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Sustainable design at new affordable housing project

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The Press Democrat.com. Tuesday, September 24th, 2013. By Dianne Reber Hart

A ribbon cutting is planned for Wednesday (Sept. 25) to celebrate the grand opening of a new 43-unit rental project serving low- to extremely low-income families in Sonoma Valley.

The Valley Oak Homes project at 875 Lyon St. off Highway 12 near West Spain Street offers a family community within the green, environmentally sustainable development.

The development is a project of the nonprofit Satellite Affordable Housing Associates (formerly Affordable Housing Associates) and the City of Sonoma. The city purchased the site in 2008 and selected SAHA to develop the project.

Residents live at or below 50 percent Area Median Income.

Valley Oak Homes offers families working in the city of Sonoma with safe, comfortable, healthy and environmentally responsible housing coupled with services from La Luz Center, said Susan Friedland, SAHA executive director. Homes developed by SAHA are more than places to live they are places of support, growth and opportunity.

Inspired by Sonoma's town square, the development features a public commons fronting a clubhouse that acts as a community hub for the seven residential buildings. It includes a multipurpose room with a common kitchen, public gathering space, a homework/computer room, a tenant services office and a resident manager office.

A community garden and bicycle parking encourage healthy living.

The project was designed by McCamant & Durrett Architects, with construction led by Segue Construction Co. Valley Oak Homes is a model for sustainable design from the site planning to the finish materials.

It features design strategies, materials and resources for efficiency and healthy homes that complement the neighborhood and natural environment.

Funding comes from the previous City of Sonoma Redevelopment Agency, Sonoma County Community Development Commission, Silicon Valley Bank, Enterprise Community Investment and the Enterprise Community Loan Fund.

Satellite Affordable Housing Associates was created when Satellite Housing and Affordable Housing Associates joined forces. As SAHA, the Berkeley-based group has 66 years of experience, 56 communities for low-income residents and 21 new projects in development.

The grand opening is from 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesday (Sept. 25) at 875 Lyon St.

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