

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County Awarded \$150,000 Grant from Bank of America and United Way Bay Area to Accelerate House Sharing Program

Santa Clara County, CA – To help tackle costs in Silicon Valley, one of California’s most expensive rental markets, multi-service agency Catholic Charities announced today that they were awarded \$150,000 from Bank of America and United Way Bay Area to accelerate the County of Santa Clara’s Housing Sharing program, administered by Catholic Charities. The announcement was made on Friday, October 19, 2018 at the National Home Sharing Conference held in Burlingame.

The grant will provide Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County with \$150,000 over three years to help with marketing, event outreach, and background checks for the House Sharing program.

“We are excited that Bank of America and United Way Bay Area are interested in providing matching funds to help us invest in the County of Santa Clara House Sharing program,” said Gregory R. Kepferle, CEO of Charities of Santa Clara County. “It is wonderful that the private for-profit sector is stepping up to support the creative work of the public and nonprofit sectors. We believe that this will help us make even more impact on the housing crisis in Silicon Valley.”

There is a critical need for affordable housing in Santa Clara County as the median price of a single-family home in the county rose a staggering 34 percent to \$1.29 million this year over last, and the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in San Jose is fast approaching \$3,000 – the highest costs of any market in the state. The average median earnings in Silicon Valley is 46 percent higher at \$105,305 than the national average of \$72,000, creating significant obstacles for working and lower income people to afford to live in Silicon Valley.

“Creative solutions to address affordable housing are critically important for Silicon Valley where rents are among the nation’s highest and commutes grow longer and longer,” said Raquel González, Silicon Valley Market President, Bank of America. “House sharing is an encouraging approach because it uniquely expands local housing capacity without the need for new construction and gives additional options to people struggling to find an affordable place to live.”

“During our recent listening tour of the eight counties we serve, United Way Bay Area heard repeatedly that affordable housing is a growing priority,” said Anne Wilson, CEO of United Way Bay Area. “Supporting innovative solutions to our housing crisis has become a key part of our work to provide access to the basic needs of life, so we are very proud to support Catholic Charities and partner with Bank of America in nurturing the House Sharing program. It’s a great example of how we can strengthen our communities by investing in one another.”

Background

The County’s Board of Supervisors approved a contract of \$1.5 million with Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County to launch the new House Sharing Program on April 3, 2018. The pilot program has a goal to match 100 households (Renters with Providers) each year over the next two and a half years. The House Sharing program officially launched in Santa Clara County in August and is modeled similar to a program gaining traction in neighboring San Mateo County. Catholic Charities also operated a similar program in the past.

House Sharing is an arrangement by which two or more unrelated people share a home. This could be a homeowner or renter (House Provider) renting out vacant bedrooms to a person (or persons) seeking housing (Renters). It could also include two or more people renting a home together. Each resident typically has his or her own bedroom but shares the home’s common living areas. Bathrooms may be private or shared, depending on the property. No two house sharing situations are alike; each is tailored to the needs and desires of the people involved.

Priority for rooms will be given to Santa Clara County residents with incomes below the area median income. In particular, seniors and young adults may find this a helpful solution to their housing costs. Seniors who are “house rich but cash poor,” who own their own homes and have vacant rooms, may find this option not just an attractive source of revenue, but also an opportunity for creating new friendships.

House sharing programs provide various benefits for low-income populations such as seniors, people with fixed incomes, veterans, working individuals, transitional-aged youth, and students, such as additional income for house providers, more affordable housing options for seekers, shared household responsibilities, companionship, and increased security.

“House sharing provides an expansion of the housing supply without the need to spend a dollar on property acquisition or pound a single nail,” said Santa Clara County Board President Joe Simitian. “It takes advantage of excess capacity, and gets more people under the roofs we already have.”

About Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County has worked to strengthen families and build economic self-reliance for the poor and vulnerable in the county for more than 63 years.

Each year, more than 480 employees and 1,000 volunteers serve more than 40,000 individuals of all cultures and beliefs through more than 30 programs. Program areas include behavioral health, youth and family services, economic development, employment, housing, immigration legal services, older adult services, refugee resettlement, refugee foster care, emergency services, and more. Catholic Charities is working to reduce poverty with social change goals that target the alleviation, prevention, and reduction of poverty in our communities. To learn more, please visit www.catholiccharitiesscc.org.

About United Way Bay Area

United Way Bay Area (UWBA) fights for financial stability and equal opportunity for residents in eight Bay Area counties. UWBA takes an innovative, holistic approach to ending the cycle of poverty through advocacy and programs that support all ages—providing free access to family support, financial and career coaching, job opportunities and basic needs. Learn more at uwba.org.

About the County of Santa Clara's Office of Supportive Housing

The County of Santa Clara's Office of Supportive Housing's (OSH) mission is to increase the supply of housing and supportive housing that is affordable and available to extremely low income and/or special needs households served by the County. One of its primary aims is to support the County of Santa Clara's mission of promoting a healthy, safe, and prosperous community by ending and preventing homelessness. OSH's major activities include efforts to organize and operate homeless services countywide, including homelessness prevention, crisis response, and Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-Housing programs. In addition, OSH strives to increase the supply of housing by funding and spurring the development of housing for low income households, with a particular focus on extremely low incomes. OSH is the lead department within the County implementing the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond program. To learn more, please visit www.sccgov.org.

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