

# THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

---

## \$25M affordable housing development in Reedley honors Veterans, supports farmworkers and boosts sustainability

March 12, 2025

By: Dylan Gonzales



Reedley celebrated the ribbon cutting of the \$25 million Guardian Village on Feb. 19. This 48-unit, affordable housing development is aimed at providing housing for low-income families, agricultural workers and veterans.

Guardian Village was developed by Visalia-based Self-Help Enterprises, a company that helps low-income families build and sustain homes. Ground was broken for the project in April 2023.

Self-Help CEO Tom Collishaw shared where the name Guardian Village came from.

“It derives from the historic use of this property that served the veterans in the Reedley area for many years, making it a place that honors both service and sacrifice,” Collishaw said.

There is also a permanent flagpole onsite, as well as a California National Guard sign.

The development features one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments designed to accommodate various households. According to Collishaw, 15 units are specifically reserved for agricultural workers. All units are part of a zero-net-energy, all-electric project, reinforcing the commitment to sustainability.

The income range for qualifying households is said to be from about \$15,000 a year up to about \$55,000.

Collishaw spoke about the significance of opening Guardian Village to the Reedley community.

“Reedley has always been welcoming of our efforts to house their hardworking population, which started decades ago with our first self-help housing efforts,” Collishaw said. “These efforts provided opportunities for people to build their own homes, own their own homes, and find great stakeholders in this wonderful city.”

Collishaw added how much he enjoyed working with the city of Reedley and Mayor Matthew Tuttle.

Rep. Jim Costa shared similar sentiments and expressed his gratitude for all of those who helped invest in the development.

“Today marks a major milestone for our farmworker community and their families. Our farmworkers and farmers are the backbone of the Central Valley and our nation. Together, they put food on America’s dinner tables every night. Increasing the production of affordable housing must remain a priority for those who put food on Americans’ dinner plates,” Costa said.

He thanked stakeholders, including Self-Help Enterprises, financial partners, and state and federal agencies, for their collaborative efforts to make Guardian Village a reality.

The project was made possible through a combination of public and private funding. The California Department of General Services played a crucial role by donating the property under a 99-year lease for just \$1.

Additionally, the Department of Housing and Community Development provided \$6 million through state grant programs. Fresno County also contributed resources and funded amenities such as a playground, a covered seating area and recreational facilities.

One of Guardian Village’s key investors was UnitedHealth Group. The company invested \$14.4 million in equity in the project and committed \$100,000 annually to fund on-site services.

UnitedHealth Group has worked all over California, helping fund apartments in the Central Valley, Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange County.

Steven Henry, the senior director of UnitedHealth Group’s investment management team, explained why investing in affordable housing is essential to them.

“When you have a health condition and you don’t have stable housing, your focus is on taking care of your housing needs, which, of course, is very important, but you kind of neglect your health needs,” Henry told The Business Journal. “So we really see it as helping the health care, helping people have better and healthier lives through stable housing with services.”

One of the highlights of the ceremony was when Collishaw introduced Cindy Vidal, a new resident and a single mother of six.

Vidal talked about the struggles of raising her kids in her previous apartment due to its small size. She shared her emotions when she found out that she had been approved.

“I was happy, I was praying and I was crying,” Vidal said.