

The Barrio's affordable housing is a 'place to call home'

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^[1]From right, Miguel and Luz Sotelo, with their four sons, Miguel Jr., Abraham, Aziel and Joab, thank architects, elected officials, developers and community activists for working to open La Entrada, an 85-unit affordable housing complex in Barrio Logan. The Sotelo family moved in to a four-bedroom apartment in La Entrada in May.

The Sotelo boys make mom and dad proud; the kids - Miguel Jr., 12, Abraham, 9, Aziel, 7, and Joab, 6, - have a good-sized stack of awards and trophies and recognitions they show off. There are math and English awards, perfect attendance trophies, leadership certificates - even a special recognition awarded by City Council President Ben Hueso.

Thursday, the boys' parents, Miguel and Luz Sotelo, smiled as their energetic younger sons bounced around them on the rooftop balcony of the family's new apartment complex, La Entrada Family Apartments, an 85-unit affordable housing structure on Logan Avenue in Barrio Logan.

"We're able to give them a place to call home," Miguel Sr. said. "It's clean and it's safe and it's new. It's a good start. It's a blessing from God."

The Sotelo family, community activists, local elected officials and members of the City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency joined developers, **Las Palmas Foundation** and Global Premier Development, architects and affordable housing proponents to celebrate the grand opening ceremonies of the building Thursday.

The elder Sotelos say the secure, affordable new home is one block from the boys' school and one block from the boys' church. They sleep a little better each night, knowing they have shelter and a suitable place to raise the family.

"We don't ask the Lord to give us a lot; we just ask Him to help give us what we need to provide for our kids," Miguel Sr. said.

The Sotelo family - one of more than 1,000 families to apply to live in La Entrada's two-, three- and four-bedroom units - moved into a four-bedroom condo in the new development in May. Every unit is occupied and about 500 families are on a waiting list, said Rocio Galvez, the area manager for Buckingham Property Management, the firm working with La Entrada.

The \$37.9 million, 178,898-square-foot project was completed in April, using \$13.1 million from the Centre City Development Corporation and the city's Redevelopment Agency, and funds from the City of San Diego and Sun America Affordable Housing Partners.

Rent ranges from \$530 to \$1,087 for the two-bedroom units; \$611 to \$1,255 for the three-bedroom units; and \$677 to \$1,396 for the four-bedroom units.

La Entrada is one of three affordable housing complexes in the Barrio.

The Gateway Family Apartments, a 42-unit structure on Logan Avenue, opened last year; Los Vientos Family Apartments, an 89-unit project on National Avenue, is expected to be complete in August.



La Entrada, an 85-unit affordable housing complex in Barrio Logan, features murals painted by neighborhood artists.

According to the Redevelopment Agency's 2008 demographics, 4,045 people live in the Barrio, and there are 1,013 housing units. The median household income in the Barrio is \$26,705.

Community activists and the city's Redevelopment Agency have fought to eliminate blight in the Barrio, and revitalize it for families.

"Blight breeds violence; we've been fighting for families' quality of life for years," said Rachael Ortiz, executive director of Barrio Station, a nonprofit organization that targets high-risk, disadvantaged youth in the Barrio, and attempts to engage them in the community.

Ortiz was critical in facilitating partnerships to get La Entrada built, said Hueso, and Mayor Jerry Sanders, who were on hand Thursday for the grand opening. Ortiz - who fondly remembered Hueso's father, a popular businessman in the Barrio, and who has known Hueso since he was a child - thanked the elected officials for their compassion, and their commitment to building affordable housing in the neighborhood, and preserving the its character.

The Sotelo family is happy to be settled in the Barrio, in a roomy home. Miguel Sr. - a self-employed upholsterer - and his wife say the kids are happy, and they have met many of their new neighbors.

"There are real families living here, just hoping to have a better life," Miguel Sr. said.
