

# mercyHOUSING

CALIFORNIA NEWS

Seeing the  
**Possibilities**  
in **Sunnydale**

PAGE 4

MEET VIOLA  
**"There's No  
Place Like Home"**

PAGE 8

## SENIOR TSUNAMI

PAGE 6

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT DOUG SHOEMAKER



Figuring out how to care for an aging parent can be one of the most difficult challenges people face as adults. Along with healthcare decisions, I think the question of where your parents can or should live is the hardest because it combines so many other complex issues including financial realities and your own living situations.

This issue is hard enough if you are middle class and your parents own their own home. It becomes nearly impossible for the millions of Americans that are lower income and trying to rent in markets in which any form of housing is unaffordable.

For organizations like Mercy Housing that work with seniors, we are well aware of the huge wait lists and the so-called “Senior Tsunami” of retirement age Baby Boomers that will expand the ranks of people age 65 and over to 74 million by 2030.

It may surprise you to know that very little is being done in Washington DC or Sacramento to address the growing housing challenges of older Americans. At the federal level, funding for new senior housing has disappeared as a result of budget cuts in the last

decade and there is no sign that new funding resources will be added. At the state level, seniors are a forgotten constituency that is generally not prioritized, if not excluded, from many state funding programs.

It’s hard to focus on yet another group that lacks access to affordable housing when it’s apparent that virtually every segment of our society is suffering under this weight.

And yet, if we don’t do something soon, we know that we will have millions of homeless seniors whose health will suffer dramatically. And the cost of that healthcare will dwarf the cost of doing something proactive and helpful. For starters, the cost to Medicaid for nursing home care is \$5,500 per month, while the State of California estimates that a senior living in a service-enriched affordable housing community would cost less than half that number.

In an era in which we struggle to find bipartisan agendas, we believe that creating more affordable housing for seniors is vital. In addition to the articles featured in this newsletter, we hope to reach out to you in coming months to let you know how to help us advance this cause.

Warm wishes in the new year,

Doug Shoemaker  
Mercy Housing California President

GIVE BACK GIVE HOPE

One Team.  
One Mission.

We are so grateful to Golden State Warriors guard, Stephen Curry, who teamed up with the Warriors Community Foundation and Feed the Children to deliver 390 boxes of food and personal care items for 130 Mercy Housing families this winter. Thank you to the Curry Family, the Warriors, and the several volunteers who spent the day gathering supplies, loading



Curry and his family at Beebe Memorial Cathedral

trucks, and making the special deliveries to Beebe Memorial Cathedral! ♦

Dressed for Success

It all started with a pair of black bell-bottom jeans. A member of Bayview Hill Gardens community recently landed a restaurant job with a dress code of black jeans, no bell-bottoms. But she had no jeans and no money to buy a pair. In stepped the resourceful Stephanie Morgan, one of Mercy Housing’s on-site Resident Services managers. Stephanie located a pair of black jeans, but they were bell-bottoms. Solving the problem quickly, the newly-employed resident neatly taped the bottom of her pant legs around her ankles and tucked them into her boots. Witnessing this ingenuity and will to succeed, Stephanie sought out the online company Stitch Fix to donate clothes to help formerly homeless moms launch their careers. Stephanie wanted her residents to know that something as seemingly insignificant as a pair of black jeans would never again stand in the way of work and the ability of a mother to care for her family. ♦



Stephani Morgan,  
Resident Services Manager

VOLUNTEER  
CORNER



Volunteers donated the food for the annual holiday party and gave their afternoon to serve the residents of 111 Jones in San Francisco.

Interested in getting involved? Want to give back with your friends? Want to connect us to your church?

We’re thankful for our hundreds of volunteers throughout the state – of all ages, and groups of all sizes. Contact the Mercy Housing California offices if you’re interested in volunteering! **Or, visit us on [volunteermatch.org](https://volunteermatch.org) and search Mercy Housing to sign up!** When you do, you’ll forever change your city and the lives of those who call Mercy Housing home. ♥

**Homework Club Assistant**  
*Homework Club positions are available all across California and offer a fun opportunity to help youth learn and flourish in school.*





HOME IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Seeing the Possibilities in Sunnydale



Sunnydale community event brings out residents and volunteers to help transform the neighborhood

Hidden from the view of most San Franciscans, Sunnydale is the city’s largest public housing site with 778 apartments across 50 acres. Physically isolated in a corner of Visitacion Valley, Sunnydale is home to 1,700 residents. Many residents struggle to make ends meet with a 70% unemployment rate and an average annual household income of \$14,000.

Mercy Housing California was selected with Related Companies of California as the developer over eight years ago,

but our commitment has gone much deeper. Recognizing that “transforming public housing” is first and foremost about people, Mercy Housing has empowered and partnered with the community to see the possibilities in Sunnydale – collaborating with more than 500 residents on a master plan, facilitating leadership, connecting residents to added services and programming, and priming the neighborhood for physical transformation.

Women’s groups, senior teas, and family game nights have

strengthened an already strong sense of community. Financial coaching, one-on-one interviews, and monthly community meetings have provided an outlet for open dialogue while equipping residents to live in a mixed-income community. Community participation at several commission and planning meetings have given residents a platform to advocate for their needs and a voice to those who for so long have felt forgotten.

Community participation has given residents a platform to advocate for their needs and a voice to those who for so long have felt forgotten.

As an example of this participatory planning, in 2014 Mercy Housing led the development of an onsite health and wellness center with the Department of Public Health out of a response to community concerns around chronic physical health



Volunteers join Sunnydale residents to plant a community garden during a neighborhood beautification event.

issues as well as behavioral health concerns such as ongoing stress and trauma. Since its opening, the Center has filled a gap in the support available to the community – accounting for a marked reduction in emergency health calls and use of the emergency room at San Francisco General Hospital while also functioning as an established hub for resources and care.

Mercy Housing is not alone in this effort. Groups like the Boys and Girls Club and Wu Yee are working in partnership with many City departments

to fashion and implement collective strategies around employment, training, safety, education, and health. In partnership with the City and private donors, we aim to create a new community center and gym as part of the rebuilt community. This year, we will finally begin to replace the 778 outdated apartments of Sunnydale, adding affordable and market-rate homes, open space, and replacing outdated infrastructure. As difficult as that work is, it pales in comparison to the challenge facing the residents of Sunnydale as they look

to educate themselves, to keep safe from violence, and to share in the economic prosperity that surrounds them. Our commitment to help residents achieve those fundamental aspirations is why we say “home is just the beginning.”





A LOOK AT THE SENIOR HOUSING CRISIS

SENIOR TSUNAMI

Americans are aging at an alarming rate. By 2030, we can expect 74 million people age 65 and older – a 33 million spike in just two decades. But the rate of seniors struggling to make rent is growing even faster. Because our existing housing supply is already inadequate for today’s senior population, millions of our seniors live on the brink of homelessness. Today, 30% of seniors spend more than half their income on rent – a number projected to increase by 42% in the next ten years.

older. In Long Beach, Mercy Housing is slated to complete refurbishments of St. Mary Tower in June to make it possible for the seniors there to continue to have an affordable, decent home to age in place.

Supply Can’t Keep Up with Demand  
Vera Haile had over 5,000 applications within two weeks for 90 homes

In light of the quickly growing need coupled with dwindling resources, Mercy Housing California is proud to have added and preserved more than 500 affordable homes for our seniors across the state. This year, we will celebrate the grand opening of The Arbor at Hesperian in San Lorenzo to add 77 new homes designed within a vibrant service-enriched community for seniors age 55 and

Through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, which transferred ownership of public housing sites in San Francisco to nonprofits, we have taken ownership and management of four communities primarily serving senior and disabled populations. As we continue to complete extensive rehabs at these properties, we have also introduced onsite services that more effectively address the unique needs of our residents. ♦

A Matter Of Balance

An award-winning group intervention program, “A Matter of Balance” increases activity to improve strength and balance while teaching participants to view their falls as controllable. Through practical and effective strategies, participants learn to set realistic goals, reduce the fear of falling, and change their environment to reduce fall risk factors.



‘A Matter of Balance’ graduating class of 15 seniors at Russell Manor

Over 250 residents have participated in ‘A Matter of Balance’ – reporting that they felt empowered and prepared to overcome barriers, inspired by a personalized action plan, and motivated in a fun, supportive setting. ♦

Dwindling Resources  
HUD 202 Budget for Program Expansion (Housing for the Elderly)  
2008: \$400 million plus  
2016: No new funding



did you KNOW?



Treating fall injuries is very costly. In 2015, costs for falls to Medicare alone totaled more than \$31 billion. With an aging population, both the number of falls and the costs to treat injuries are likely to rise.



Over 800,000 patients a year are hospitalized because of a fall injury, most often because of a broken hip or head injury.



Among the 20 most expensive medical conditions, the average hospital cost for a fall injury is more than \$30,000.

Support with an Independent Spirit

Home is more than a roof. For our seniors, home means finding the support they need to thrive, having the bonds they need to live vibrant lives, and access to resources to keep them healthy and independent. That’s why at our senior communities, we especially rely on innovative, evidence-based models that provide cost-effective and proven responses to their greatest concerns including depression, isolation, nutrition, and chronic health issues such as arthritis or pain management. ♦



## MEET VIOLA



# No Place Like Home

as a Marine. Over the course of her 20 years in service, she estimates she's sailed around the world three times. Still, she'll tell you, "Oh, there's no place like home. There's freedom at home."

### Tell me about yourself

Perhaps I should write a book of testimonies before I am 70. I've seen

### What are some of the changes you are seeing here?

Well, the renovation looks like they rebuilt the building. My apartment looks completely different with new windows, kitchen, bathroom, and fresh paint. I feel so much safer here. People used to come in off the street all day long. Now, we have good lighting, someone is always here, and we have those grab bars in case you trip. And, basic things like heat and good electricity. I have rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis, my bones have to stay warm. We have events, therapy, nurses, activities, a bus to take us to WalMart, gardening, and field trips to Fisherman's Wharf. This is my home, you know, this is the place where I go to sleep.

Before Mercy Housing came, we didn't have management or basic services. I used to have to go to my sister's place in the East Bay on the weekends to take a hot shower. We had to go take the bus and go someplace to pay our rent and some of us can't walk. >>>

>>> You ought to see this place now—I can finally sleep well. It's breathtaking.

### How do you think the process has changed you?

I feel settled now. I don't have anywhere to live but here. I get emotional because I understand what it means to finally live comfortably and not worry about where home is going to be. When you get to be a certain age, like me, you want to feel at home. To feel like things are going to be all right.

"... I understand what it means to finally live comfortably and not worry about where home is going to be."

I don't have to worry about how hard it was or be stressed about leaving. My psychiatrist has seen the change in my anxiety. Management will be here for whatever we are going through. I am all right ... I'm relieved. My mind is at rest. I can look forward coming home. This is real. And when you have hope, you have faith. I used to not want

to go to church, but now I'm blessed to be a blessing to others.

### Why was staying here so important to you?

I am very independent. I need my own space. I take good care of my things and take pride in my home. I just feel better. I can't afford another place ... none of us can. I have a place to stay here and I can stay forever. Income is set for you, most people don't get a \$1000 a month.

You know, I have lupus, it affects all my organs—the crippling kind. When you're not living right, it affects your mental and physical health. I can't keep going in and out of the hospital. When I have no heat and no ventilation, it's very difficult. Let me tell you, we had so many ambulances come here and break people's doors down. We had so many sick people here. You have to have a decent place.

The people who live here, they're grateful. They might not say it all the time, but they'll tell me, "We got a lot of change here, huh, Ms. Viola?" I tell them, "But, baby, when we get though... look what a blessing it is." ♥



"There is a common misperception that homelessness is a permanent or semi-permanent trait that affects individuals throughout their lives and defines who they are. The reality is that homelessness is an experience – a state, and not a trait. In our study of homeless seniors in Alameda County, we found that **44% of the seniors became homeless for the first time after the age of 50.** Most of these older adults became homeless due to changes in circumstance like an eviction, loss of job, or health crisis. When we stop imagining that the homeless crisis is due primarily to personal failings and allow ourselves to see the structural conditions that allow homelessness to happen, we can begin to see new solutions to the crisis."

— Dr. Margot Kushel,  
Professor of Medicine at the  
Zuckerberg San Francisco  
General Hospital and Trauma  
Center, and core faculty member  
in University California San  
Francisco's (UCSF) Center for  
Vulnerable Population

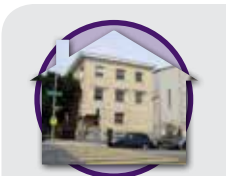
For the past 10 years Viola has lived at 345 Arguello in San Francisco—one of the public housing sites for seniors and people with disabilities. Mercy Housing recently took ownership of through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.

Viola has traveled the world

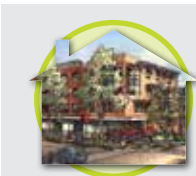
a lot ... being a black woman in the Marines and being an underwater welder and engineer. I like to help the homeless, pass out coats, help people. I've been there. I know what it's like to not have any clothes or food. But, I'm here today, and thank God that I am. I believe that's my calling.



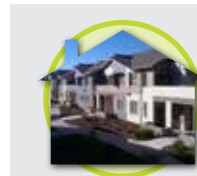
CREATING MORE HOMES



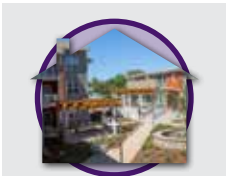
**1500 Page**  
• 17 Homes  
• 1500 Page St, San Francisco, CA  
• Special needs, Disabled, Developmentally disabled



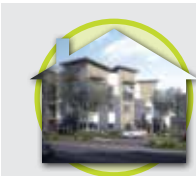
**623 Vernon**  
• 50 Homes  
• 623 Vernon St, Roseville, CA  
• Family



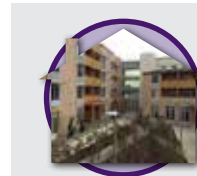
**Esperanza Crossing Phase II**  
• 40 Homes  
• 16797 Country Road 87, Esparto, CA  
• Family



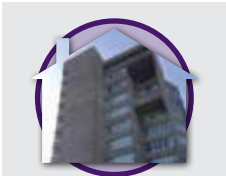
**Mather Veterans Village Phase I**  
• 50 Homes  
• 3615 Bleckley St, Sacramento, CA  
• Veterans, Special Needs, Dual Diagnosis



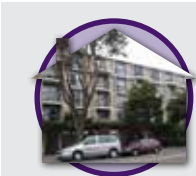
**New Dana Strand Phase IV**  
• 88 Homes  
• 410 Hawaiian Ave, Wilmington, CA  
• Family



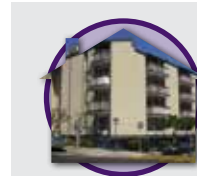
**The Arbor at Hesperian**  
• 77 Homes  
• 15888 Hesperian Blvd, San Lorenzo, CA  
• Senior



**SFHA 1880 Pine**  
• 113 Homes  
• 1880 Pine St, San Francisco, CA  
• Senior, Disabled



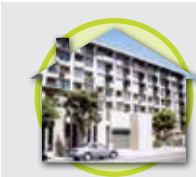
**SFHA 345 Arguello**  
• 69 Homes  
• 345 Arguello Blvd, San Francisco, CA  
• Senior, Disabled



**SFHA 491 31st Avenue**  
• In partnership with The John Stewart Company  
• 75 Homes  
• 491 31st Ave, San Francisco, CA  
• Senior, Disabled



**SFHA 2698 California**  
• 40 Homes  
• 2698 California, San Francisco, CA  
• Senior, Disabled



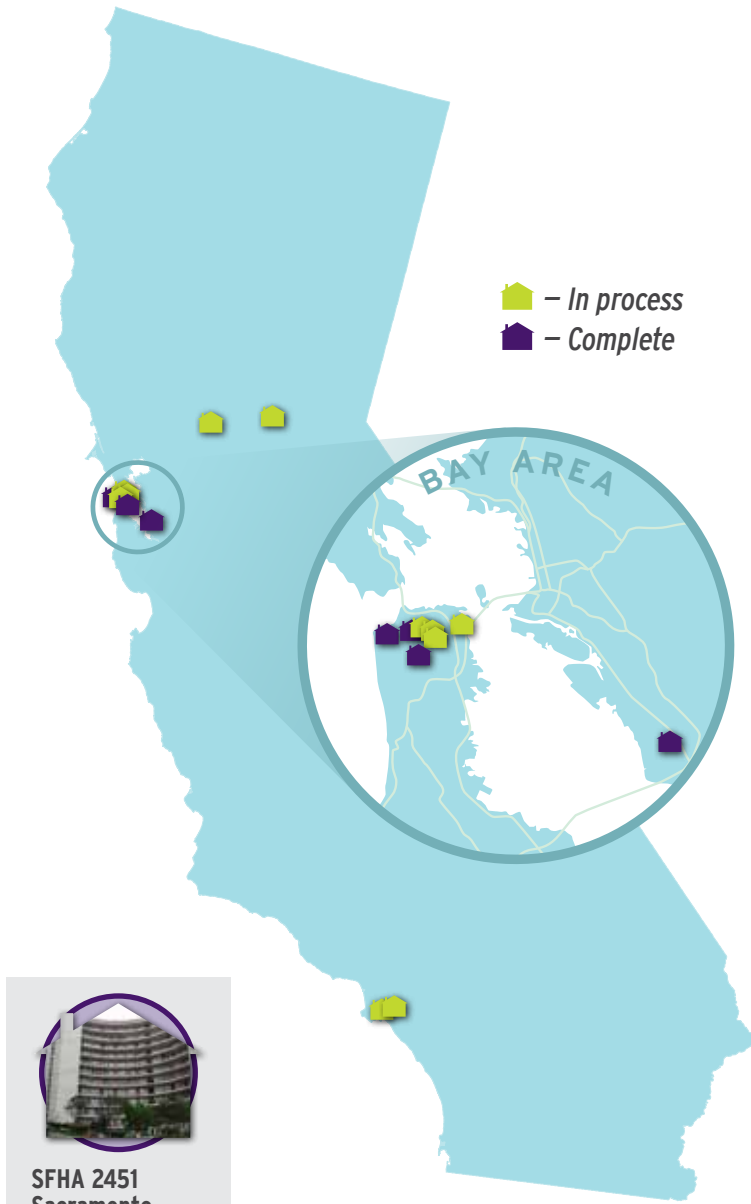
**SFHA 1760 Bush**  
• In partnership with The John Stewart Company  
• 108 Homes  
• 1760 Bush, San Francisco, CA  
• Senior, Disabled



**St. Mary's Tower**  
• 148 Homes  
• 1120 Atlantic Ave, Long Beach, CA  
• Senior



**Transbay Block 7**  
• 45 Homes  
• 200 Folsom St, San Francisco, CA  
• Senior, Disabled



**2,675 New Homes Underway Statewide**

In addition to 9,000 Mercy Housing homes already in service in California, Mercy Housing California is currently developing 2,675 new homes across the state. The homes will provide stability, dignity, and practical support for formerly homeless families, LGBTQ seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and many others in need. 💙



## New Dana Strand Phase IV

In partnership with Abode Communities and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, Mercy Housing will transform eight parcels of vacant land in the port-based neighborhood of Wilmington into an affordable community of 176 service-enriched homes and 25,000 square feet of open recreational space. The fourth and final phase will complement the residential communities and the lifelong learning center completed in previous phases – culminating a 15-year vision to redevelop the 20-acre former public housing site and a product of extensive master planning with local schools, neighborhood groups, and the police department. 💙

*Moving forward on the final phase of New Dana Strand*

ST. MARY TOWER  
**A Partner in Hope**

For over 20 years, Mercy Housing and Dignity Health have collaborated to create healthy and sustainable communities. As part of the on-going partnership and in an effort to steward the property well while preserving its affordability, St. Mary Hospital, a member of the Dignity Health system,



transferred ownership of St. Mary Tower in Long Beach to

Mercy Housing in early 2016. With rehabilitation underway, plans for the 146 homes for seniors include conversion of 16 apartments to meet ADA requirements and efficient renovations tailored to meet the individual needs of each home so that its residents can call St. Mary Tower home for years to come. 💙

Thank You!

Mercy Housing is grateful to all of our generous supporters – leaders, corporate and foundation partners, and people like you—who make it possible for us to build affordable, healthy, vibrant communities throughout California. Thank you for sharing the gift of hope!





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INSIDE:  
**Check out  
what's  
happening  
in your  
neighborhood**



# JOIN US



Mercy Housing California  
cordially invites you to



# HOME

IS JUST THE  
BEGINNING

an event to benefit the revitalization  
of the Sunnydale neighborhood in  
San Francisco's Visitacion Valley

WEDNESDAY EVENING  
**MARCH 15, 2017**

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL  
757 Market St. • San Francisco

