



Stepping from streets to stability

Town Center Studios clients move up, make room for new residents mere months after homelessness thanks to Project Homekey

STOCKTON, Calif.— Just a few months ago, Connie Hill was living under a freeway, one of the estimated 600+ chronically homeless individuals living on the streets in San Joaquin County. As of March 10, Hill was moving into her own apartment at the Cottage Village development for seniors in Manteca.

“I just can’t believe this is happening,” Hill said. “Gosh, you couldn’t even get on a housing list before.”

Hers is one of the many early success stories of Town Center Studios, a permanent supportive housing effort that is turning a motel in Stockton into permanent housing for the chronically homeless with funds from the State of California’s Project Homekey.

Hill stayed less than three months at the project, which is a partnership between Central Valley Low Income Housing Corp., Stocktonians Taking Action to Neutralize Drugs, and the City of Stockton. She moved from Town Center Studios to Cottage Village, a senior development in Manteca developed by the Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin and DFA Development.

Hill is one of 29 people who have been assisted by Town Center Studios since it opened its first 20 units on Dec. 28, 2020. Four of those individuals have moved on to other permanent housing.

None of the individuals who have been provided housing through Town Center Studios have returned to homelessness, which is the top priority of permanent supportive housing projects that serve those with long histories of homelessness and a permanent disabling condition.



Photo by CVLIHC

Connie Hill speaks about her journey from the streets to permanent housing at Town Center Studios on March 10, 2021.

Hill described her time spent homeless as “scary” — especially when she was abandoned on the streets by a friend without any place to go. But she said “everything lined up” when she was given a space in San Joaquin County’s Project Roomkey, an effort that turned a Motel 6 in South Stockton into an emergency shelter for homeless individuals at special risk for COVID-19.

“I’m good. I’ve got a brand-new place. ... I can stay there until I die.”

The moves of Hill and others from Town Center Studios open up new housing opportunities for other chronically homeless persons, as the project is currently operating at 100% capacity. Renovations continue on 20 additional rooms at the project, which will eventually feature 40 studio units.

“Helping to make projects like Town Center Studios come to fruition is where the City of Stockton can have the greatest impact,” shared Carrie Wright, City of Stockton Economic Development Department. “We’ve worked together as a region to develop a strategic plan and this is directly in line with one of primary goals — helping individuals secure permanent housing.”

The main project partners are CVLIHC, STAND, and the City of Stockton, but additional agencies including San Joaquin County, Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin, Dignity Health, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative have contributed to make Town Center Studios a success, according to Jon Mendelson, director of CVLIHC. The participation of so many entities is critical to building effective responses to homelessness as local leaders and agencies look forward toward future projects and investments, he added.

“Town Center Studios is producing positive outcomes not only because of CVLIHC, STAND, and Stockton, but because of Project Roomkey, the Housing Authority, and others,” Mendelson said. “Problems like homelessness are large and complex, but Town Center Studios shows it’s possible to change lives and improve our community when we all commit to projects like this one.”

• *For more information about Town Center Studios, contact Jon Mendelson at [jmenelson@cvlihc.org](mailto:jmendelson@cvlihc.org).*