

News Release

12 Low-Income Veteran Families Move Into First-Of-Its-Kind Community In Sylmar

The Hernandez family just moved out of their two bedroom apartment and into their very first home. Efrain, an Army veteran, and Valerie, an Army National Guard veteran, and their three daughters, Cecelia, and twins, Carmen and Cristine, are one of the 12 very-low income families moving into a first-of-its-kind Habitat Enriched Neighborhood™ for veterans in Sylmar, CA in April.

On April 12, 2014, Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV and the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) hosted a Home Dedication/Key Ceremony at the Sylmar Habitat for Heroes site where the families received the keys to their homes. CalVet Secretary Peter Gravett and Los Angeles City Councilmember Felipe Fuentes attended spoke at the event.

The Habitat Enriched Neighborhood™, named “Sylmar Habitat for Heroes”, was built by Habitat for Humanity San Fernando/Santa Clarita Valleys (SF/SCV) in collaboration with CalVet. It is the first community in the nation to provide homeownership to very-low income veteran families in a neighborhood context that also provides wrap-around social services free of charge to the families. These services, provided through partnerships with other local non-profits and businesses, include financial and health education, health screenings, and self-sufficiency training. Also unique are the services provided that meet the specific needs of the veteran community. These include art workshops for trauma victims, PTS counseling, FOCUS training, and ensuring connections to all entitled military benefits.

This “Sylmar Habitat for Heroes” program was created to provide affordable homes for very-low income veterans and their families and also offer them the services and training needed to get out of poverty and move up into the middle class. Through this collaboration, low-income veterans qualify for four-bedroom homes, which they purchase using a CalVet Home Loan, a Habitat SF/SCV second loan, and a deferred silent third loan from California Department of Housing and Community.

The Habitat for Humanity second loan is the key to making these homes affordable to low income veterans. On pay-back, funds will be reinvested into Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV’s efforts to build more homes for low-income veteran families and those in dire need of housing.

CalVet selected Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV to collaborate with because of its Habitat Enriched Neighborhood model™, a model designed by and unique to the San Fernando/Santa Clarita Valley affiliate. The Habitat Enriched Neighborhood™ provides veterans not only with a homeownership opportunity which they would not otherwise be able to afford given their low income status, but also with enrichment services.

These services are specifically designed to empower veterans with the knowledge, education and social services they require to become healthy and self-sufficient so that they can leverage their homeownership into a more economically advanced future for themselves and their children.

To learn more about Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV visit www.HumanityCa.org.

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