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# The New York Times

## The Metro Section

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# Mo Vaughn to Rehabilitate 2 Bronx Apartment Buildings

By JIM RUTENBERG

**H**is baseball career abruptly behind him because of an arthritic knee, Mo Vaughn, the former Mets first baseman, is going into the real estate business with help from an unlikely source: Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

Mr. Bloomberg announced yesterday that his administration was helping a company headed by Mr. Vaughn and his former sports lawyer, Eugene Schneur, rehabilitate two low-income apartment buildings in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx.

Mr. Vaughn's new company, Omni New York, is buying and rehabilitating the buildings with a \$28.6 million loan from the Housing Development Corporation.

Mr. Schneur said in an interview yesterday that Mr. Vaughn had decided to go into the housing business

immediately after saying in early 2004 that his knee would not be in shape for the coming season, an announcement that effectively meant the end of his career.

The Mets acquired Mr. Vaughn, who grew up in Connecticut, from the Anaheim Angels in December 2001 with an annual salary of \$15 million. In his second season, he went onto the Mets disabled list because of his knee and never came off of it.

"As his career was winding down or coming to an end, he was looking to get involved on a larger scale," Mr. Schneur said. "He had heard and read there was a huge housing shortage and a lot of neighborhoods needed revitalization."

Mr. Vaughn, speaking with the mayor at one of the projects he is rehabilitating, the Thessalonica Court apartments, said he had met with the mayor and city housing and small business officials at City Hall exactly

a year ago to discuss areas of the city where he could get involved.

"We were trying to find the best way to give back and get involved in the City of New York," he said.

The mayor said yesterday that nearly \$5 million of the loan to Mr. Vaughn's company would go toward renovations in the buildings, which have fallen into disrepair and failed two recent inspections. The mayor also said the tenants' rents would remain at \$270 a month. The announcement drew tears from residents who attended.

Mr. Vaughn, for his part, was quick to credit Mr. Bloomberg. "Mayor Bloomberg truly cares about affordable housing and the people of New York City," he said. "We all should be fortunate to have him as our mayor." But he would only go so far. Asked if he was ready to endorse Mr. Bloomberg in the mayor's race, Mr. Vaughn said he was not.

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