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Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan and Mercy Housing California to Celebrate the Grand Opening of The Arbor at Hesperian

New apartments will provide much-needed housing for older residents while promoting better health, quality of life, and independence for the area's growing senior population. Mercy Housing California's 77 new apartments create homes for seniors struggling under the weight of the Bay Area's ballooning housing crisis.

San Lorenzo, CA-- For many residents of **The Arbor at Hesperian**, San Lorenzo's newest affordable community for seniors, the Grand Opening celebration marks a homecoming. With an increasing demand to preserve affordability in San Lorenzo and the Bay Area, the 77 service-enriched apartments were developed and marketed with a local preference—the first of its kind for San Lorenzo—with the goal of allowing seniors already living in the area to remain in the community and close to their support networks. The result: 51% of the households moving in are local residents who will continue to call San Lorenzo home.

"At 74, I had to sell my home and look for more affordable housing," says Faye Ruben, one of The Arbor at Hesperian's first residents. "I moved to Alameda County in 1964 and after working in San Lorenzo for 25 years, I'm thrilled to be able to stay in this neighborhood near friends and family and give back to the community here."

A ribbon cutting marked the realization of six years of collaboration between **Mercy Housing California**—one of the state's largest non-profit affordable housing developers—and **Alameda County** to help alleviate the senior housing crisis in the area. For many Bay Area seniors like Faye Ruben, the inadequate housing supply and skyrocketing costs mean being forced to choose between food, medicine, and a home. Seniors, who are too often pushed out of high-cost areas, increasingly finding themselves homeless and struggling to make ends meet. Approximately 30% of seniors nationwide spend more than half of their income on rent.

The good news is there are proven strategies that can help. "By investing in service-enriched senior housing like The Arbor at Hesperian, we can ensure our seniors have a safe, decent and affordable home to age in place, while providing a stable platform to deliver community support and programs that improve their health and quality of life," says Doug Shoemaker, President of Mercy Housing California.

"Affordable housing for seniors is needed now more than ever with the cost of rental housing having nearly doubled in Alameda County during the past 7 years. The Arbor at Hesperian is already making a tremendous difference in our community," says Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan.



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The Arbor at Hesperian is planned with onsite services to meet the unique and critical needs of seniors—offering staff and programs focused on health and wellness, housing stability, and community engagement. The community boasts an exercise room for tai chi and fall prevention classes, lounges for book club meetings, and a wellness room to provide a private and comfortable space for visiting nurses.

Collaborating with the neighbors on the development and design of The Arbor at Hesperian, the community also reflects its local heritage. Shade trees, wood finishes, and lush gardens help transform the site of the former post office into a residential anchor while new walkways invite neighbors to visit the recently expanded and renovated Alameda County library. A central orchard, a nod to San Lorenzo’s agrarian past, welcomes seniors outdoors to pick fresh fruit in season.

In the Bay Area, where the weight of the housing crisis is especially heavy and where many seniors teeter on the brink of homelessness due to the high cost of living coupled with fixed incomes and limited savings, The Arbor at Hesperian is a model solution and critical in preventing the problem from worsening. Financial partners for The Arbor at Hesperian are Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., Wells Fargo Affordable Housing Community Development Corporation, California Tax Credit Allocation Committee, and Alameda County. The Arbor at Hesperian is one of the last projects to survive the dissolution of redevelopment and embodies redevelopment at its best—eliminating blight, supporting the local economy, and providing safe, healthy, affordable housing for local residents.

About Mercy Housing California

Mercy Housing California is the largest regional division of national nonprofit Mercy Housing, Inc. Mercy Housing, Inc. is headquartered in Denver and founded in 1981 with the mission to create stable, vibrant, and healthy communities by developing, financing and operating affordable, program-enriched housing for families, seniors and people with special needs who lack the economic resources to access quality, safe housing opportunities. To date, with a presence in 41 states and 200+ cities, Mercy Housing, Inc. has developed, preserved and financed more than 45,800 affordable homes nationwide, both rental and single family, serving more than 152,600 adults and children on any given day.

Mercy Housing California has developed more than 140 rental properties across 36 California Counties serving low and very low-income working poor families, senior citizens, persons who were formerly homeless, people with disabilities and persons living with HIV/AIDS. For more information about Mercy Housing, Inc. and Mercy Housing California, please visit mercyhousing.org.

About Supervisor Chan

Alameda County Supervisor Chan represents District 3, which includes the cities of Alameda, San Leandro, parts of Oakland including Chinatown, Jack London, Fruitvale and San Antonio neighborhoods, and the unincorporated community of San Lorenzo. She is currently President of the Board of Supervisors, Chair of the Health Committee, and a member of the County’s Legislative Committee, Budget Committee, and Unincorporated Services Committee. For more on Supervisor Chan’s accomplishments and current initiatives, please visit www.acgov.gov/board/district3 or connect on Facebook with “Supervisor Wilma Chan.”

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