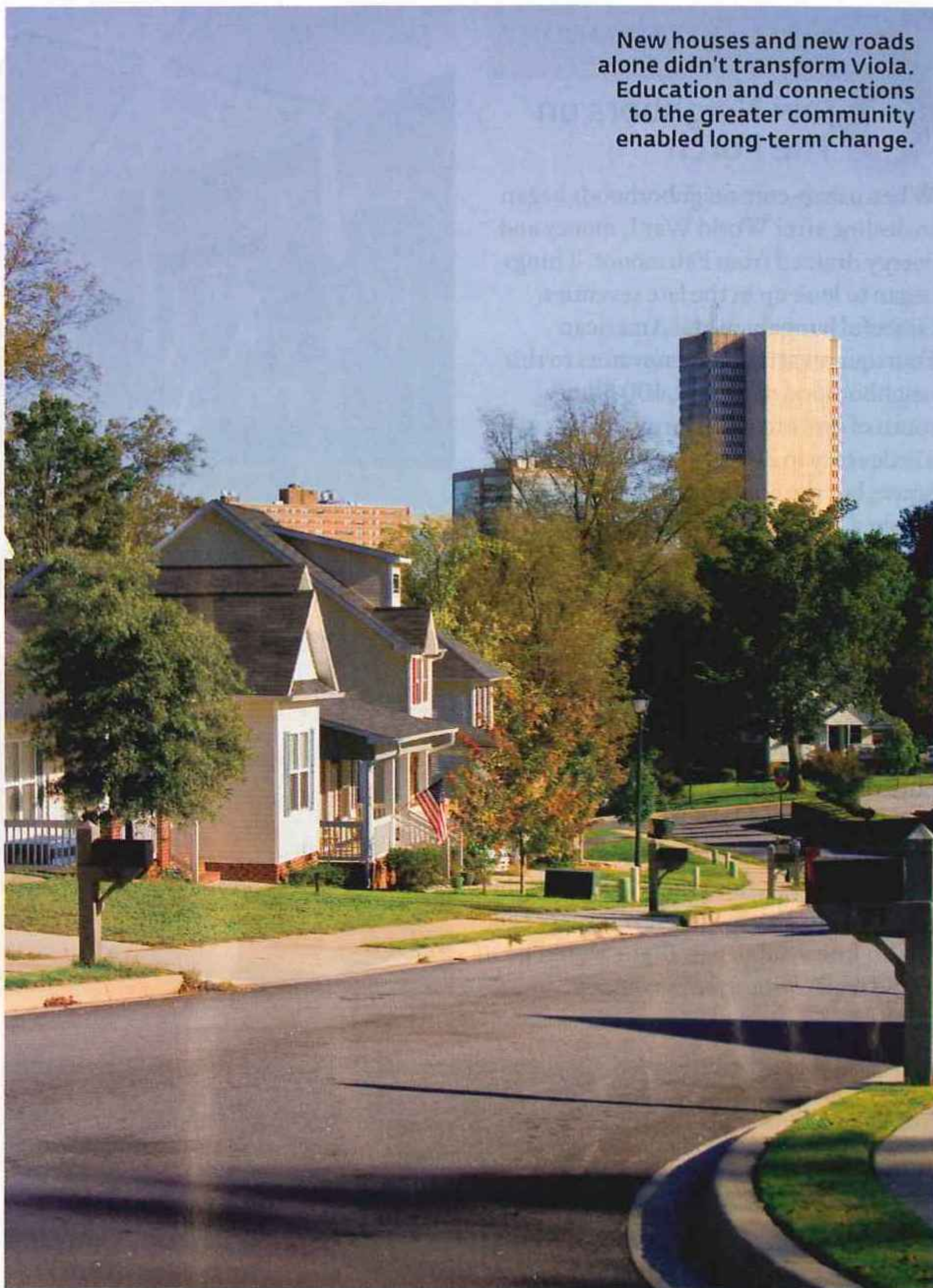


10^{BEST}
**COMEBACK
 NEIGHBORHOODS**

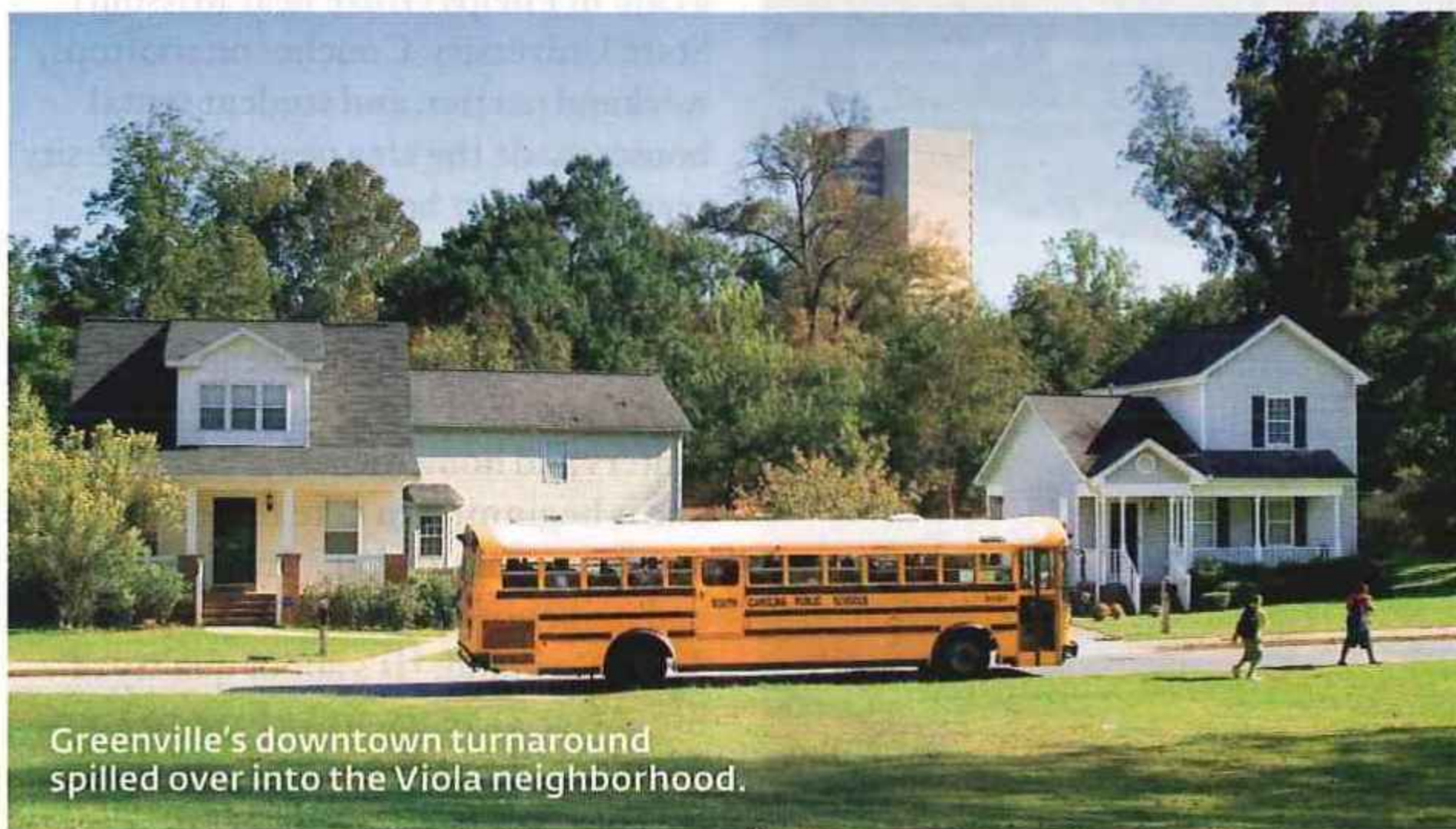
**8 VIOLA
 GREENVILLE, SC**

**Start Fresh Near
 The City**

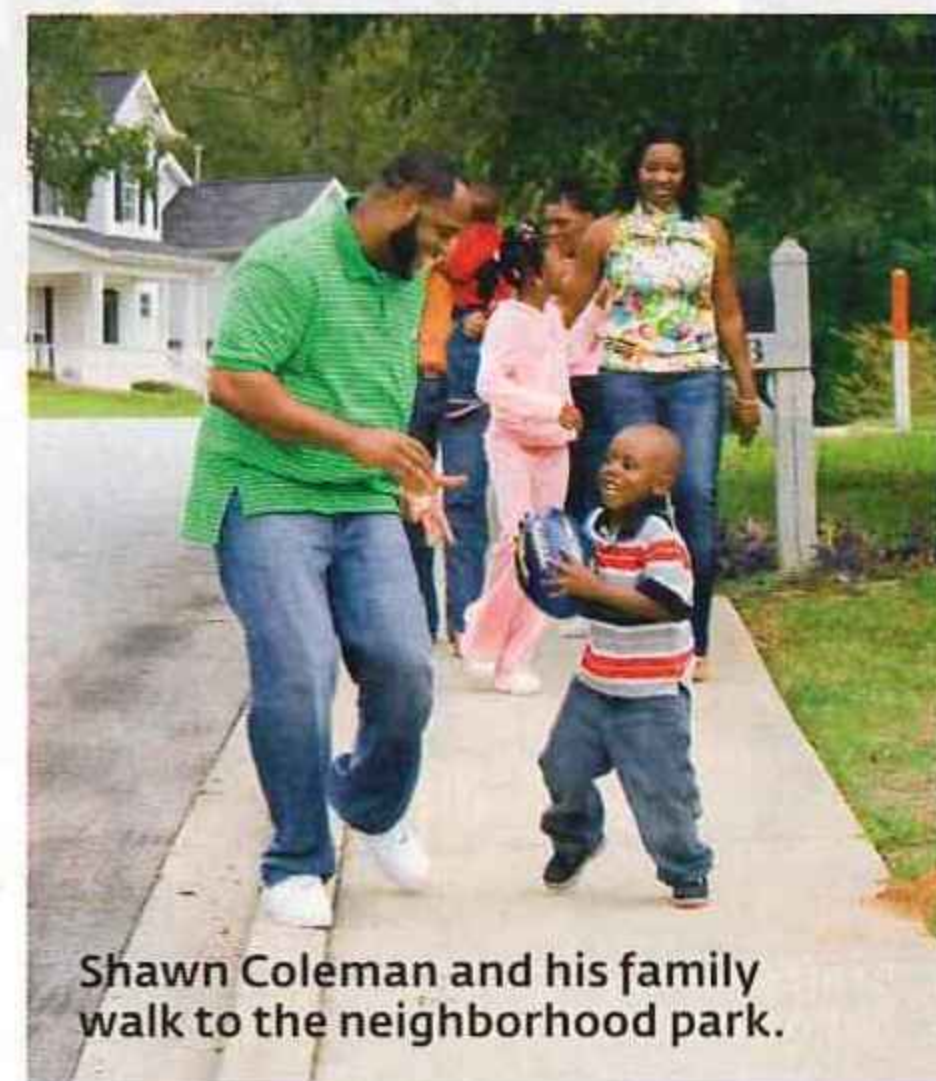
Parker Street was at a low point in downtown Greenville. "Heavy rains would flood through the shacks at the bottom of the street," says lifelong resident Shawn Coleman. Crime also filled the area. But a little over a decade ago, the Viola neighborhood was reborn, thanks to the efforts of the city, First Baptist Greenville, the Urban League of the Upstate, various community partners, and the residents themselves. Tidy homes with front porches replaced clapboard homes in decay. Better drainage and new streets, sidewalks, parks, and attitudes transformed the neighborhood. "When I got out of the military, my goal was to become a homeowner," Shawn says. "I never thought I'd be able to in my old neighborhood." In 2002, Shawn and his wife, Sandra, bought one of the more than 90 new homes in the neighborhood and inherited a second house, which they've kept as an investment. He isn't the only former resident to learn the benefits of ownership. "Former renters are learning to be homeowners. Viola has turned a lot of broken dreams into new dreams," says neighborhood association president Vincent Green. greenvillesc.gov



New houses and new roads alone didn't transform Viola. Education and connections to the greater community enabled long-term change.



Greenville's downtown turnaround spilled over into the Viola neighborhood.



Shawn Coleman and his family walk to the neighborhood park.

PHOTOGRAPHS: VAN CHAPLIN