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For immediate release

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**801 Alma Family Housing Wins Design Award**

**PALO ALTO, CA — November 17, 2014 —** Community Working Group (CWG), a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to providing affordable homes and supportive services for extremely low-income and homeless individuals and families, announced today that its newest home community, 801 Alma Family Housing, won an Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Santa Clara Valley.

AIA Santa Clara Valley presented 801 Alma Family Housing with the award, AIA's highest tribute, at its biennial Design Awards event in October.

"We are so honored by this recognition," said John Barton, president of the CWG board of directors. "The AIA jury is in a position to really understand the design challenges presented by a project like 801 Alma. This award means a lot to those of us who worked to make the building as attractive and functional as possible."

A jury of five AIA members from out of the area selected the award winners based on design, originality, extended use attributes, sustainability, budget, and use of environmental surroundings. Among the jury's favorite features about 801 Alma Family Housing were its use of natural lighting, "excellent" noise mitigation, garden spaces, nice use of color and defensible space, and "brilliant" floor plan. Jurors commented that the building "raises the bar on housing."

(more)

CWG partnered with Eden Housing to develop 801 Alma Family Housing, which provides 50 much-needed affordable homes and a range of services for low-income working Midpeninsula families. 801 Alma Family Housing opened in February 2014 and is home to approximately 150 residents, including more than 50 children. Five hundred families are on the waiting list for homes at 801 Alma Family Housing.

“We are so proud of 801 Alma — not only because it is home for dozens of low-income families in our community, but also because of the kind of home it is,” said Barton. “801 Alma was thoughtfully designed to create beautiful, livable homes for families while reflecting environmental, functional and social factors.”

The environmental study required that designers mitigate the noise from both the nearby railroad tracks and the busy four-lane street that runs the length of the building. CWG directors also wanted all the homes to have access to natural light and fresh air, so architect Rob Quigley put in a sound wall facing the street and carved small courtyards into the facade so that each apartment has windows that open onto a garden.

“The garden courts are planted with bamboo,” said Barton, “so when the plants grow in, each family will enjoy the warmth of soft filtered sunlight, the beauty of lush greenery, and the comfort of increased privacy.”

Barton, who directs the Stanford Architectural Design Program, also noted that 801 Alma Family Housing incorporates many sustainable design features, including a “living roof” composed of seasonal, drought-tolerant plants that helps to insulate the building and reduce utility costs; a roof-top solar hot water heater; high-efficiency light fixtures and appliances; water-conserving plumbing fixtures; and use of renewable materials and paints that are low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

“These features may not be obvious to the average passer-by, but they contribute to the building’s livability and sustainability as affordable homes for years and years to come,” said Barton.

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*Community Working Group is a Palo Alto-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency that brings people together to respond with compassion and common sense to homelessness and poverty in the Mid-Peninsula. For more information visit [www.communityworkinggroup.org](http://www.communityworkinggroup.org).*