

APPEAL-DEMOCRAT

November 22, 2022

'Welcome to your neighborhood'

By Michaela Harris



Sierra Vista residents, Habitat for Humanity officials and community partners celebrate the completion of the Sierra Vista permanent housing project on Saturday in Marysville.

After nearly five years in the making, Habitat for Humanity Yuba-Sutter celebrated the completion of the permanent housing community Sierra Vista.

Habitat for Humanity organizers, contractors and community members gathered on Saturday to highlight 27 families who have become Habitat homeowners in the last two years.

Habitat for Humanity officials held a ribbon cutting ceremony and reception to acknowledge donors and corporate partners who helped develop the park and neighborhood.

Located in Marysville, Sierra Vista features 36 four-bedroom, two-bathroom homes which expand upon an existing neighborhood. Out of the newly constructed houses, 32 are fully completed with the remaining four nearing completion.

The subdivision also features a new playground for the surrounding community, which includes a new play structure, swing sets and a walkable path.

The street where these homes are located was named Habitat Way, said Joe Hale, CEO for Habitat for Humanity Yuba-Sutter.

"It's great to think how Habitat Way leads directly into Humanity Park," he said.

Partner families living in Sierra Vista were required to put in 500 hours of volunteer work in order to qualify for a Habitat for Humanity home, said Family Services Manager Pat Archuleta.

Once a family is ready to move in, housing payments are based on income and typically range between \$800 and \$1,300, Archuleta said.

If residents struggle to make payments after earning their home, Habitat for Humanity offers a forgiveness note for up to \$100,000 worth of payments, Archuleta said. However, residents are still required to make mortgage payments for 20 years before they can redeem their equity, Habitat for Humanity Administrative Officer Camille Benner said.

In order to add amenities to the new houses, Habitat for Humanity called upon Life for Relief and Development. The Michigan-based nonprofit partners with furniture re-use solutions to provide materials for housing projects like Sierra Vista. Programs Coordinator Nicole Hoisington said that the organization was able to ship products to Habitat's ReStore which were later used to furnish Sierra Vista homes.

For some families, the process from applying to getting the keys to their home can take years. Barbara Steele and her daughter, Lexi, were Sierra Vista's first residents and have been living in the neighborhood for five years. Steele said the process took nearly three years for them to move into their new home.

“It took us three years, but we’ve had a good experience since then. All these people here are our neighbors. I know almost all of them. I know I could ask any of them for a cup of sugar,” she said.

For Deeawn Scruby, becoming a partner family with Habitat for Humanity was the answer to her troubles. During a presentation, Scruby said that she faced significant hardships as a single mother in debt with inadequate housing. After applying to become a Sierra Vista resident, Scruby was able to move her family in August 2019.

“Even though my circumstances were tough, I still had a dream of homeownership. I’m so grateful for this opportunity,” she said.

Before closing the event, Archuleta congratulated each resident at Sierra Vista.

“You are all homeowners. Welcome to your neighborhood,” she said.