



For Immediate Release

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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY WOMAN REALIZES THE AMERICAN DREAM OF HOMEOWNERSHIP

Housing Authority's Family Self Sufficiency Program Opens a New Door of Opportunity

(San Bernardino, CA.) Lately any news about housing seems to be bad news, but for one San Bernardino County resident the news was just the opposite. When a homeownership opportunity came knocking on the door of Olivia Castro she answered with open arms, her "American Dream" was finally realized.

This was all made possible through the hard work of Castro and the Housing Authority's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) and Home Ownership Preparation Education (HOPE) program. The FSS program is a five year commitment that offers financial incentives through the establishment of a savings account made available to the participant upon completion of the program. Castro graduated from the program by continuing to increase her income and becoming debt free making herself eligible to purchase a home.

"This is a dream come true for me and my family," said Castro after a recent ceremony honoring her completion of the program and new homeowner status. "This has been a long road, but well worth and I am glad to see my hard work rewarded in such a way."

"Support and encouragement is so important when you're making a long-term commitment to a goal like this", said Angela Joyner Homeownership Technician at the Housing Authority. "I am glad to see Olivia experience this moment because it is a testament to what is possible."

FSS participants are required to take classes throughout the duration of the program on an average of three to four hours a week. The Housing Authority requires that all participants obtain at least their high school diploma or GED and expects them to pursue some form of post-secondary education that will help them to establish a long-term career. The program also requires that participants be employed full-time at the completion of the contract and welfare free for at least one year prior to the expiration of the contract. Completion of the FSS program allows participants to enter the HOPE program where they learn about money management, credit repair and home maintenance.

The Housing Authority currently has 185 individuals enrolled in the FSS program and has graduated 274 since the inception of the program. The 16 people who enrolled in the HOPE program last year dream of having the same opportunity that Castro currently has.

"Affordable housing, let alone purchasing a home is hard to come by in today's economy," said Executive Director Dan Nackerman. "These are the types of programs that every community needs."

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino is one of the largest public housing agencies in California, providing the critical resource of housing to a clientele of which the majority are seniors, persons with disabilities and children. From providing housing and home ownership, to job training and child care, the Housing Authority helps tens of thousands of people to elevate their lives every day.

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For more information on the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino, please visit www.hacsb.com