

SACRAMENTO MUTUAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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Community Effort Earns Grant to Revitalize Lemon Hill Neighborhood in South Sacramento

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Sacramento—The Sacramento Mutual Housing Association was notified today that the South Sacramento neighborhood of Lemon Hill has been targeted by the S.H. Cowell Foundation to receive grant funding to support a broad neighborhood revitalization effort. “We are thrilled,” said Rachel Iskow, SMHA’s executive director. “This is very exciting news for everyone who has been working for change in this diverse, vibrant neighborhood.”

The selection of Lemon Hill comes as the result of more than two year’s work on the part of elected officials, residents and community groups. The target area also includes the smaller neighborhoods of Avondale and Glen Elder, where SMHA operates a United States Justice Department funded Weed and Seed program. The highlight of the application process was a site visit by the Cowell Foundation featuring a driving tour of Lemon Hill guided by former Assemblymember Darrell Steinberg, discussion groups led by leadership staff from Sacramento Mutual Housing Association and Area Congregations Together (ACT), and a town hall meeting chaired by Assemblymember Dave Jones. The town hall meeting, held at the new Boys and Girls Club on Lemon Hill Avenue, drew more than 75 neighborhood residents, representatives of neighborhood groups, churches, and government officials who offered testimonials and answered questions from the Cowell Foundation site visit team.

“In addition to the decision of the Foundation, the site visit was a proud moment for this entire neighborhood,” said Kevin McCarty, City Councilmember for the area. “There were five languages being spoken in the room that day but everyone was speaking out for collaborative neighborhood improvement.”

Most immediately, the news from the Cowell Foundation means funding for a community center and children’s play area at Mutual Housing at Lemon Hill, the first new multi-family affordable housing community built in the neighborhood in more than 20 years. The Foundation will also partially fund a community organizing team that will

work to develop resident leadership and accomplish a broad range of programs and neighborhood improvement initiatives.

In the longer term, the Cowell Foundation's selection of Lemon Hill opens the door to potential additional funding to improve teaching in the neighborhood's public schools, develop family resource centers that offer consolidated services, and support youth development programs. When evaluating a site for potential place-based funding, the Cowell Foundation considers factors including the existence of widespread, acute poverty, the presence of a committed core of residents devoted to improving their neighborhood, and the quality of leadership represented by community groups and elected officials.

"The board of directors of the S.H. Cowell Foundation was impressed with the way the community has come together to improve the lives of the people living in Lemon Hill," said Susan Vandiver, Vice President of Grant Programs for the S. H. Cowell Foundation. "It is a privilege to support the forces in the neighborhood that are working so well together to solve problems and create new opportunities for the people living there."

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Sacramento Mutual Housing Association

Sacramento Mutual Housing Association is a non-profit organization with a mission to develop and operate permanently affordable housing that builds strong and stable communities through resident participation and leadership development. Currently, SMHA operates nine mutual housing communities that are home to more than 2,000 Sacramentans. In June, during national NeighborWorks Week, SMHA will dedicate Mutual Housing at Lemon Hill, the first new multi-family low income housing community built in the area in more than 20 years. Featuring 74 units, a community center, computer lab and children's play area, Mutual Housing at Lemon Hill will be home to more than 400 low-income residents and the hub of a massive community revitalization effort.

Additional information about SMHA can be found at www.mutualhousing.com or by contacting Mark Fleming, Director of Resource Development at (916) 453-8400 ext. 22.

S.H. Cowell Foundation

The S.H. Cowell Foundation is a non-profit, tax exempt private foundation headquartered in San Francisco. Established in 1956 through a bequest from Samuel Henry Cowell, the Foundation has approved 3,741 grants awarding \$190,332,572 to Northern California non-profit agencies and K-12 public schools. The goal of the S.H. Cowell Foundation is to improve the quality of life children and families living in poverty in Northern California.

More information about the S.H. Cowell Foundation can be found at www.shcowell.org or by contacting Ms. Susan Vandiver, Vice President of Grant Programs at (415) 397-0285.

Lemon Hill Neighborhood

Located in south central Sacramento, Lemon Hill is one of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Sacramento County. Defined by the 95824 zip code, parts of Lemon Hill are the jurisdiction of the City of Sacramento while other parts are in the unincorporated area of Sacramento County. The neighborhood is bound by major north south cross streets of Fruitridge Avenue and 47th Avenue and the east west boundaries of Power Inn Road and Franklin Boulevard. The neighborhood includes the smaller communities of Avondale and Glen Elder.

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