

Family finds 'real' neighborhood exists in southeast Raleigh

BY YONAT SHIMRON
STAFF WRITER

Growing up in Boston, Barbara Risman never imagined that she could find a home with a wide yard, large trees and the peace and quiet of a suburban tract — only about a mile from an urban downtown.

She did, though, in Longview Gardens, a neighborhood off New Bern Avenue in southeast Raleigh. Risman, a sociology professor at N.C. State University, lives there in a rambling, 1940s home with her husband, Rick Kane, and her daughter, Leah, 8.

Risman's entry is the latest winner in The News & Observer's Where We Live contest. Here's part of her letter:

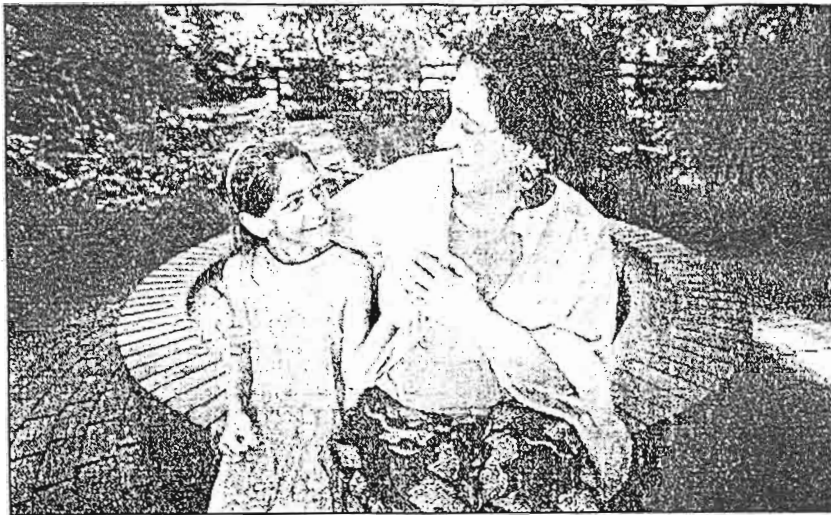
"I live in what may be the best urban neighborhood in America," she wrote, emphasizing the racial diversity of the neighborhood, large homes and "big beautiful flowering trees which make the air sweet."

The family has a screened porch in back, a water fountain, a two-car detached garage and — tucked away in the back — a tree-house for Leah.

"The best thing about my neighborhood is the people, all kinds of people," Risman writes.

"We have young families and retired couples. We have nearly an equal number of black and white families. We have very big houses that are almost estates (the late Thad Eure's home, for example), and modest ranch houses that single people and families living on one paycheck can afford to own.

"When the children who grow up in this neighborhood enter their jobs, they won't need diversity training. It will be what they were brought up with. We are building a mul-



'Where We Live' winner Barbara Risman, right, and her daughter, Leah KaneRisman, in their back yard in Longview Gardens, a southeast Raleigh neighborhood.

STAFF PHOTO BY ROGER WINSTEAD

ticultural community.

"Second, we share a strong concern for education. Most of the newcomers, like us, moved here at least partly because of the schools. One family recently moved from Arizona to Raleigh after a nationwide search for the best high school for their daughters. They found Enloe, and our neighborhood.

"This is an old-fashioned kind of place, with Frank's pizza parlor and a hardware store within walking distance. No, the pizza parlor in our neighborhood doesn't offer chevre

cheese and portabello mushrooms as toppings. It is the old-fashioned kind, with an owner-baker always there, making world-class pizza as good as the best I remember from North Boston's Little Italy when I was a child. I don't have to drive to the mall for every little good thing!

"When urban planners talk about 'new urbanism' and 'recreating' neighborhoods, I wonder if they realize that neighborhoods needn't be created fresh from forests, that some real old neighborhoods do exist."

THE WHERE WE LIVE CONTEST

The winner: Barbara Risman

Family: Husband Rick Kane, 42; daughter Leah KaneRisman, 8

Occupations: Professor of sociology at NCSU; Risman's husband is a state government attorney.

Time in home: Four years

The place: Longview Gardens off New Bern Avenue in southeast Raleigh

History: Home was built in 1943 in a mix of architectural styles.

Neighbors: The census block including Longview Gardens has about 1,018 residents, according to the 1990 census. Some details:

- The median age is 39.
- The median household income is \$35,395; that's a little lower than the Wake County median of \$36,222.
- The most common occupations are professionals (24 percent), clerical (17 percent), managers (16 percent) and service workers (15 percent).
- The racial breakdown is 50 percent black and 48 percent white
- About 75 percent of residents own their homes; 25 percent rent.
- The larger voting district is Democratic-leaning in registration (80 percent registered Democratic during the 1994 elections). In the 4th Congressional District race last year, 65 percent of the residents voted for Democratic incumbent David Price and 35 percent voted for Republican Fred Heineman, who won the election.

