

New affordable housing complex will cost some Valley renters less than \$200

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MADERA, Calif. (KGPE) – Sugar Pine Village in Madera is finally ready to welcome low-income renters just in time for the holidays. The \$25 million project is a partnership between Self-Help Enterprises, Madera County, the state and private investors, among others.

For Anahisa Moreno, it's an answered prayer.

"I would tell my daughters every time we would drive by, 'Pray to God, pray to baby Jesus that that's gonna be your house.'"

The mother of three said she became homeless in 2020.

"We had to shower at parks where the water was cold. There's times where my kids caught a cold because they had to take a cold shower."

The Mexican immigrant said they spent many nights sleeping in a car.

"We had to lose our clothes, we had to lose one of our cars, we had to lose everything to be able to find yourself again."

Now, families like Anahisa's will be able to move into one of the new homes in as soon as one to two weeks.

"We're gonna open this project and rent it up in a single day," said Self-Help Enterprises CEO Tom Collishaw. "We have all 52 households ready to move in right now, with 16 of the units available for people coming out of street homelessness."

Some families will pay less than \$200 in rent.

The project features 20 one-, 16 two- and 16 three-bedroom apartments with fully equipped kitchens, energy-efficient appliances and laundry hook-ups. Sugar Pine Village is partnering with Madera County Behavioral Health Department to provide residents access to counselors who can help with health, wellness and other socio-economic needs.

“Folks are just looking for an opportunity to improve their lives,” said Collishaw, adding that during the pandemic, the organization saw more low-income or homeless families struggling to make ends meet.

“Either because a loss of a job, an illness in the family or kids being home from school which has affected some families’ ability to earn money in the way they normally do.”

Collishaw said construction had its own challenges, including the East Lewis site’s proximity to the freeway, which caused some noise concerns.

“The supply chain issues and the cost of construction have been dramatically impacted.”

But after three and a half years, project leaders are happy to help people like Anahisa have a roof over their head again.

“This to us is just like a dream come true,” she said.

Self-Help Enterprises has just started a similar project in Oakhurst.