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Richmond Menker Apartments Re-Invigorated *Neighborhood celebrates renewal*

San José --- Tenants, property owners, and the Burbank/Del Monte community will join District 6 Councilmember Ken Yeager and the San Jose Redevelopment Agency to celebrate the completion of the Richmond Menker Apartments renovation on **Saturday, April 30 at 11:00 a.m.**

The Richmond Menker Apartments rehabilitation project, located in the Burbank/Del Monte Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) area, is a top ten priority in the neighborhood's revitalization plan.

Located in a gang abatement area on Richmond and Menker Avenues between Interstate 280 and Kingman Avenue, the Richmond Menker Apartments and its surrounding neighborhood suffered from a wide variety of issues associated with street crime and violence. Since 2001, Richmond Menker property owners collaborated with community members and City of San José staff to revitalize the apartments with street, landscape, and building improvements as part of the Strong Neighborhoods effort to clean up the neighborhood.

"I hope that the Richmond Menker Housing Improvement Plan will serve as a model for other large, blighted apartment complexes in the City," said Councilmember Ken Yeager. We need to focus on permanent solutions, rather than sending police and code enforcement officers out on a regular basis, which is costly and often ineffective."

The housing complex was originally developed in the 1960's under a single property owner. The land on which the apartment buildings sit was subsequently subdivided in the 1970's, resulting in 11 different owners. This divided ownership contributed to the poor condition of the complex. Approximately 600 people live in the 31 buildings making up the Richmond Menker Apartments.

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“So many people, tenants, landlords, neighbors, the City of San José and related organizations have come together to accomplish something really good. It’s really great to see the improvement in the quality of life, crime has dropped, there is less graffiti, and the overall area is a more pleasant place to live,” said Richmond Menker property owner David George.

The Neighborhood Advisory Committee for the Burbank/Del Monte SNI area decided to allocate SNI reserve monies, granted by the San Jose Redevelopment Agency, to improving the Richmond Menker Apartments. In conjunction with the neighborhood association, Menker Inquilinos Richmond Asociación (MIRA), consultants, and property owners a plan to redesign the common areas was devised. Previously a collection of small yards, the apartments now boast playing fields, a barbeque area, and community gardens. There are plans to include a tot lot in the future.

“While we can already point to a decrease in crime and an increase in curb appeal, the true success of this project is the relationship between staff, tenants, landlords and neighbors,” said Randi Kinman, President, Burbank/Del Monte Neighborhood Advisory Committee. “This project is a great example of how the city can help develop relationships that will ensure long term positive impacts on neighborhoods.”

The \$636,000 project consisted of \$385,000 in funding from San Jose Redevelopment Agency and City of San José, plus \$225,000 from the Richmond Menker Property Owners, including a \$93,000 rehabilitation loan from the City Housing Department. Additional sources of funding included \$23,000 from MIRA CAP grant, \$2000 from MIRA San Jose Beautiful grant, and \$1,000 from Richmond Menker Community Cargen Fiskars, Inc.

“We are committed to funding projects that strengthen our neighborhoods and create a safe environment for our children,” said Harry Mavrogenes, Executive Director for the San Jose Redevelopment Agency. “In all of our projects, our Agency collaborates with many of our partners to improve the quality of life for the San José community.”

The San Jose Redevelopment Agency is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all who live and work in San José. Together the City and the Redevelopment Agency facilitate and oversee comprehensive programs for development to revitalize the City’s Downtown, neighborhoods, and industrial areas.

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