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## Southwest Fresno families moving into 22 ‘sweat equity’ homes

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On April 25, city leaders, nonprofit partners, supporters and more attended a community event where nearly two dozen families received certificates of completion and opened the doors to the homes they helped build.

The Southwest Fresno families completed construction of their own homes through the Mutual Self-Help Housing program with Self-Help Enterprises.

“This is about more than just homeownership — it’s about dignity, equity and opportunity,” said Tom Collishaw, president and CEO of Self-Help Enterprises.

The City of Fresno contributed \$1.4 million to the project, helping to make homeownership possible for these families.

“From the moment I took office, housing has been one of the top priorities I addressed in my One Fresno vision,” said Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer. “This project exemplifies the creativity, investment and hard work required to deliver affordable housing and will impact families for generations to come.”

The homes are located near Annadale and Elm avenues, in a neighborhood that has seen very little investment over the past several decades.

Under the Mutual Self-Help Housing program, families worked under the supervision of Self-Help Enterprises construction staff. Each contributed “sweat equity” by performing tasks such as pouring foundations, framing, wiring and painting.

“We didn’t just build a house—we built a community and a future,” said Esmeralda Melecio Lopez, a new homeowner. “We came into this with no experience, but with the support of people like Benny Zurita, our construction superintendent, we learned everything from the ground up. My family was my motivation. Their support kept me focused on the bigger picture and reminded me what we were working toward. I’m so grateful to Self-Help Enterprises — not just for helping us build a home, but for believing in us and guiding us every step of the way.”

Fresno City Council Vice President Miguel Arias noted that he worked alongside the families during the construction process.

“The completion of these 22 new homes at Annadale and Ivy marks a new chapter for Southwest Fresno, bringing longtime residents the opportunity for homeownership,” Arias said. “I am proud to have had the opportunity to work beside the neighbors last year, as we rolled up our sleeves pouring concrete, laying the foundation not only for their new homes, but for a bright future for generations to come, rooted right here in Southwest Fresno.”

Self-Help Enterprises partnered with Tri Counties Bank, which financed all 22 homes and helped families access down payment assistance programs.

Funding included \$100,000 from the state CalHome program, \$29,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco’s WISH program, \$10,000 in Self-Help Enterprises down payment assistance, \$17,000 in sweat equity and up to \$7,500 from the Tri Counties Bank Homeownership Access Program.