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Press Release

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City of Modesto Receives a National Honor with the Audrey Nelson Community Development Award

Modesto, CA, January 28, 2026 – On February 6, 2026, the City of Modesto will be one of seven recipients of the National Community Development Association (NCDA) Audrey Nelson Community Development Award. Modesto is being recognized for Jenny's Place, a permanent supportive housing project that provides support for individuals and youth experiencing homelessness.

The recognition highlights the City's ability to align community collaboration with federal funding to address the needs of residents rebuilding their lives out of homelessness.

"By maximizing our resources and leveraging strong partnerships in our community, Modesto has been able to turn a once underutilized motel, into 54 housing units providing individuals with opportunities to build a sustainable and meaningful future," says Jessica Hill, Director of Community and Economic Development for the City of Modesto.

In partnership with Upholdings, Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, and Center for Human Services, and with capital funding from the City of Modesto, Health Plan of San Joaquin, State of California HomeKey Program, and Stanislaus County Community System of Care, the motel conversion began in early 2024 and opened its doors to hope in May of 2025.

Jenny's Place has a dedicated focus on youth experiencing homelessness; along with housing, they provide coordinated case management services including peer support activities, mental health care, and healthy community connections building on an existing continuum of care for youth experiencing homelessness in partnership with Center for Human Services.

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"Jenny's Place is for young people in our community who need support when they are at risk and face barriers to survival," says City of Modesto Mayor, Sue Zwahlen. "Since opening, Jenny's Place has served 42 youth, offering a safe environment, where they can work on their independence while knowing help is available if they need it."

The NCDA is a non-partisan national non-profit association comprised of more than 500 local governments across the country that administer federally supported community development, affordable housing, and economic development programs through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The NCDA established the Audrey Nelson Community Development Award in 1987 to recognize and honor communities which exemplify outstanding achievement in service to residents, families, and neighborhoods through innovative and impactful uses of Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds that address the needs of families, homes, and neighborhoods.

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