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San Gabriel Valley’s First Tiny Home Village Offers Hope to the Unhoused

*Residents to move into 25 units at Esperanza Villa
in Baldwin Park over Thanksgiving week*

(Baldwin Park / November 20, 2021) – Community members and officials gathered today to laud the opening of a village of 25 tiny homes in the City of Baldwin Park as offering hope to unhoused neighbors. Esperanza (“Hope”) Villa is the first tiny home village of its kind in the San Gabriel Valley, and unhoused residents of Baldwin Park will begin moving into the units over Thanksgiving week.

“Baldwin Park is proud to spearhead this unique effort to combat homelessness in the San Gabriel Valley. Tiny homes provide the safety and privacy that is lacking in more traditional congregate shelters, while helping residents transition to permanent housing,” said Emmanuel J. Estrada, Mayor of Baldwin Park, where a recent survey counted more than 500 people experiencing homelessness. “Wrap-around resources and services, coupled with a stable and secure environment, will help restore hope to our neighbors experiencing homelessness.”

Esperanza Villa consists of 25 heated and air-conditioned tiny homes with a bed, desk, and outlet to charge devices. The 64-square-foot units are intended to provide bridge housing for about three months before residents are placed in permanent housing, allowing up to 100 people a year to be served. Volunteers of America Los Angeles will operate the site and provide on-site supportive services including case management, three daily delivered meals, secured site access and 24-hour security, and connections to health and mental health services. Additional site amenities include restrooms, laundry and shower facilities, and a dog run.

The City of Baldwin Park, the San Gabriel Valley Regional Housing Trust, and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, or SGVCOG, funded and developed the village in partnership. The City of Baldwin Park provided the site at 14173 Garvey Avenue, dedicated staff time to coordinate the project and offered in-kind labor. The Trust and SGVCOG provided technical assistance, \$500,000 in grant funding for site preparation and the acquisition of the homes and facilities, and \$800,000 for the first year of operation, with options to fund additional years of operation.

“I commend the City of Baldwin Park for its leadership and am pleased that community members are warmly welcoming their newly housed neighbors by preparing hygiene kits and through many

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other helpful volunteer activities. The tiny home concept is catching on and we look forward to opening another village soon in partnership with the City of Montebello,” said Claremont Mayor Pro Tem Jed Leano, Chairman of the Trust’s Board of Directors.

“Residents of other sites have told us how life changing it is to have a door with a lock. Providing security and stability and being connected to supportive services will be the first step toward ending homelessness for the residents of Esperanza Villa,” said Monrovia Councilmember Becky Shevlin, President of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, which sponsored state legislation authorizing the Trust.

“After securing \$25 million in state funds for San Gabriel Valley affordable housing and homelessness initiatives, I’m proud to see cities leveraging this money and launching innovative solutions,” said state Senator Susan Rubio, (D-Baldwin Park). “These are real housing units for real people in need. I am pleased to see that the Housing Trust, created by my bill, SB 751, has created meaningful partnerships in the San Gabriel Valley through the SGVCOG. We share a common focus – solving the housing and homelessness crisis in our region and building hundreds of homes for the most vulnerable in our communities.”

Local jurisdictions have proven to be active partners with Los Angeles County in finding a solution to homelessness,” shared Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis, Supervisor to the First District. “In support of their efforts, the Board passed my motion, co-authored by Supervisor Barger, to establish a new \$10 million Interim Housing Services Fund that will provide funds for the supportive services needed at interim housing sites operated by cities and councils of governments across Los Angeles County, like Esperanza Villa. I applaud the City of Baldwin Park, the San Gabriel Valley Regional Housing Trust, and the San Gabriel Valley COG on their collaboration to bring this project to fruition and look forward to working with other local partners to continue building and growing our homeless rehousing system Countywide.”

“Southern California is the epicenter of the homelessness crisis in America. We need to deploy multiple strategies, including temporary and permanent supportive housing with additional services, and advocate for funding to provide the resources needed to respond to this crisis,” said Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-Pasadena), who, in addition to supporting robust funding for federal homeless and affordable housing programs, has submitted a pending request in the House of Representatives FY2022 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill seeking \$3 million from the federal budget for the San Gabriel Valley Regional Housing Trust to expand affordable housing options throughout the San Gabriel Valley. U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla have jointly submitted a separate pending request in the United States Senate seeking \$500,000 from the federal budget for the Trust.

The event marks a milestone for bridge housing in the San Gabriel Valley, while simultaneously working to provide permanent housing solutions. The Trust has funded 71 units of affordable housing and issued letters of intent to support an additional 175 units. Twenty-one San Gabriel Valley cities joined the Trust since its establishment in 2020. The member cities have identified a pipeline of low-income housing projects and homeless shelters in need of funding and totaling more than 600 units in multiple San Gabriel Valley cities. For more information, see <https://www.sgvrht.org/>.