

# THE VALLEY VOICE

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## Grand Opening of Santa Fe Commons I in Tulare!

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By: Valley Voice Contributor



On Thursday, October 12th, SHE hosted a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for the first phase of Santa Fe Commons, the nonprofit's first multi-family affordable housing project in the City of Tulare, located at 537 N. West Street. The event was attended by elected officials, community leaders, and development partners who helped make the project possible.

One of the speakers at the event included Joy Flores, who also helped cut the ribbon, marking a new beginning for her and everyone else living at Santa Fe Commons.

Joy is a new Permanent Supportive Housing resident at Santa Fe Commons who has survived domestic violence and struggled with homelessness for the last four years. A teary-eyed Joy shared how challenging life had been for her before moving into the new community. "There were mornings I would wake up, and it was so cold I had ice in my hair, clothes stiff, covered with frost," said Joy. "It was the worst time of my life. I lost everything. I felt abandoned and alone."

Joy was eventually able to get connected with a housing navigator from our partners at Salt+Light Works of Tulare County, who helped her apply to our Permanent Supportive Housing program. "I am so grateful to be housed in a brand-new apartment, fully furnished, with services on site. My Sanctuary. My Home. My safe haven. Thank you all for making this dream possible."

Santa Fe Commons I offers 81 new affordable housing units for Tulare residents. It features spacious one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. Monthly rents are determined by unit size and the family's income. Monthly rents range from \$190 to \$1,066, ensuring that families, many of whom work in nearby fields or packing plants, have an affordable place to live. In addition, thirty-five of the units will be reserved for farmworker households through the Joe Serna Jr. Farmworker program at the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

In addition to serving the needs of working families, twenty-five units will be reserved as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) through the HCD No Place Like Home program. Residents are referred through a partnership with the Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance and Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency. Santa Fe Commons I is the first integrated PSH project of its kind for the City of Tulare. All incoming PSH residents will move into a fully furnished apartment and receive Welcome Home Kits, which include essential household items such as bed linens, bath towels, and kitchenware. This helps ensure that the community's most vulnerable residents will be supported on their fresh start.

"The City of Tulare is extremely excited about the grand opening of Santa Fe Commons," said Josh McDonnell, Assistant City Manager for the City of Tulare. "This project provides high-quality affordable housing, and the opportunity for our unhoused residents to graduate from the homeless encampment directly to permanent supportive housing. We are optimistic the on-site services will provide housing stability and result in real transformation in Tulare."

"Santa Fe Commons will serve a truly broad range of people who need affordable housing – from low-income working families to individuals and families with children who have experienced homelessness," said Pete Vander Poel, the Tulare County Supervisor representing District Two. "High housing costs and homelessness are prevalent issues in our communities. We need to continue to create diverse, permanent, affordable housing opportunities with wraparound services to meet the needs of all Tulare residents. Self-Help Enterprises' Santa Fe Commons is a great example, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on the local community."

Self-Help Enterprises is committed to expanding its affordable housing efforts in Tulare. To the north of Santa Fe Commons I, a second phase is currently under construction that will effectively double the capacity by providing additional opportunities for stable housing in Tulare.

"Self-Help Enterprises is thrilled to celebrate – along with our dynamic partner, the City of Tulare – the grand opening of Santa Fe Commons I, which will provide affordable housing opportunities for the Valley's essential agricultural workforce and the most vulnerable members of our community," said Tom Collishaw, President and CEO of Self-Help Enterprises. "The project will not only promote housing stability in the City of Tulare, but also help transform residents' lives through access to essential services that will enable them to thrive in their new homes."

Santa Fe Commons I was made possible with the support of Merritt Community Capital Corporation, Pacific Western Bank, and California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) No Place Like Home (NPLH) and Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) Program funds, and City of Tulare Low and Moderate Income Asset Fund. The City of Tulare has been a thoughtful and visionary partner throughout the development process. This project also would not have been possible without the design team from Mogavero Architects and Civil Design Studios, and the general contracting services of Ashwood Construction. Learn more about Santa Fe Commons I.