



# Tallatoona CAP helps turn Cartersville resident's house into a home

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**BY MARIE NESMITH**

To Sharon Johnson's delight, she witnessed her house being transformed into a home last month, thanks in part to Tallatoona CAP's Weatherization Program. Her one-story, three-bedroom residence, situated on 1.5 acres, is located on Martin Luther King Dr. Drive in Cartersville.

"My ceilings squares were falling down," Johnson, 65, said. "I had an extremely high utility bill winter and summer because I had no insulation. I had applied for the Weatherization Program because ... my AC window unit had leaked and rotted the wood in my bedroom, and it had turned into black mold — hazardous and unhealthy.

"I received a phone call from Tallatoona asking me if I was still interested in getting my house weatherized, because Tallatoona had been blessed with funds. I was overwhelmed and in tears literally. God, thank you Jesus, I've been blessed with a new home."

Operating for more than 35 years, Tallatoona CAP's Weatherization Program continues to provide pre-qualified, low-income residents home repairs to enhance their structures' efficiency. Some of the upgrades include improvements to the residences' insulation and heating system.

"Homes must pass an energy assessment in order to qualify," said Scott Gray, executive director of Tallatoona CAP. "Some examples that will prevent a homeowner from qualifying for weatherization services include roof/ceiling needs to be replaced or repaired, leaks, mold issues, foundation issues, windows need to be replaced and electrical wiring concerns."

As Johnson noted, her home improvement needs were initially turned down by Tallatoona CAP, due to the condition of her ceiling. However, thanks to a \$5,000 grant awarded to Tallatoona CAP

by USG in November, her ceiling — which was bowing and falling down in places — was replaced in December and January.

“She was selected because she met the income requirements for our Weatherization Program but was unable to cover the cost of tearing out and replacing her ceiling,” Gray said. “The cost of which fell within the parameters of the USG grant. Once her ceiling was replaced she would qualify for the Weatherization Program, which would result in services and substantial energy savings for her as well as address health and safety concerns.”

Along with her ceiling, Johnson’s home was revamped with numerous weatherization services including, adding attic insulation; replacing attic vents, exterior doors and lightbulbs with energy efficient bulbs; and installing a carbon monoxide detector, bathroom shower head and exhaust fan, and a stove vent.

“It was very rewarding to see how much Ms. Johnson appreciated the work that was completed on her home,” Gray said. “I had the opportunity to meet with her in her home and she was beaming with pride. She now has a safe, energy efficient home and is reaping the benefit of reduced heating bills.

“We, along with Ms. Johnson, are very appreciative of the grant from USG. Her home repairs could not have taken place without these funds. These repairs were instrumental in her meeting the qualifications to take advantage of our Weatherization Program.”

He added the one-time USG grant was for work “over and above” what their Weatherization Program performs.

“Often we see homes that are beyond the scope of the work of our Weatherization Program and we deny approximately 40 homes annually,” Gray said. “Tallatoona is hoping that more solutions like the USG grant will happen in the future to help assist with these homes that are denied.”

Grateful for all the home improvements, Johnson extended her thanks to everyone involved.

“My health is meaningful now that I don’t have to inhale the mold and fumes anymore,” she said. “I’m comfortable, and I’ve seen the big difference in my utility bill.

“I would wholeheartedly like to thank and express my gratitude to Mrs. Johnny Mae, Mr. Tim, Mr. Frank, the Tallatoona CAP family and team for everything that you’ve done for me. May God bless you all. My house is now a home.”

For more information about Tallatoona CAP’s Weatherization Program, call 770-382-5388, ext. 100.