

A decade in Davis: Twin Pines celebrates 10 years of neighborliness

By Angela Swift | Sunday, September, 27 2009

Twin Pines Community, a member of the Yolo Mutual Housing Association, celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. Located on the corner of F Street and Anderson Road in North Davis, Twin Pines overlooks Northstar Pond.

Twin Pines residents enjoy the opportunity to be personally involved in the running of their community – a new concept at the time the community opened in the late 1990s. Today, Davis has four mutual housing communities of diverse, affordable residences: Twin Pines, Owendale, Tremont Green and Moore Village. A fifth, New Harmony, is in development.

In addition to living near each other, mutual housing residents become a more tightly knit community by participating in regular monthly meetings, classes, pot-lucks and varying social events. Residents work on community garden projects, and have kids' movie nights, holiday dinners, fiestas and pumpkin-carving projects, among other community events.

Classes on finances, recycling, healthy eating and fitness as well as facilitation seminars that show how to successfully run meetings and other leadership skills are offered at the YMHA properties. More leadership workshops are scheduled for the fall.

Editors at the four properties oversee monthly newsletters written by residents. The publications help keep residents up to date on the current events and issues.

Each household is expected to volunteer five hours each month. The shared activities lead to a feeling of community spirit that gives residents a sense of ownership and control over their lives. This involvement has a dramatic effect on the

stability of the community and results in a virtually crime-free environment.

Twin Pines opened with 36 households of one-, two- and three-bedroom homes. Today, YMHA provides homes for 176 families with another 69 apartments planned to open in 2011.

Single- and dual-parents, retirees and young married couples make up the diverse YMHA families. Families come from as far away as the Congo and Asia. Twin Pines and Moore Village are so global, they have world maps in the community room showing where residents immigrated from.

In 1968, the mutual housing movement in Davis started with the establishment of the Twin Pines Cooperative Foundation, a nonprofit that still serves the development needs of food, housing and other cooperatives.

In 1993, two local co-op advocates had the idea of creating a local mutual housing association.

In 1995, the Davis Mutual Housing Association was born in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Rochdale Equitable Pioneer Society, considered the founders of the modern cooperative movement. Construction of Twin Pines on the Northstar Pond began soon after. The name later changed to the Yolo Mutual Housing Association to recognize the association's expansion into Yolo County.

The Yolo Mutual Housing Association formally affiliated with Sacramento Mutual Housing Association this past year. While the two organizations now operate housing for 2,600 people in Sacramento and Yolo counties, the mission remains the same – to develop safe, affordable housing



and empower residents to create their own thriving communities.

Although the residents and language have changed dramatically since 1844, little has changed in philosophy since the English Rochdale Pioneers Society said that mutual housing was 'the building of a number of houses in which those members desiring to assist each other in improving their domestic and social condition may reside.'

For more information, call (530) 574-4979.

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