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BOARDED MOTEL CONVERTED INTO 60 APARTMENTS AS PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR FAMILIES IN NEED

\$9.2 Million public/private partnership meets the needs of local families

Sacramento, California – Saybrook Apartments, a 60-unit permanent affordable housing complex, celebrated its grand opening today. The first of its kind in Sacramento, Saybrook Apartments combines housing with on-site social services, on-site job placement, and numerous programs in sports, arts and mentoring for children. Saybrook offers homeless families a new apartment and virtually every resource they need to get on their feet and stay on their feet. Housing more than 70 adults and 100 children, Saybrook is more than a new place to live. It is a safe, supportive community where families can reside permanently.



Turning a run-down, crime-laden, abandoned hotel into a second chance for homeless families of Sacramento was no small feat. It took a collaborative partnership between Pacific Housing, Jon Berkley Management, Squier Properties, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance, and multiple lenders and investors who put forth \$9.2 million to see this project through completion. After two years of planning and building, Saybrook Apartments opened its doors to sixty families.

“We saw an opportunity to transform a blighted corner into an apartment complex that would both enhance the community and help families in need,” said Mark Wiese of Pacific Housing. “We knew we could assemble a team to create a community that would offer a safe living environment for families trying to get back on solid ground.”

“This was once a very notorious location and now we’ve turned it into a beautiful asset for this community that also provides so many wonderful programs,” said Anne Moore, Executive Director of the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, “so it truly will make differences in many people’s lives.”

The Agency is one of several government agencies involved in the project, Moore said. SHRA is charged by the Board of Supervisors with financing and preserving affordable housing. The Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance helps bring services to low income people and the District Attorney’s Office took strong action to turn this property in a different direction. “And we’re here because of leadership that this County has,” said Moore. “A commitment to neighborhoods, a commitment to really providing for everybody in the community, a commitment providing a continuum of care for extremely low income families that are really in a difficult place in this economy and at this time in Sacramento.”

The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) provided \$1.6 million in permanent financing to close the gap and make this project a reality.

Saybrook’s private lenders include Bank of America, which provided a \$4.16 million construction loan, and California Community Reinvestment Corporation with a \$1.05 million permanent loan. In addition, The Bank of The West has made a \$486,000 loan via the Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program. RED Capital Group based in Columbus Ohio, the projects limited partner, has invested \$5.3 million in Saybrook.

Applicants are required to meet specific qualifications in order to be considered for residency. They must be homeless, defined by HUD as an individual living on the street or in a shelter; have one adult that is disabled (disabilities may include substance abuse, mental or physical health issues); have one child under the age of 18; and have one adult that is employed or motivated to become employed and willing to develop the skills needed to maintain employment and self-sufficiency. In families where substance abuse is a factor, family members must be clean and sober. Even with the qualifying factors, the demand for an apartment at Saybrook was in the hundreds. A street count conducted in August 2003 reported a total of 2,896 sheltered or unsheltered homeless persons, including homeless persons living in local correctional institutions.

Unlike most transitional housing or homeless shelters, Saybrook is a permanent supportive housing complex. Tenants can stay as long as they like. Affordability is assured by site based Housing Choice Voucher (HCV/Section 8) rental subsidies that reduce the rent paid by residents to 30% of their income.

In Saybrook, the founding partners wanted to create an environment where rents are low and resident support services are plentiful. Through the various programs offered at Saybrook, residents are encouraged to find jobs with growth potential, thereby increasing their income and giving residents the opportunity to become more financially secure in hopes of someday owning their own home.

The development team involved with building and creating Saybrook Apartments has tried to find solutions to the more universal problems that often put and keep families on the street. Two common barriers to staying employed are transportation and reliable childcare. Little Blessings will provide onsite full time care for children 0-5 years from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Youth Guidance will provide tutoring for children age 7 to 18 at the new onsite computer learning center. Saybrook is conveniently located between two bus lines and is partnering with the Wheels to Work Program that will shuttle patrons to and from their jobs.

To help families achieve permanent stability, the development team brought in Lutheran Social Services (LSS) to operate programs out of the 12,000 square foot Saybrook community building. “There are what I would consider two primary goals of Saybrook Apartments,” says Sue Laliberte, Executive Director of LSS, “Employment and parenting.” Saybrook Apartments has contracted with Lutheran Social Services to provide the case management for each of the residents. As families enter the complex, individualized plans are created and assessed by the onsite caseworkers. Many of the people living at Saybrook are coming from emergency shelters that break up families according to men, women, and children. Living cohesively again while taking on the responsibilities of a new job would be stressful for anyone. The onsite caseworkers will help residents work through and deal with such situations.

A new beginning, a place to call home, a community--thanks to the vision of its developers and investors, Saybrook Apartments is making a difference. As Lutheran Social Services Laliberte said, “This project will be watched as a national model by cities with similar issues. More importantly, Saybrook is more than a home – it is a community, an opportunity for families looking to take charge and better their own lives.

The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency is a Joint Powers Authority created as a public agency by the City and County of Sacramento in 1973. SHRA is the lead public agency and public developer for the City and the County regarding affordable housing, public housing and redevelopment projects and issues. The Agency provides a variety of financial assistance programs for first-time homebuyers, and offers several loan programs and other assistance to the business community. SHRA has a FY 2004 budget of \$196 million and approximately 328 employees SHRA owns 3,600 units of public housing and is one of the largest landlords in Sacramento. SHRA also administers about 11,700 rental assistance vouchers per month.

Media Contacts:

Angela Jones, Public Information Officer, SHRA, (916) 440-1355 or (916) 919-3090
Ann Montgomery, (916) 359-7035 or (916) 747-6641