



The HEART of San Mateo County

Opening Doors in Our Community

The Housing Endowment and Regional Trust



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HEART downpayment assistance loans: home for the holidays

Julie Stock has taught drawing and art at San Mateo High School for the past twelve years, and has rented a home with her daughter in the Sharp Park area of Pacifica for the past four-and-a-half years. Now, thanks to HEART's downpayment assistance program, a mortgage from Meriwest Credit Union, and the help of Realtor Suzan Getchell-Wallace of Coldwell Banker-Fahey Properties, they got the keys to their new home in Pacifica in December.

Julie is one of the most recent homebuyers to benefit from HEART's "Opening Doors" program which pairs a mortgage from Meriwest Credit Union with a second loan from HEART for up to \$75,000. It is similar to an FHA loan, but with fewer restrictions. Julie had been looking for several months, and had made several offers, none of which were accepted. Suzan heard about the HEART program through the San Mateo County Association of Realtors (SAMCAR) and suggested that Julie see if she could qualify.

"The HEART loan absolutely made this home affordable for Julie," said Suzan, "and we closed in 25 days. Julie saved thousands of dollars, both because the closing costs were lower, and she did not have to buy private mortgage insurance. This enabled Julie to afford a small home, instead of a townhouse."

San Mateo High School teacher Julie Stock (right) received the keys to her new home in December with HEART's help.

Congratulations and happy holidays to Julie from HEART, the County, all 20 cities who are members of HEART, and the community leaders who are working to help more of our families buy homes where they work.



The goal of the program is simple: To help qualified, middle-income borrowers buy a home with only a 5% downpayment.

How can you qualify?

- Household income up to \$150,000
- Live or work in San Mateo County
- First-time or move-closer buyer
- Maximum purchase price of \$521,250
- Minimum downpayment of 5%, competitive with FHA loans
- FICO score of 680

Apply online at www.heartofsmc.org/open or call Meriwest Mortgage at 408-363-3451 for more information

"I am thrilled to be in a single-family home. HEART made it easy to start by applying through the website. The email connection with Meriwest went smoothly. I never thought that this would happen for me; it is still hard to believe. I am very happy."

– Julie Stock, new home owner

New Homebuyer Loans for San Mateo County

"Opening Doors in Our Community"
helps qualified, moderate-income families buy a home.

HEART OF SAN MATEO COUNTY
The Housing Endowment and Regional Trust

MERIWEST CREDIT UNION

For more details: www.heartofsmc.org/open to see if you qualify. Or call a Meriwest loan consultant at 1-408-363-3451.

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Mary Rose H. and Sawsan M.

Who lives in affordable housing? Meet your neighbors at the Village at the Crossing in San Bruno.



Paula P. and Martha G.

To remain self sufficient

"I love living here," says **Mary Rose H.** (left) a resident of The Village at the Crossing, a HEART-funded development for seniors in San Bruno. If anyone needs help, she is there to pitch in. She participates in activities that not only improve her own living situation, but help her neighbors too.

Mary Rose runs the bingo games, organizes rummage sales and boutiques, and helps organize trips. A deeply religious woman, she encourages other residents to be less reclusive, to get drivers' licenses to remain self-sufficient, and to socialize. "I don't know how long I'll be driving, but we do have the Village van," she says, noting that having her church and stores nearby helps tremendously with her independence.

Sawsan M. (right) was born in Cairo, Egypt but spent 21 years working with the Millbrae school district, and 20 years working part-time for the Green Hills Retirement Center.

She has always been fiercely independent in spite of being visually handicapped. She enjoys the social gatherings and getting to know the younger residents. "I also use the exercise room twice a day; my doctor says it's helping me to stay healthy. My main goal in life is to manage to walk independently and to see 'okay'," she adds, noting that the accessibility features at the Village such as the grab bars and ramps help her succeed.

The sense of community

If you ask **Paula P.** (left) how she feels about living at the Village, she answers instantly, "the wealth of experiences, stories, diverse cultures and sense of community." Living with a disability and unable to work full time, she has struggled to find adequate housing. "After renting or sharing rooms with perfect strangers, living with an Alzheimer's patient, and spending a year in a basement with rats, ants, and spiders, I feel like I've found Nirvana," she jokes. "I only want to leave feet-first."

To her, the sense of community is most important. "I had to suddenly go to the hospital without telling anyone," she says, as an example. "Within a few days I was missed. People started calling and contacted the office. Having such care and concern is a totally new experience."

Martha G. (right), returned to San Bruno to live near her family, and helps out wherever there is a need, including potlucks, parties, kitchen help and, most important, brewing coffee for the residents in the community room.

Martha's biggest concern for the future is her rent. Although on a fixed income, she doesn't qualify for the least expensive apartments. "Sometimes I only have \$300 left over for the month. This means I can't eat the way I'd like to," she says. "I know this is a huge problem for many seniors all over the County; I feel badly for people who haven't found a place like this."

Opening Doors in Our Community

The HEART Campaign to Raise \$3 Million in Three Years to Create 600 New Homes

Vision: A County where housing is attainable to all.

Mission: Raise funds from public and private sources to meet critical housing needs in San Mateo County.

Who: Support from our community businesses and residents.

How: Invest in rental and ownership homes. Leverage funds 10:1. Create \$30M total in new housing.

Give to HEART. Invest in affordable housing for our community - San Mateo County

HEART Member Cities

- Town of Atherton
- City of Belmont
- City of Brisbane
- City of Burlingame
- Town of Colma
- City of Daly City
- City of East Palo Alto
- City of Foster City
- City of Half Moon Bay
- Town of Hillsborough
- City of Menlo Park
- City of Millbrae
- City of Pacifica
- Town of Portola Valley
- City of Redwood City
- City of San Bruno
- City of San Carlos
- City of San Mateo
- City of South San Francisco
- Town of Woodside
- County of San Mateo

Affordable Housing 101: why is there still a crisis?

The housing market in San Mateo County is still broken.

Most of what has been built is still too expensive, leaving far too many families without options for an affordable place to live. So, even though we hear about lower home prices and foreclosures, we still have a housing crisis.

- Renting:** People who are key contributors to the local economy cannot even afford to rent a home. To afford an average two-bedroom apartment, a household needs an income of \$66,320 – significantly more than elementary school teachers, receptionists, and emergency medical technicians earn.
- Homeownership** is even further out of reach. In October 2009, median sales prices were still extremely high in communities like Redwood City (\$653,000), Millbrae (\$948,750), and Burlingame (\$1.2 million).

So, despite some home prices dropping in parts of the county, a first-time buyer must earn more than \$69,000 to afford a median-priced home in San Bruno (\$367,000) or more than \$113,000 in Daly City (\$472,000) - and that assumes excellent credit, a 20% downpayment, and a willing lender.

This gap between housing costs and wages highlights the need to create more balance in the housing market. We need great housing variety and supply so people who work and grow up in San Mateo County can find a place they can afford here.

WHAT does it mean for housing to be “affordable”?

By federal government standards, housing is considered “affordable” if households pay no more than 30% of their gross income for rent and utilities.

WHO lives in affordable housing?

People who earn less than their region’s median income, which in San Mateo County is \$98,600 for a family of four, may apply depending on the funding source. Affordable housing developers must certify specific income limits for their prospective residents as a condition of funding. Housing for “very-low income” households for example, is only available to households earning less than 50% of the area’s median income.

WHO builds affordable housing?

It is built by private developers, mostly non-profits, many of which are local, community or faith-based organizations. The buildings are funded through a combination of rental income, private funding, and government subsidies.

HOW does HEART help?

HEART raises funds from city, county, state and private donors and lenders to make long- or short-term loans to developers for a variety of hard-to-fund needs: pre-development costs, “bridge” loans until final funding is secured, and loans to increase the affordability of some of the apartments. HEART also makes downpayment assistance loans to well-qualified, middle-income families to help them obtain mortgages.

Some of the San Mateo County residents who would benefit include:

Low-income earners

Coaches	\$ 55,830
Executive Secretaries	\$ 55,017
Paralegals	\$ 63,357
Carpenters	\$ 62,495
Elementary School Teachers	\$ 61,577
Paramedics and EMT	\$ 54,654

** below 80% of median income

Very-low-income earners

Dental Assistants	\$ 42,061
Medical Assistants	\$ 39,235
Preschool Teachers	\$ 36,741
Receptionists	\$ 33,298
Janitors	\$ 28,355
Cashiers	\$ 25,324

* below 50% of median income

In the past five years HEART has invested over \$7.49 million to create or refurbish 667 affordable homes.

HEART Board of Directors

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City Council
City of Daly City



Opening Doors in Our Community:

Christopher Mohr, Executive Director

Editor: Paula Stinson

Thank you to Paula Petropoulos for interviewing the residents at The Village.

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HEART wins Sustainable San Mateo County Award in 2010

HEART is honored to receive one of five **Sustainability Awards** given to organizations and leaders that represent the forefront of those who are making positive contributions to San Mateo County's economy, environment, and social equity.

Lack of affordable housing is one of the primary concerns in San Mateo County and a threat to the County's long-term vitality. Most housing funded by HEART is high-density and close to public transit – two of the primary tenets of sustainable development.

Congratulations to all the winners:

- Goodwill Industries of San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin counties
- The La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District's Meal Program
- San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Shared Vision Process
- Jason Bade, Environmental Impact Committee, Aragon High

All will be honored at an awards event held on March 11, 2010. Contact Kari Binley at 650-638-2323, or www.sustainableanmateo.org for more information.



Thank you to HEART volunteer Audrey Cantley for offering her time and talents to help keep the office running while administrative assistant Sherri Stevenson is on medical leave for three months. We couldn't do it without you!



The Housing Endowment and Regional Trust of San Mateo County

139 Mitchell Avenue, Suite 108

South San Francisco, CA 94080

Phone: 650-872-4444

Fax: 650-872-4411

E-mail: info@heartofsmc.org

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New public sector board members elected

HEART welcomes **Elizabeth Lewis**, Councilmember, Town of Atherton and **John Seybert**, Councilmember, City of Redwood City to the board of directors. We also welcome back

Larry Franzella of Prudential CA Real

Estate in San Bruno, who has rejoined the board after serving five years as a public official. We also thank **Diane Howard**, former Vice Mayor of the City of Redwood City, for her five years of service to the board.



HEART is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), one of the few public-private housing trust funds in the country. The board is made up of eleven elected officials, including two supervisors, and ten representatives from the private and nonprofit sector. We thank them all for their commitment of volunteer time and service.

Thank you to JPMorgan Chase Foundation

JPMorgan Chase Foundation has made a generous gift of \$10,000 to underwrite HEART's communications programs in 2010. Community education and dialogue is a vital part of getting more affordable homes funded, approved, and built.

Thank you!

