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Contact:
Helen Duong, (408) 795-1807
San Jose Redevelopment Agency
Helen.duong@sanjoseca.gov

Jennifer Van Every (408) 539-2133
EHC LifeBuilders
jvanevery@ehclifebuilders.org

New Youth Shelter to Provide Emergency Housing and Social Services to Homeless Teens

Ribbon Cutting event to celebrate the grand opening of facility

SAN JOSE, CALIF. – The first multi-service center combining emergency shelter and transitional housing services for youth in Santa Clara County will open its doors with a community celebration on Thursday, April 10 at 4 p.m.

EHC LifeBuilders and its partners will recognize supporters and donors at the Sobrato House Youth Center on Third and William Streets in Downtown San Jose. The ceremony will be followed by tours guided by teens and adults in the EHC LifeBuilders shelter programs.

“The need to care for homeless youth on our streets is critical,” said Jennifer Loving, EHC LifeBuilders’ interim CEO. “The Sobrato House Youth Center will not only provide shelter beds but also vital services to help these teens and young adults get their lives back on track. We are grateful beyond measure for the partners who generously donated funding for this project.”

The \$12.8 million, 15,864-square-foot facility owned and operated by EHC LifeBuilders will provide emergency housing and an array of services to 500 homeless youth, ranging from 12 to 21 years old.

The Youth Center is designed to be a part of the neighborhood, while filling a growing need to provide care for San Jose’s homeless youth who are living on the streets. Of the 20,000 people who experience homelessness annually in Santa Clara County, an estimated 25 percent are younger than 18.

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“EHC LifeBuilders Sobrato House is a haven for youth and a necessity in our downtown,” said Councilmember Sam Liccardo. “Today, we celebrate the commitment of our City, Redevelopment Agency, neighborhoods and private donors who serve our youth in need.”

Outreach workers contact about 5,000 homeless teens and young adults every year in San Jose. They report that 15 percent are from homeless families and 25 percent have been kicked out of their homes. About two-thirds say they left home because of physical or sexual abuse.

The facility provides 10 emergency shelter beds for young people ages 12 to 17, transitional housing for young adults from 18 to 21 and one apartment for a resident manager. Five additional apartments will be rented to 15 City Year volunteers. The young adults in the national City Year program dedicate a year of their lives to community service and often find it tough to find an affordable and safe place to live in Silicon Valley.

Services at the Youth Center will include counseling, life skills workshops, legal advice and help with employment, school, permanent housing, medical care and efforts to reunite families.

The facility has underground parking and offers four bathrooms with showers plus a common kitchen, dining room and laundry room.

Nearly half of the funding for the project came from the San Jose Redevelopment Agency. Also contributing to the project are the City of San José Housing Department, the County of Santa Clara, State of California, the Sobrato Foundation and dozens of other private sources and public sources.

“The Sobrato House Youth Center is a perfect example of how the Agency, City, County and a non-profit organization can work together meet an important need in the downtown community,” said Harry Mavrogenes, Executive Director, San Jose Redevelopment Agency. “The project design also allowed us to save and creatively re-use an historic building.”

The new facility, significantly larger than the former temporary shelter on North Fifth Street, highlights the re-use of an historic home. The 105-year-old Greeninger House was moved from a site near the San Jose McEnery Convention Center and incorporated into the project, an idea first proposed by community members. The renovated Prairie-style, two-story home houses offices, a counseling room and apartments.

The Center also incorporates green design elements, including the use of products that containing recycled materials, water-efficient landscaping and underground parking to reduce heat. The site is also near bus routes and light rail stops.

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In 2001, EHC LifeBuilders' youth shelter was temporarily relocated to North Fifth Street to make way for the new City Hall. In 2003, the San Jose City Council approved the site at Third and William Streets site after 19 community meetings. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on June 15, 2005.

The surrounding community was involved in the planning phase and proposed a neighborhood advisory group to address the concerns of residents and business owners. The Citizen Advisory Council is made up of business owners, neighbors, City Council representatives and police officers.

About the San Jose Redevelopment Agency

The Agency is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all who live and work in San Jose. Governed by the City Council, the Agency facilitates and oversees comprehensive programs for development to revitalize and strengthen quality of life and competitiveness for San Jose's downtown, neighborhoods and industrial areas. For more information, visit www.sjredevelopment.org

About EHC LifeBuilders

EHC LifeBuilders provides a wide variety of comprehensive solutions to help people overcome the obstacles in their lives. From shelter and long-term housing to homelessness prevention and supportive services, we match people with the right kinds of opportunities for assistance to help them succeed. For more information, visit www.ehclifebuilders.org

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SOBRATO HOUSE YOUTH CENTER

The Sobrato House Youth Center is the area's first multi-service center combining drop-in services, emergency shelter, transitional and affordable housing for over 500 youth and young adults from ages 12 to 21 annually. The \$12.8 million, 15,864 square-foot facility is owned and operated by EHC LifeBuilders and was designed to seamlessly integrate within the existing neighborhood. The center fills a growing need to provide care for homeless youth living on the street. Of the 20,000 people who experience homelessness annually in Santa Clara County, 25 percent are under age 18.

Sobrato House Youth Center Programs Drop in Center and Street Outreach

Services:

The drop-in center gives homeless, runaway and throwaway youth a safe place to come in off the streets and receive basic needs assistance like meals, showers, and phone, mail, and laundry services. The drop-in center also provides individualized case management to help youth develop a plan to stabilize their lives, housing assistance, employment assistance, educational assistance, medical care, life skills workshops, non-clinical and clinical counseling, and recreational activities. Additionally, two staff members spend 20 hours a week on the streets of Santa Clara County outreaching to homeless and runaway youth.

Hours of operation and staffing levels:

2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays and 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekends.

Three to four staff on duty, including interns from SJSU and other local colleges

Staff and management are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Ages served:

12 to 21

Length of stay:

As long as services are needed to stabilize the youth

Capacity:

Up to 45 youth per day

Emergency Shelter

Services:

The shelter provides emergency housing and services to homeless, runaway and throwaway youth 24 hours a day. In addition to the services provided through the drop-in program, the shelter strongly emphasizes intensive short-term clinical and non-clinical counseling focused on family reunification or finding another form of stable housing.

Hours of operation and staffing levels:

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

A minimum of two staff on duty during the day and one staff at night

Ages served:

12 to 17

Length of stay:

15 days

Capacity:

10 beds

Transitional Living Program

Services:

The Transitional Living Program provides transitional housing for youth and young adults and teaches them how to live independently through on-site case management and life skills instruction. Program participants must be working and/or enrolled in school and must make monthly mandatory savings payments for use upon graduation from the program. The program also provides employment assistance, career development, assistance enrolling in educational programs and maintaining grades, budgeting, service learning, counseling and recreation.

Hours of Operation and staffing levels:

8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday – Friday with a resident manager living on site

Ages served:

18 to 21

Length of stay:

18 months

Capacity:

9 beds, 3 apartments for teens, one for resident manager

City Year Apartments

Services:

Young adults in the City Year Program dedicate a year of their lives to community service and often find it difficult to find affordable housing in Silicon Valley. The five City Year apartments provide Corp members with an affordable place to live during their 10 months tenure as members.

Length of Stay:

10 months

Capacity:

All the units are 1-bedroom townhouse style with lofts.

A maximum of three members can live in each apartment.

Need for On-going Community Support

Since the Sobrato House Youth Center inception over 8 years ago, operational costs for running the program have risen. If you'd like to partner with EHC LifeBuilders' to help raise operational funds for the shelter, please contact us at: www.ehclifebuilders.org, rbramson@ehclifebuilders.org or (408) 539-2103. Thanks for your ongoing support of local youth and young adults.