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SAN MARCOS: Autumn Terrace celebrates grand opening

Affordable housing development cultivates community space

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SAN MARCOS: Autumn Terrace celebrates grand opening

By DEBORAH SULLIVAN BRENNAN - dbrennan@nctimes.com North County Times - Californian |
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[Buy this photo](#) Trinity Davis, 9, jumps to give Antonio G.R. on stilts a high-five during the opening celebration and block party Tuesday at the affordable housing project Autumn Terrace in San Marcos. (Photo by John Koster - For the North Country Times)

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its developers hope will be a model of green, affordable housing.

Residents of the 103-unit affordable housing structure and other community members enjoyed popcorn, cupcakes and cotton candy, as stilt walkers and jugglers performed in the open courtyards of the complex.

Property manager Victoria Vargas, who opened her own apartment to public viewing, said she hopes to cultivate the sense of neighborhood with activities such as family movie nights, group birthday parties and child safety seminars.

"We have to have that community feel and all take care of each other," she said.

Residents, some of whom said they had left cramped flats to move into the new apartments, said they were happy with their new homes.

"My family is better off," said Fabiola Ochoa, 34, who moved into a three-bedroom apartment with her three children and grandson. "They're very pretty."

Ochoa's daughter, Velini Avendano, 17, said the family, who moved into the complex from a one-bedroom apartment, is benefitting from the extra space.

"It's very comfortable," she said, waiting in line for cotton candy with her 1-year-old son Adrian. "He has his own space too."

Autumn Terrace architect Mike Burnett, of FoundationForForm Architecture and Development, said the complex is designed to create a sense of community space amid a dense development. Open courtyards and wide sidewalks promote public safety by leaving public areas easily visible, he said. And design details like recessed windows and varied facade colors help break the large buildings into a more accessible size.

"It's more pedestrian friendly, more liveable, more walkable," said San Marcos Councilwoman Rebecca Jones.

The city required the development to meet environmental criteria established by the international LEED program for sustainable green building and development, demanding that the project meet the program's LEED Silver standards.

Developer Ginger Hitzke said, however, that the complex, which includes environmentally friendly features such as low-energy street lights and pollution-filtering landscaping, may qualify for LEED Platinum status, a more stringent level of sustainability.

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