

The Davis Enterprise » Special to the Enterprise January 18, 2012

Mutual Housing going for the green

With the completion of pilot programs this past month, the Sacramento/Yolo Mutual Housing Association wrapped up the first phase of its Green Leaders program in Davis.

The programs at Moore Village, Owendale, Tremont Green and Twin Pines as well as Sacramento's Foothill Plaza ran for five months.

"This program helps our residents become more aware of our green principles," said Rachel Iskow, Mutual Housing Association's executive director. "By getting more residents involved, we are able to move the greening of our housing forward in a really significant way."

During the program, resident leaders that included youth members of the community met with experts in the green industry to learn about such issues as recycling, green products, energy and water conservation. With this information, they surveyed residents on their knowledge and involvement in green issues.

Leaders distributed recycling bins to households that did not have them and conducted demonstrations of worm composting. They also provided information on local utility discounts and began collecting energy-consumption

data from residents. Weatherization work also was done at several apartments.

In addition to making connections with people in the green industry and learning technical skills in a growing field, leaders also received a small stipend.

"Deciding to become a green leader not only helped my community become more eco-friendly," said youth leader Ale Ruiz-Jiminez, a resident at Owendale Mutual Housing in South Davis, "it also taught me that no matter what your age, you can do something to help the world."

Since 2009, Mutual Housing has spent nearly \$6.6 million on green renovations to its 16 communities in Yolo and Sacramento counties. Rehabilitation projects included installing Energy Star cool roofs and solar panels as well as using recycled building siding. New, energy-efficient heating and air-conditioning units and appliances as well as bathroom exhaust fans and low-flow toilets also were installed in individual apartments.

The Green Leaders program helps maximize the financial impact of these energy-conservation measures for the nonprofit multi-family developer.

"Doing green education and improvements, such as solar installation,



makes the property run in a more sustainable manner, which not only protects the city's investment in the properties, but also aligns with the city's goals for reducing local greenhouse gas emissions," said Danielle Foster, housing and human services superintendent at the city of Davis, which provided land and financing for development of the four communities.

The second phase will begin in a few weeks. The expansion is being funded by Farmers & Merchants Bank, among others. Grants for the pilot programs were from The Home Depot Foundation and NeighborWorks America as well as a donation from the Davis Food Co-op.

Founded in 1988, Sacramento/Yolo Mutual Housing Association develops and operates rental housing for modest-income households. The communities have 2,700 residents, half of whom are children.