

# HANFORD SENTINEL

## Self-Help Enterprises Named a Top Affordable Housing Developer

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CORCORAN — Self-Help Enterprises, a housing and community development organization with a current project in Corcoran, was named among the nation's top 50 affordable housing developers.

The organization was ranked number 42 on the list compiled by Affordable Housing Finance magazine, and among only seven nonprofits, for developing both affordable rentals and affordable single-family homes.

“This ranking is a testament to our commitment to addressing the shortage of much-needed affordable housing,” Tom Collishaw, president and CEO of Self-Help Enterprises, said. “We are proud of our partnerships with public officials, community organizations, and many others who work with us to provide a range of homeownership and rental opportunities for low-income families.”

Collishaw said he was thrilled the organization made the list, especially considering there were only a handful of nonprofits that were recognized.

Since 1965, Self-Help Enterprises has created rental and homeownership opportunities for families and farmworkers in eight San Joaquin Valley counties – Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Stanislaus, and Tulare – through the organization's housing rehabilitation, self-help housing, rental housing and community development efforts.

Self-Help Enterprises is a nationally recognized community development organization whose mission is to work together with low-income families to build and sustain homes and communities. The organization's work today encompass a range of efforts to build better homes and communities for farmworkers and other hard working families.

With agriculture at the heart of the Valley's economy, farmworker families occupy about 75 percent of Self-Help Enterprises' new construction developments, said a press release from the organization.

This year, Self-Help Enterprises is seeking financing for more than 300 new multifamily units in six projects. In addition, the organization plans to build nearly 85 new single-family homes.

These projects include rental properties in Stanislaus and Fresno counties, along with single-family homes in Kings, Tulare, Kern and Merced counties.

Through the self-help program, each homeowner contributes a minimum of 40 hours per week — over 65 percent of the construction labor — constructing their own homes and those of their neighbors. The press release said these labor hours, or “sweat equity,” are used as the down payment on their new home, resulting in affordable monthly payments.

In Kings County, Self-Help Enterprises is currently building nine self-help homes for Corcoran families.

Collishaw said the organization worked with the city to purchase lots and the project is the last phase of a subdivision that includes other self-help homes.

He said the current project began construction in February and should be complete in about six months.

Collishaw said the families all work on each other's houses and none of the families are able to move into their respective homes until every house is complete. He said an on-site supervisor is available to teach the homeowners necessary skills and manage construction materials.

Since its inception, Collishaw said Self-Help Enterprises has helped more than 6,200 families build their own homes.

The press release also said the organization has provided homeownership education and first-time homebuyer assistance to over 9,100 families, rehabilitated over 6,400 unsafe homes, developed over 1,350 units of affordable rental housing and has provided technical assistance for reliable access to safe drinking water and sanitary sewer infrastructures to more than 160 small communities.

According to the press release, these combined efforts have helped over 55,000 families, providing security and stability for families and building more productive communities.

“It’s clear that these types of projects are needed around the Valley,” Collishaw said.