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**Article appearing in:** **The Star Press**  
**Date of article:** April 1, 2003  
**Page:** 1A  
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## **HUD chief, others dedicate neighborhood**

By Rick Yencer  
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Millennium Place was praised as a model for future rebuilding.

MUNCIE -- Dakota Harris and his schoolmates watched as Mel Martinez praised Millennium Place as a neighborhood of the future. 'It's a new place for people all over the world to live,' said Harris, a third-grader at Longfellow Elementary's CAPE Community Learning Center. Martinez, secretary of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, said HUD was in the business of rebuilding neighborhoods. 'We have a strong belief that this is the future of public housing mixed-income communities that allow homeowners alongside public housing, rent-subsidized and market-rate housing,' Martinez told reporters.

More than 300 people turned out Monday at Second and Monroe streets for a ceremonial groundbreaking of Millennium and recognition of the recent \$12.3-million federal HOPE VI grant. Munsyana Homes public housing complex stands on the south side of Second Street, and Millennium on the north side. The intersection with Monroe is well known for violence and drug-related crime. Emma Price, who has lived at Munsyana since 1952, cut the ribbon Monday at the official ceremony. She said she was ready to move into a new home.

The federal grant will be used to replace Munsyana with 62 new public housing units, 138 rental apartments, and 44 new homes. Martinez promised Price and other public housing residents would be 'at the front of the list' for new housing and rent-subsidized apartments. About 170 families still live in Munsyana. HUD also pays the relocation costs for displaced residents and gives them preference for new housing.

Mayor Dan Canan and Congressman Mike Pence also spoke Monday about the partnership involved in obtaining the grant and jump-starting Millennium last fall with a 30-unit development. 'This is more than the construction of new buildings,' Canan said. 'This is the beginning of a new life.' Pence, who worked in Washington to obtain the grant, said the partnership involved bipartisan leadership and all sectors of the community.

Teacher Mary Dollison said she brought the Longfellow CAPE class to Munsyana to witness history. Students held flags and watched intently. Community leaders and other dignitaries rode trolleys to the site from a downtown fund-raiser for Pence. Martinez spoke amid tight security that included local uniformed police officers and Secret Service agents assigned to the HUD secretary.

Contact news reporter Rick Yencer at 213-5833.

About Mel Martinez

\* Martinez, the nation's 12th secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, was born in Cuba and fled to the United States in 1962 as part of a Catholic humanitarian effort.

\* A lawyer, Martinez is a former chairman of the Orlando (Fla.) Housing Authority and is a former president of the Orlando Utilities Commission. He was appointed to the HUD post in 2001 by President Bush.