

NEW YORK POST

ONLINE EDITION

NOW, IT'S MO HAVEN



A PLAYER: Vaughn's now a developer.
Photo: N.Y. Post Tamara Beckwith

Saturday, March 19, 2005

By ALEC APPELBAUM

Here comes a changeup. Former Red Sox slugger Mo Vaughn is making some big waves in The Bronx, but this time around, Yankees fans have nothing to worry about.

Vaughn's new game is real estate, and he's focusing on 284 low-income apartments in the South Bronx.

The retired athlete, who also played two seasons with the Mets, is spending millions to upgrade the apartments. And Vaughn, who's endured digs from Yankees fans in the past, doesn't want smirks about his new career as an affordable-housing developer.

"Everybody laughs," he says about his new career. "The mayor's press secretary asked me if I wanted to plant trees. But we really want to do some things."

Vaughn and his lawyer, Gene Schneur, formed Omni New York in 2004 to buy Thessalonica Court and Brookhaven I, two dilapidated low-income housing complexes in Mott Haven.

Omni borrowed \$28.6 million from the city's **Housing Development Corporation** and set aside \$5 million for new floors, boilers, security cameras and other basics.

Families of four that earn under \$37,680 annually qualify for these apartments; tenants pay an average of \$270 per month. Omni pledges to keep the rents at that level.

There are 33 three-bedrooms throughout the two complexes, but most of the units are two-

bedrooms.

There's already a decent-sized waiting list (only three of the 284 total units are currently vacant). If you think you qualify, stop by one of the buildings at 350 St. Ann's Ave. or 197 Brook Ave. in Mott Haven.

Or you can write to Saint Ann's 350 Limited Partnership, The Bronx, N.Y. Attn: wait list.

Now that he's got a deal wrapped, Vaughn hopes to lure other retired athletes into affordable housing.

"It's a hell of a process," he says, "but it's a good process."