El Paseo
Oxnard, California (Platinum Award)

Median Home Price in MSA: $236,000
Home Price: $89,950 - $149,950

El Paseo is a community of 190 two, three and four bedroom, two story, single family detached homes priced from $89,950 to $149,950 and are affordable to households earning between 35 percent and 80 percent of median area income, who have otherwise been excluded from the new home marketplace in Ventura County where the median price of a home exceeds $320,000.

The development is located in the City of Oxnard's newest and fastest growing northeastern quadrant. The City's Northeast Community Plan weaves together residential neighborhoods, in close proximity to schools, parks, centers of employment and neighborhood commercial services. The City's planners have integrated very-low and low-income housing in the midst of an all new moderate-income area, promoting economic diversification and stability for the new community.

After opening its doors to Oxnard's very low and low income families in December 1999, the development sold out at a rate of 24 sales per month. These households earn between $20,000 and $48,000 per year, and have otherwise been excluded from the new home marketplace in Ventura County.

The development's prospective long term success as a community reflects sound community planning on the part of City staff, outstanding architectural design, and the development team's effort to provide post purchase support in collaboration with community based institutions, thereby empowering lower income households as they transition into the responsibilities and rewards of homeownership and the American dream.

Las Mariposas
Coachella, California (Platinum Award)

Median Home Price in MSA $240,122
Home Price: $97,000

The Las Mariposas homes makes a significant contribution to the rural City of Coachella, which lacks decent affordable housing due to poverty status of many residents, a high percentage of whom are farm workers. Technical assistance was provided by Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, a non-profit developer. Families were selected from a waiting list of over 3,000 and had to qualify for mortgage credit. For this project, 70 percent were very low-income households. Families contributed "sweat equity" working 40 hours a week for eight to ten months completing approximately 65 percent of the construction of their houses and thus earned a 10 percent down payment.

Coachella Valley Housing Coalition purchased a group of 12 lots every 6 weeks from a 168 lot subdivision. A low interest line of credit was obtained from Wells Fargo Bank and two predevelopment grants from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and the Community Services Block Grant Program. The US Department of Agriculture Rural Development provided a grant for technical assistance and for mortgage financing.

"Sweat Equity" Self-Help program reached beyond the physical construction of their homes. Families that have completed the program have expressed an inner pride and empowerment to achieve other goals to benefit their families and communities.

Community Hills
Newark, New Jersey (Platinum Award)

Median Home Price in MSA: $110,000
Home Price: $11,160 - $95,558

Among this year's Platinum award-winners is the New Community Corporation, a faith-based organization in Newark, NJ, founded by Msgr. William J. Linder. Community Hills will ultimately be home to more than 200 low-income working families. In addition to the attractive and affordable "smart wired" homes, Community Hills will also provide a day care center for -school children. HUD's partnership with New Community Corporation reflects President Bush and Secretary Martinez's expanded faith-based initiative announced last month.

The Community Hills project was developed and built by the New Community Corporation under HUD's Hope 1 program. Over the past 30 years, NCC has developed about 2,500 units of affordable rental housing for families and seniors in the area . Community Hills represents its first homeownership effort to revitalize Newark's Central Ward. In keeping with its mission, Community Hills is targeted at low-and moderate-income working families currently renting apartments in Newark or its immediate urban surroundings. The project promotes homeownership in an urban area where ownership rates are very low, and contributes to the revitalization of an impacted low-income urban neighborhoods.

Community Hills offers two story townhouses with alternating brick and vinyl siding facades. It makes good use of door and window moldings, shutters, window build-outs, and other exterior features, consistent with market rate townhouses in the region. The site design consists of attached clusters of five to nine townhouses. The 12 acre site was provided at nominal cost by the Newark Housing Authority, which demolished the former 12-story high rise buildings with funding from HUD. Clusters are placed around the perimeter and within the inner court, with play areas for children placed at the corners. The project development includes an 18,000 square feet community center, which has a day care center and offers an early childhood educational program.

In keeping with HUD's HOPE 1 program and with New Community's mission, these units are being sold at below-market price to low and moderate income households from the Newark area. Prices will be set relative to a household's certified income, such that all housing expenses do not exceed 35 percent of income. The development will offer a "step up" for 206 families that otherwise would not have been able to achieve homeownership. It will provide a body of stakeholders in an area whose residents were formerly quite transient. As such, it will provide a powerful impetus for resident involvement in efforts to resist crime, building decay, low-quality education, and other inner-city problems.

La Esperanza Subdivision
Dixon, California (Gold Award)

Median Home Price in MSA: $189,000
Home Price: $131,000

La Esperanza is the first affordable housing project built in the last 20 years. Dixon is located in a rural area 30 minutes west of Sacramento. Latinos constitute 28 percent of Dixon's population, but their voice is often drowned out by the rapidly growing higher-income population.

The homes were built to help families making below 50 percent of median income. The financing for La Esperanza made use of every possible subsidy in order to be affordable to low-income homeowners. The Federal Home Loan Bank's AHP program was utilized and contributed a grant of $355,000. This was supplemented by a Cities/HOME grant of $800,000 and both funding sources were converted to silent second and third position loans. Perhaps most beneficial and effective for the homebuyers was the coupling of the California Housing Finance tax exempt loan funds with the US Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Service's Section 502 loan program. The blended rate of permanent financing produced by combining these sources was 5.25 percent.

If it was not for the deep subsidies and low interest rates, low-income families would not be able to qualify to purchase at La Esperanza. Like the many residents of Dixon, 85 percent of the home owners within La Esperanza work in the fields as farm workers and in the local canneries where wages range from $5.25 - $12.00 an hour without medical benefits. The average of income in the subdivision is 65 percent of the area median income. Families who earn $20,000 have been able to purchase a home.

Viola Street Revitalization Project
Greenville, South Carolina (Gold Award)

Median Home Price in MSA: $109,000
Home Price: $80,000 - $105,000

The Viola Street community is composed of 298 African-American residents. The homes that are being built in the Viola Street neighborhood is a collaborative effort between the Urban League of the Upstate Housing Corporation, the City of Greenville, the County of Greenville, Greenville Technical College, the Randolph Group, First Baptist Church of Greenville, Hyatt Regency Hotel, HUD, the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority, Arcadis Geraghty and Miller Engineers and Architects, and local financial institutions.

The public/private partnership takes a holistic approach to neighborhood revitalization. This projects will have infrastructure, improvements consisting of road improvements, storm drainage, sewer updates, new water lines, the locating of all utilities underground, the demolition of 146 substandard homes, and the construction of 90 new homes sites with amenities. The revitalization project creates a unique and effective partnership between the public and private sectors.

This joint venture is designed to bring lasting self-sufficiency and decent living conditions for all of the residents. With Federal HOME funds received from HUD, residents receive down payment and closing costs assistance and are able to obtain FHA mortgages at a fixed rate between 4 percent and 5.5 percent for 30 years. Low-to moderate-income families can buy new homes that are 1,200 to 1,600 square feet, with three-bedrooms and two full bathrooms for an average house payment of $320 to $420 per month including taxes and insurance.

Anthony Square
Rochester, New York (Gold Award)

Median Home Price in MSA: $90,000
Home Price: $69,375

The Anthony Square project is a development which has both single family homes for first-time homeowners and townhouses for rental. Anthony Square will develop 23 single-family homes for owner-occupants, and 45 townhouses for rental. Anthony Square is affordable to both low- and moderate-income families, accessible to those who use wheelchairs and available without subsidy to those who have higher incomes. Home buyers who have low or moderate incomes may qualify for a grant of up to $22,500.

The Anthony Square development is located in the Mayor's Heights neighborhood in Rochester, NY. The Anthony Square site was the home of the former low-income, rental housing project called FIGHT Square. Built in 1969, FIGHT Square housed 149 families who received public assistance. In the 1980s and 1990s this project became riddled with drugs and violence. It was no longer working for the residents who resided there or the neighborhood surrounding it.

Building Blocks
Des Moines, Iowa (Gold Award)

Median Home Price in MSA: $100,000
Home Price: $59,000 - $79,000

The Building Blocks project is located in a historic neighborhood, which contains the largest concentration of late 19th and early 20th century residential architecture in the city. As part of a historic neighborhood, designs had to meet strict architectural guidelines while remaining affordable for low- to moderate-income families. As a result of the successful collaborative design effort, it is difficult to determine which houses were actually built at the turn of the century and rehabilitated, and which are the new infill houses.

Working with neighborhood groups, city staff, and the state historic architect, new infill house plans were developed that met strict infill guidelines suitable for this historic area. Next, all the available deteriorated and abandoned properties were acquired, as well as the vacant lots within a five block area surrounding an inner city school. Ten abandoned properties were rehabbed, and 16 new single-family homes were constructed.

Homes were built through a collaborative effort with HOME Investment Partnership Community Development Block grant funds, local lending institutions, and private corporate donations. All of the homes are sold to individuals whose incomes are less than 80 percent of median income, with most ranging from 45 to 70 percent. The project is so successful that most homes are sold before construction is completed, and the city is researching the need for similar projects in other distressed neighborhoods.

Los Puentes Housing Development
Albuquerque, New Mexico (Silver Award)

Median Home Price in MSA: $130,000
Home Price: $91,000 - $99,000

The Los Puentes Housing Development is comprised of 20 three-bedroom and 4 four-bedroom single family units on 7.2 acres in the South Valley with an average lot size of 9,394 square feet. The contemporary "Northern New Mexico Territorial" architectural design compliments the surrounding older neighborhoods which are of a similar design and construction.

Homeownership is aimed at families who have incomes up to 80 percent of the area's median income for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Statistical Area. The 19 present owners at Los Puentes have an average annual income of $17,000, or 36 percent of median income. The development is uniquely designed and marketed to those families of very modest means. As a consequence, 24 families will realize the American dream of homeownership.

Los Puentes Housing Development success can be attributed to the partnership formed between YES Housing, Inc., a local non-profit housing development agency, the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority and the County of Bernalillo.

Campostella Square
Chesapeake, Virginia (Silver Award)

Median Home Price in MSA: $114,000
Home Price: $84,867

Campostella Square presented an opportunity to successfully complete the transformation of an area that previously contained severely deteriorated housing and high levels of poverty into an economically diverse and dynamic community. The residential development is being constructed through a joint effort of private builders, non-profit entities such as Habitat for Humanity and various community housing development organizations (CDHOs), and other local civic organizations, including representatives of the faith-based community.

The redevelopment of the greater Campostella Square is included in a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) Plan prepared by the Chesapeake Redevelopment & Housing Authority on behalf of the City of Chesapeake, with broad and significant input from the various segments of the community. The Campostella Square NRSA Plan was the first to be approved in Virginia by HUD.

The NRSA Plan mentioned above will initially enable CRHA and the City to implement a mixed income development strategy for the community. The City of Chesapeake has invested considerable Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME, and Section 108 Loan funds in the redevelopment of Campostella Square, with additional funds targeted for revitalization activities. The NRSA Plan will enable CRHA to use single family lots at Campostella Square (assisted with CDBG and Section 108 funds) to develop affordable homes for a broader income range, thereby promoting income diversity and the long-term viability of the neighborhood, including enhanced economic opportunities.