

GUSTINE PRESS- STANDARD

Families celebrate completion of homes they helped build

By West Side Connect.com

February 26, 2016



Self-Help Enterprises celebrated the completion of a group of homes with festivities last Wednesday. Home buyer/builder Adelaide Etheridge addressed those gathered as, from left, Gustine City Manager Sean Scully, Congressman Jim Costa and Self-Help President/CEO Tom Collishaw looked on.

GUSTINE - Ten families who have spent the past year helping build their own homes in a Gustine subdivision reaped the fruits of their labor last Wednesday.

With a number of dignitaries on hand to commemorate the event, the families got the clearance to move into their new homes in the Self-Help Enterprises project.

As USDA inspectors made their final inspection rounds of the recently-completed homes, the builder/buyers gathered for remarks by Congressman Jim Costa and others on hand.

Under the Self-Help model, families achieve home ownership by providing sweat equity in lieu of a down payment.

Working under the supervision of construction professionals, each buyer must contribute at least 40 hours of labor a week to

the project. The owners work on all homes as a group; and none move in until each home is completed.

In his remarks, Congressman Costa said home ownership is an essential underpinning of a vibrant middle class.

“It is part and parcel to what we call the American Dream,” he stated.

Programs such as Self-Help allow Americans to achieve that dream, Costa remarked.

Tom Collishaw, president and CEO of Self-Help Enterprises, said he never tires of seeing families reach their goal of home ownership, which becomes reality on move-in day.

“This day never gets old,” he expressed.

He credited the city of Gustine for its willingness to work with Self-Help, making the Gustine project possible.

Self-Help acquired more than 50 lots in a subdivision which was languishing at the time, Collishaw said.

The first group of homes was built in 2010.

The latest group of homes completed (the fourth phase in the project) brings the number of finished homes to 39. The remaining 12 are under construction.

The homes are three- and four-bedroom floor plans, ranging in size from 1,210 to 1,350 square feet.

Adelaide Etheridge and her family were part of the group that tackled home ownership through their own sweat equity.

She spoke to those gathered, praising the program that made it possible.

“We are not just building a home,” she reflected. “We are building a community.”