

Moro Cojo housing site gets blessing

Moving day months away

By Glenn Cravens
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Owning your own home is one of the American dreams. On Tuesday evening, that dream came true with the dedication and blessing of the Rancho Moro Cojo housing development in Castroville. Ultimately the development will have 175 single-family homes and 90 multifamily units. None of them are finished yet, and the first residents won't move in for a few months, but Tuesday was still a day to celebrate. "It's the people's wish to have a home and because of Moro Cojo, it's coming true," said Monterey County Supervisor Lou Calcagno. Supervisor Edith Johnsen agreed: "It is the answer to the community's prayers."

Zenaida Acosta, a Castroville resident, will soon be a Moro Cojo resident. "Everyone was so happy. We are in an apartment and we needed room for the kids to play," Acosta said. The development is being built by the Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association. While children ran through the streets, about 100 new homeowners listening with happy faces as they looked at their dream turned to reality-they unfinished houses which have sprung up in Moro Cojo. The speakers reassured the families of their bright futures once their homes are completed. After a blessing by Sylvester Ryan, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Monterey County, the supervisors and Ryan raised the walls of a home.

Most of the families in attendance come to watch the wall raising, symbolizing the realization of their dreams. "We need to come together," said Ryan. "They've worked hard for it." Working hard is something Acosta can relate to. She and her family are helping to build their new home. "We'll have a place for our kids with privacy," Acosta said. "It's been a long way and we're almost done. It's been a long way and we're almost done. It's the best thing that has happened to us. It's for the kid's future." Where Lisandro Lopez lives now, it's so cramped the Castroville resident who currently attends California State University, Monterey Bay, has trouble studying for finals. He and his family spend 11 to 20 hours a week helping to build their new home. To them, it's not work, it's a realization. "I want to take my time and do it as best I can," he said. "They've worked so hard to get it, they don't want it to be run down," And he takes note of those who work extra hours on top of their primary jobs. "They're pulling 40 hours a week and doing 16 here," he said. "They're well rounded."

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