

APPEAL-DEMOCRAT

August 18, 2022

'This fills a growing need'

Prosperity Village a small solution to a growing problem

By Robert Summa



Don Dunn, a resident at Prosperity Village, spoke last week about the positive impact on his life that the low-income housing solution in Marysville has provided him.

The rooms at Prosperity Village, a low-income housing solution in Marysville, come furnished with a bed, television and small kitchen-type set up.

Affordable housing is not only one of the biggest issues in the nation and state, but the availability of affordable housing in the Yuba-Sutter area has been a top concern for citizens and officials alike for some time.

As rents and the price of housing steadily increase in an environment where salaries or benefits are not keeping up, the mix of the two can often lead to someone becoming homeless. To help alleviate this growing need, institutions such as Habitat for Humanity have stepped in to provide temporary relief.

One such project that has attempted to solve a portion of that need is Prosperity Village, a low-income housing solution that caters mostly to seniors, disabled individuals and veterans who are currently struggling with homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

Formerly the Travel Inn & Suites Hotel at 1111 North Beale Rd. in Marysville, Prosperity Village consists of 62 housing units and includes supportive services from case workers and other onsite providers, Joseph Hale, CEO for Habitat for Humanity, said.

Onsite providers that help current residents include Hands of Hope, the local Veterans Affairs office, the veterans organization Nation's Finest and Yuba County Health and Human Services.

A majority of the funding for Prosperity Village came via the state through a Community Development Block Grant, the Appeal previously reported. A total of \$6,325,611 was used for the cost of the facility along with the costs of an environmental study, physical needs assessments, staffing hours for employees from all working organizations and the closing costs of the estate transaction. Hale said more money will be put into the facility for improvements, including solar installations and other various enhancements.

"It also enhances our community at large," Camille Thomas, executive assistant for Habitat for Humanity, previously said. "Lowering crime rate, creating a safe place for these people to live, and a safe place in our community."

The project is similar to the success of Harmony Village, a permanent affordable housing site in Sutter County that began in 2020. According to Thomas, police previously would receive about eight calls a month to that area. Since the completion of the project and housing of its residents, there have been three calls in the area unassociated with the complex.

"We did very well on the Homekey project for Yuba City, that HCD (California Department of Housing and Community Development) reached out," Hale said. "They had additional money they had to have expended to the state by the end of the year and they said if you have a project, we wouldn't mind working with you on something new. It was really a great opportunity. We presented this site as a potential option because Yuba County wanted to participate in Homekey but they were a little bit behind ... it kind of gave us this opportunity."

Hale said a third project is currently under construction in Orland, which will include 33 units.

Last week, Habitat for Humanity held a ribbon cutting ceremony highlighting the success of Prosperity Village and what it means to the community.

“This fills a growing need,” Habitat for Humanity Public Relations Officer John Nicoletti said during a tour of the housing complex. “I know this is a solution and for sure there is a need.”

Residents at Prosperity Village are chosen through a referral process by Yuba County Health and Human Services and the Veterans Affairs office. Yuba County Health and Human Services conducts its assessments and refers its most vulnerable to be housed, Hale previously said.

Hale said about 57 units are currently filled. He said some have been left vacant because of renovation work that has taken place.

“The sad part about all of this is that we have over 1,000 people on the waiting list. What we try to do is prioritize by the most need,” Hale said.

Residents who are eligible are typically contacted when a space becomes available, Hale said. Those living at Prosperity Village pay up to 30% of their monthly income in rent.

“Most are probably paying in the \$300 to \$350 range and then some may have a little more and maybe paying up to \$500. It does include utilities and all those things,” Hale said.

The rooms are furnished with a bed, television, and small kitchen-type set up that allows residents to return to a more ordinary life.

Among the feedback Habitat has received from residents at Prosperity Village is that they feel they now have the opportunity to change their life for the better.

“You have a lot who are very happy about the change in life, the opportunity, the stability, not having to worry about where they were going to be the next day, protecting their stuff, all of those elements,” Hale said.

He said having facilities such as Prosperity Village show that affordable housing projects can work for the betterment of the community.

"These types of projects have really allowed us to go further because it's showing that there's a good ability to manage it," Hale said. "It doesn't turn into the chaos that I think people think it's going to be. Now people can look around, see what's happening, and have a better opinion of it. One of the problems, when we go to an area and we have people who are upset about a project moving to the area, we can take them on tours of these facilities and we've had people change their mind overnight after coming and seeing it's not what they think it is."