

PR NEWSWIRE

Salt + Light Revolutionizes Homeless Services in Tulare County, California

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By: Salt+Light



TULARE COUNTY, Calif., Oct. 23, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Salt + Light, a pioneering non-profit organization founded by community advocate Adrienne Hillman, is revolutionizing homeless services in the region. Hillman's deep-rooted commitment to her community led her to establish Salt + Light in 2019, marking the start of a remarkable initiative to address the growing homeless crisis in the area.

Having witnessed the escalating challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness, Hillman transitioned from her previous career as a life coach to lead a groundbreaking project inspired by The Community First Village in Austin, Texas. Drawing from the model's emphasis on community, connection, and meaningful work, Hillman founded Salt + Light to create a similar village in her own community.

Her vision came to life for The Neighborhood Village when local non-profit affordable housing developer, Self-Help Enterprises approached Salt + Light to partner in developing the transformative village as part of a master planned affordable housing community in Goshen, California. Scheduled for completion by April 2024, The Neighborhood Village aims to provide not just housing, but a comprehensive support system within a vibrant community setting.

The master planned community spans 6.5 acres and encompasses 53 dignified homes which meet all Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements. Ranging from one-bedroom to two-bedroom units, each home features fully equipped kitchens and bathrooms, offering residents a

sense of comfort and independence. Complementing the residential area, The Neighborhood Village will feature an array of amenities including a multipurpose Unity Hall for community gatherings, movie nights, and other events. Additionally, residents can benefit from a dog park, green spaces, a tiny library, a memorial garden, and a commercial culinary training kitchen, ensuring that essential needs are met within close proximity.

"The vision for The Neighborhood Village goes beyond providing affordable housing; it focuses on fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment," remarked Hillman. "Our on-site case managers and comprehensive services ensure that residents have access to the high touch, human-to-human support they need to thrive."

At The Neighborhood Village, creating trauma informed spaces designed to meet people where they are is paramount. To that end, residents are not required to be sober to secure housing. Hillman explains that substance abuse is directly correlated to trauma, and says she feels that it is counterproductive and nearly impossible to ask people who are living in survival mode on the streets—experiencing trauma daily—to become clean and sober in that environment. While she acknowledges that recovery is an important part of helping folks settle and heal, she believes that for successful recovery to occur, it is important to bring folks into a trauma informed community setting which has robust resources and high-staff-to-resident ratio on site. Salt + Light will offer a range of substance abuse treatment programs. Residents contribute to the community by paying rent scaled to their income, fostering a sense of agency and financial independence.

With The Neighborhood Village poised to transform the lives of its residents, Hillman remains steadfast in her mission to inspire similar initiatives across the state. "I believe we are witnessing a genuine transformation within our community, where individuals are rediscovering their worth and receiving the care and support they deserve," emphasized Hillman.

As Salt + Light continues to illuminate pathways for those experiencing homelessness, it is assured to set a new standard for community-driven initiatives, fostering hope and resilience in the hearts of individuals across Tulare County and beyond.