

# DINUBA SENTINEL

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## Youth Receive Shade Structure

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By: Sentinel Staff

Children living at Villa de Guadalupe, Self-Help Enterprises' apartment rental community in Cutler, were given a shade structure over a play area at the complex. The new structure was unveiled on Friday.

The shade structure cost \$18,000, which \$8,000 was provided through a grant from the American Academy of Dermatology [ADD]. Self-Help paid for the other \$10,000 as part of the organization's Healthy Homes initiative to improve healthy environments for children and residents.

"We are committed to educating our residents about the dangers of sun exposure through our resident services programs. The installation of the shade structure will provide another way to protect children at our housing locations," said Patrick Isherwood, Rental Housing Assets Manager of Self-Help Enterprises. "We are extremely thankful to the American Academy of Dermatology, and Dr. Torakawa, for their help and generosity."

Dr. Torakawa is a dermatologist out of Visalia. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the shade structure she talked about the importance of having children stay out of the sun, especially between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., to avoid getting skin cancer later in life. She recommended children apply sun block with an SPF of 30-50 and to wear hats to help protect the face.

The shade structure will protect the 95 children residing at Villa de Guadalupe from the risks of sun exposure, as it has a ultraviolet [UV] protection of 96 percent. The new shade structure over the playground will increase exercise and recreation activities, especially during the hottest months when the playground equipment may have been too hot for use previously.

To teach children and youth about the importance of sun protection, Self-Help developed a sun safety awareness plan and implemented the ADD approved curriculum "Good Skin Knowledge" and "Gigi Sun Safety Toolkit" in the afterschool program.

"As a mom of four active kids, I want to make sure my children are protected from excessive sun exposure. The shade structure protects my kids and I don't have to cut down our playtime outside," said Maria Gomez, resident of Villa de Guadalupe.

While skin cancer is highly treatable when caught in its earliest stages, skin cancer can be deadly. Melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, is now the most common form of cancer for young adults 25-29 years old, and the second most common form of cancer for adolescents and young adults 15-29 years old.

Kari Ludvickson of Self-Help was instrumental in obtaining the grant for the shade structure. When asked why the structure wasn't built before the start of the summer, instead of the end, she stated that the grant was approved in March, but it took the entire summer for the entire process, including obtaining permits.

Since the Academy founded the Shade Structure Grant Program in 2000, more than 320 shade structure grants have been awarded to organizations across the country. These structures provide shade for more than half a million individuals each day.

The Shade Structure Grant Program is part of the Academy's SPOT Skin Cancer campaign to reduce the incidence of skin cancer by educating the public about effective skin cancer prevention tips. To learn more about the Shade Structure Grant Program or for ways to prevent and detect skin cancer, visit [www.SpotSkinCancer.org](http://www.SpotSkinCancer.org)