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Hope built for Buena Park's homeless families

Area homeless families will get assistance to finding housing.

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BUENA PARK – Organizers from the Orange County Rescue Mission are getting ready to help move in the inaugural group of tenants at the city's first transitional housing development, after years of obstacles in dealing with homeless families living in nearby motels.

Hundreds of volunteers, builders, home decorators and investors toured the two-story townhomes Tuesday, while city officials cut ribbons to the entrance of several two and three-bedroom units at the Hope Family Housing project.

Families are now filling out applications and are expected to start moving in very soon. Residents must be working, and pay monthly rent on a sliding scale, based on income. Typical rents can range from about \$450 to \$880 a month.



DINING AREA: The two-story townhomes at the Hope Family Housing project have been furnished and decorated, ready for families to move in. Pictured, the dining area of a two-bedroom unit.

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"This is going to make a lot of people happy," said Councilman Steve Berry as he inspected a two-bedroom unit that had modern red, white and black décor.

For years, the city tried to deal with the many families living in the area's motels, so when officials began talks with the Orange County Rescue Mission and HomeAid Orange County about building a new transitional-housing project on Whitaker Avenue, the idea seemed perfect.

Berry said that reaching out to the Orange County Rescue Mission would allow the city to aid underprivileged families without having to get too directly involved.

The city donated the land – a vacant lot that cost about \$800,000 – and an additional \$225,000 to help developers complete the project on time.

HomeAid worked with John Laing Homes to develop the 17 units. The two organizations worked together to secure the funding - \$5.1 million.

HomeAid works with builders, community organizations and contractors to build or renovate housing for the homeless. HomeAid has assisted in building more than 40 shelters – 767 beds – in Orange County

The rescue mission will provide continued services for families: job preparation, counseling and money management.

The transitional-housing complex is six years in the making.

Before the complex was developed, the only other shelter available was at First Southern Baptist of Buena Park, where 55 beds are available nightly in a bungalow in the parking lot.

Berry said that the housing afforded to the families moving into Hope Housing will have added touches not included in typical renters.

"I was really impressed," Berry said as he walked the upstairs of one of the units. "You can see where a lot of builders try to cut corners, but they didn't do that here."

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