

NEWS RELEASE

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First Regional Homeless and Disabled Veterans Housing Opens in Rancho Cordova, CA *50 Veterans Find “Place to Call Home” at Mather Veterans Village*

Rancho Cordova, CA (August 31, 2016) – Today, Mercy Housing, Veterans Resource Centers of America (VRC), the City of Rancho Cordova and the County of Sacramento announced the opening of Mather Veterans Village, the first permanent supportive housing for homeless and disabled veterans in the Sacramento region. After breaking ground in late 2014, Phase I of the project is complete and all 50 homes are occupied by veterans and their families. Mather Veterans Village is the first of three phases of critically needed veterans housing and supportive services in the region.

“The City of Rancho Cordova is a vibrant community with a strong military heritage that values its veterans,” said Mayor David Sander, City of Rancho Cordova, one of the project drivers. “Our City, once the site of an active air force base, is still home to over 5,000 veterans and their families. So, it made sense in 2006, to explore the feasibility of creating a village dedicated to the care and housing of our nation’s veterans. The idea blossomed into what is now Mather Veterans Village.”

The new, three-story, garden-style community – designed by Mogavero Architects, a local Sacramento firm – includes 50 apartment homes, as well as 3,500 square feet of meeting rooms, staff offices, kitchen/lounge area, and a computer lab. In addition to exceeding California’s energy and water usage standards, the site includes landscaping irrigated by 100% onsite gray water, solar electric generation for tenant net metering, and a solar hot water system.

“Everyone at Mercy Housing California feels enormous pride whenever we complete a new affordable housing community for low-income residents,” said President Doug Shoemaker, Mercy Housing California, the master developer. “But there is an extra special feeling we all share when we open a new community for formerly homeless and disabled veterans. Mather Veterans Village is our second veterans housing

community in California and it would not have been possible without the amazing group of collaborative partners who worked tirelessly to turn this veterans village concept into a beautiful reality.”

“The County of Sacramento is pleased to be a partner in helping make the Mather Veterans Village project a reality,” said Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli, District 5. “Our veterans will benefit from this outstanding and much needed project, which provides a safe and welcoming home and supportive services for their overall well-being.”

George Thomas, now a resident at Mather Veterans Village, served in the U.S. Army from 1979-86 as a field radio repairman and earned the rank of E5 Sergeant. Six years ago, he lost his father who was his best friend. George became addicted to drugs to try and stop the pain, which led to him becoming homeless. He didn't know if he'd be alive the next day or where his next meal was coming from. George had a family that loved him and 11 grandchildren he wanted to see grow up, so one day he decided to make a change.

George reached out to VRC, the co-developer and master service provider for Mather Veterans Village, to ask for help. VRC provides a rich menu of supportive services at the village, including counseling, job training, medical assistance, group and individual therapy, and a healing environment.

“We as Americans made a promise to these brave veterans,” said Executive Director Marc Deal, Veterans Resource Centers of America. “We said ‘fight our wars, keep the wolves at bay, stand the wall, and when your watch is done, we will take care of you.’ Often times we have not kept our part of the bargain. With Mather Veterans Village and this collaboration, we are. This is the finest example of not only keeping a promise but giving the best gift you can give a veteran: hope.”

Thanks to VRC, George was placed on the waiting list for Mather Veterans Village.

“I was living in my car and praying to God for the village to open one weekend. That Monday, I got the phone call that I could move in,” said George. “I am now living in my new home, enrolled in a drug recovery program, and applying for a job. I have hope for the future and believe I can set a good example for my grandchildren.”

Over 92,000 veterans live in the Sacramento, CA region, and the area has the 10th highest number of homeless veterans in California counties. Yet housing to support the unique needs of those who are homeless and disabled was virtually non-existent - until now.

George and 49 other veterans now have a place to call home at Mather Veterans Village thanks to a network of partners. The Sacramento Housing and

Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) is one partner and provides vouchers for veterans and their families to live at Mather Veterans Village.

“SHRA is proud to be able to assist the Mather Veterans Village project by administering 25 vouchers under the federal Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH),” said Executive Director La Shelle Dozier, SHRA, funding partner. “This multi-agency partnership creates a significant positive outcome by turning hope into housing for homeless veterans and their families in Sacramento, giving them the keys to opportunities for a stable and sustainable future.”

The Mather Veterans Village location couldn’t have been more perfect than the City of Rancho Cordova, CA. It is on the site of the former Mather Air Force Base, providing a familiar setting to veterans and access to the nearby VA Hospital.

“Community collaborations such as this are vital to the success of our veterans who have sacrificed for our country,” said Director David Stockwell, VA Northern California Health Care System. “Mather Veterans Village will provide our veterans exiting homelessness not only with a safe place to live but also with the supportive services needed to get back on their feet. As our nation’s heroes, veterans deserve this opportunity to be successful, and to reclaim their health and well-being.”

In addition, the following organizations provided funding to make this program possible: California Department of Housing and Community Development, California Tax Credit Allocation Committee, The Home Depot Foundation, Sacramento Steps Forward, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Wells Fargo Bank.

Mather Veterans Village: a place to call home. For additional information and a press kit, please visit www.cityofranhocordova.org/MVV.

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