

Athlete's Foot Shoe Store

Anacostia, District of Columbia

CDFI: *East of the River Community Development Corporation*



The busy Athlete's Foot shoe store in the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, D.C., might seem like just another retail outlet. But the store has played a leading role in the revitalization of the Anacostia community.

Before the store made its appearance in the community, 82 percent of the community's purchasing dollars went outside the neighborhood, says Retta Gilliam, executive director of East of the River Community Development Corporation. East of the River CDC provides and develops affordable housing, education and training to support economic development in the Ward 8 (Anacostia) community of Washington, DC. It was instrumental in bringing the franchise to the area. "To capture more of that income," continues Rita, "we needed to bring in major retailers that make neighborhood shopping more attractive."

In 1996, East of the River provided a \$50,000 loan to help bring Athlete's Foot to Anacostia. After less than two years in business, the franchise owner repaid his loan and opened a second store nearby. Even more significant, the store's success has boosted the area's image among other retailers; Pizza Hut and Dollar Store are among the several franchises that have followed Athlete's Foot's lead. In all, the new franchise stores have created more than 30 jobs in the community.

East of the River Community Development Corporation (ERCDC) has been serving the Ward 8 community of Washington, DC (better known as Anacostia) since 1988. East of the River works to bring affordable housing, quality jobs, and greater commercial opportunities to the Southeast area of our nation's capital. ERCDC fulfills its mission by developing programs that target the ward's 72,221 residents and 251 businesses through the implementation of a strong grassroots strategy. This strategy focuses on increasing affordable housing, attracting new business development opportunities, developing education and training programs and creating and retaining jobs in the community. For more information visit: www.ercdc.org