

Thompson | Dorfman Partners Celebrates Opening of KTGy-Designed Teacher Housing on College Campus

Built on the site of a former surplus parking lot, a new housing development for professors and staff of the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) is celebrating its grand opening. Designed by KTGy and developed by an affiliate of Thompson | Dorfman Partners, Cañada Vista will provide 60 high quality, affordable apartment homes for faculty and staff at below market rates, and will serve as an effective recruiting and retention tool for the SMCCCD.

August 13, 2010 (FPRC) -- OAKLAND, CALIF. – KTGy Group, Inc., Architectural and Planning, is pleased to announce today that a much anticipated housing development for professors and staff of the San Mateo County Community College District (Cañada College, College of San Mateo and Skyline College) is celebrating its grand opening. Developed by Mill Valley, Calif.-based Education Housing Partners, a non-profit affiliate of Thompson | Dorfman Partners, LLC, and designed by KTGy, Cañada Vista in Redwood City will provide 60 high quality, affordable apartment homes for faculty and staff at below market rates, and will serve as an effective recruiting and retention tool for the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD).

In an area dominated by prohibitively high housing costs, this is SMCCCD's second faculty and staff housing development; the first was College Vista built on the College of San Mateo campus in the City of San Mateo. College Vista was also California's first workforce housing project undertaken by a community college district and was so successful that the SMCCCD built Cañada Vista.

Located midway between San Francisco and San Jose, Cañada Vista offers one, two and three bedroom apartments with rents ranging from \$975 to \$1,600 a month, approximately 50 percent of the current market rate for similar quality apartments in the area. The apartment homes feature spacious deluxe kitchens with gas stoves and Energy Star appliances including refrigerators and upgraded cabinetry, nine-foot ceilings, large picture windows, a walk-in closet in the master bedroom, and all window coverings. Each residence also has hardwood flooring in the entryway, central air conditioning, individual washers/dryers, a linen closet, sliding glass doors, and a large, private patio or deck. Many units have a private attached garage. In addition, the units are wired for computer and internet access and have individual utility meters to encourage conservation.

“Despite the low rental rates for Cañada Vista residents, Cañada Vista offers many of the same well-appointed amenities and features of an upscale, market-rate apartment community,” said KTGy Group’s Principal Stan Braden, AIA, based in Irvine, Calif. “The 60-unit development offers spacious layouts of up to three bedrooms in two and three-story Craftsman-inspired buildings with panoramic views of coastal hills, Silicon Valley, and the San Francisco Bay.”

There is also a Clubhouse situated between Cañada Vista’s two buildings. “The Clubhouse is a ‘great room’ complete with a fireplace and is flanked by a kitchen on one side and a game room with a large-screen television on the other. A large covered deck provides a panoramic view of the San Francisco Bay to the east,” Braden noted. Residents can use the Clubhouse facility for parties or dinners, and it can be used for district and faculty meetings.

“The goal with Cañada Vista and College Vista was to create quality, affordable rental housing for San Mateo County's community college faculty and staff in one of the most expensive residential markets in the state,” said Bruce Dorfman, a principal at Thompson | Dorfman of Mill Valley, Calif. “By offering attractive workforce housing at affordable rents, SMCCCD is able to recruit and retain valuable college staff and faculty. Cañada Vista is also conveniently located within walking distance to campus classrooms and facilities, providing additional cost and time savings for the residents.”

“By providing housing for our employees, we have a competitive advantage over other colleges in the area who are competing with us to hire talented faculty and staff,” said Barbara Christensen, director of community and government relations for the SMCCCD. “We can offer recruited employees first class housing at a bargain price plus a college teaching or support job. Several recruited faculty members who had multiple offers of employment choose to work for us because we offered a terrific housing option. We are just thrilled with the success of both developments and what it means to the district and the quality of education that we can offer our community.”

Even before College Vista opened in December 2005, there was a long waiting list of employees who wanted to live there, reports Christensen. Priority for prospective Cañada Vista renters is given to full-time faculty and staff who have never owned a home. “Preference is given to those employees who earn 120 percent of the median income for the area or less,” said Christensen. “Qualified employees can rent for up to five years at Cañada Vista; the idea being that they can set aside money during this time to purchase a home.” The District also has a mortgage-assistance program offering low-cost second mortgages of up to \$75,000 to help faculty and staff buy a home.

Dorfman added that despite budget constraints, he believes many school districts around the state and the country still have the capacity to follow SMCCCD's lead. “Cañada Vista is a prime example of a self-sustaining community -- environmentally, socially and also economically. Because of the financing structure and the fact that SMCCCD already owned the land, no district general funds were used for the improvements or operations, as the rents cover operating costs, reserves and debt service. Even with a softening residential market, home prices and rental rates are still well beyond what most starting teachers can afford in metropolitan areas in California, so this type of workforce housing is as vital as ever,” said Dorfman.

“Long term, this type of housing supports education and the community, and validates the concept of quality infill development,” stated Dorfman. “Cañada Vista is a model for both successful public-private partnership and workforce housing that can easily be replicated by other school districts and public agencies in areas nationwide with a high cost of living. It also demonstrates how school districts, public agencies and private companies can use underutilized parking lots for housing and protect their open space.” Cañada Vista was built on the site of a former 2.75-acre parking lot.

Thompson | Dorfman, in conjunction with KTGy, developed a similar workforce housing development for the Santa Clara Unified School District (SCUSD), Casa del Maestro, at a former middle school site in April 2002. Due to overwhelming demand from its faculty and staff, SCUSD built a second phase to nearly double the number of units available.

Thompson | Dorfman Partners is an award-winning developer best known for its luxury residential developments. The 10-year-old firm has developed more than \$1.7 billion in projects throughout California. Last year, Thompson | Dorfman completed 555 YVR, Downtown Walnut Creek's first transit-oriented luxury residential community, developed with the young professionals in mind. 555

YVR is a stylish, amenity-rich, green development located within walking distance to BART and Downtown's shopping and entertainment district. KTGy served as the project architect for 555 YVR.

About Thompson | Dorfman Partners, LLC

Thompson | Dorfman Partners, LLC is a real estate development and investment company. Formed in 1999 by Will Thompson and Bruce Dorfman, Thompson | Dorfman focuses on multi-family residential development, with particular emphasis on well-sited, urban infill and mixed-use properties located in high growth, technology-driven markets in California. The principals of Thompson | Dorfman have more than 25 years experience in the industry and Thompson | Dorfman have collectively developed 10,000 multifamily homes in 40 California apartment and condominium communities. In 2004 they formed Education Housing Partners, a California non-profit public benefit corporation, in order to facilitate development of workforce housing for employees of school districts and public agencies. For more information, please visit www.thompsondorfman.com.

About San Mateo County Community College District

San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) is a three college District located between San Francisco and the Silicon Valley. The colleges serve more than 42,000 students each year and offer the first two years of instruction in a wide variety of transfer programs as well as more than 90 vocational-technical programs. Students can earn either Associate in Arts or Science degrees or receive Certificates of Proficiency in their chosen fields. The community colleges are College of San Mateo in San Mateo, Skyline College in San Bruno and Cañada College in Redwood City. For more information about SMCCCD, visit www.smccd.edu.

About KTGy Group, Inc.

Established in 1991, KTGy Group, Inc., Architecture and Planning, provides comprehensive planning and award-winning architectural design services for residential communities, retail, hospitality, mixed-use and related specialty developments. KTGy delivers innovative solutions that reflect clear understanding of development, marketing and financial performance and takes particular pride in its highly motivated and principal led studios. Serving clients worldwide, KTGy maintains offices in Irvine, Oakland and Santa Monica, and in Denver. See www.ktgy.com.

Contact Information

For more information contact Anne Monaghan of Monaghan Communications
(<http://www.KTGY.com>)
888-456-KTGY

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