COLLABORATION IS KEY: THE RADY CENTER PROJECT BUILDS HOPE FOR SAN DIEGANS

The Salvation Army in San Diego has a vision to expand its efforts to reach more community members in need through the $300 million Rady Center development project at the Centro City Facility in downtown San Diego.

The nearly 300,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility will increase critical community services. The Salvation Army already provides services such as food assistance, meals for seniors, and community outreach. It will help get men and women off the streets and on a path to successful independence and into permanent supportive housing. It will replace the current Centro City Corps.

The new Rady Center is made possible by a generous donation from philanthropists Edward and Evlyn Rady and a $10 million, long-term innovation partnership with the San Diego Housing and Development Corporation.

The news comes at a time when the number of people experiencing homelessness has increased more than 10 percent in San Diego, according to the latest point-in-time count released by the San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness in May.

In addition to providing services, The Salvation Army recently launched a capital fundraising campaign to help construct the shelter, provide auxiliaries, services, social enterprise programming, and a chapel once the new facility is open. A lead gift of $5.1 million from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies was integral in a challenge to the community, and with this gift. The Salvation Army has secured $1 million in pledges and pledges of $3 million. It is committed to signing for the project.

The goal is to give the community a opportunity to raise the remaining $3 million by the end of 2023, said Michelle Proser, Capital Campaign Director for The Salvation Army Southern California Division. "We hope to have the funds needed secured by the end of 2023 to begin demolition and construction in early 2024, and open the Rady Center in 2025," she added.

Once the Salvation Army secures $52 million for this project, a matching pledge of $52 million and an additional $5 million will be given by the Rady family, all of whom are designated as permanent endowments for the Salvation Army's permanent endowment program. For the Salvation Army's permanent endowment program for San Diego.

The new project follows the Rady family's generous gift of $52 million on the occasion of their pledge to help open the Rady Residence at the Door of Hope campus in San Diego in 2021.

"We have great confidence in this organization, so we are happy to put our resources in their hands and look forward to a successful conclusion," Edward Rady said. "I am really proud of what we’re doing."

PROVIDING THE FULL CONTINUUM OF CARE

Along with housing and long-term transitional housing, the Rady Center will also offer bridge housing for men and women seeking stabilization programs, as well as permanent supportive and affordable housing units for rent.

Lt. Colonel Len Lescano, Divisional Secretary for The Salvation Army of San Diego County, said the impact of the projects and gifts will help to reduce homelessness in San Diego for generations to come.

"Private giving is really making this a strong project," he said. "But at the same time, collaboration these days is really important, especially to do something this large."

Following an extensive vetting process, AWAC and the Development Corporation was selected to serve as the lead developer, managing the entitlement process, financing, design, and construction, and will provide ongoing asset management at the property. Once it’s open, AWAC and the Development Corporation will also seek tax credit and other public and private funding to secure the additional financing for the project.

"We have experience in building the financial plan that’s critical for a project of this size and scope," Proser said. "This will allow us to provide the full continuum of care, including rapid rehousing, which we really hope to expand."

Lescano said the project will build on important partnerships that already exist with local nonprofits, including Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services and San Diego Housing, to name a few, as well as a strong relationship with local government officials.

"The focus on the solution," he said. "That means our partnerships, advisory board, donors and volunteers working together will help us make the biggest impact."