

Rentals please renters



SCOTT MACDONALD/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Leslie Carranza stands in the kitchen of her CHISPA Market Street Townhome in Soledad on Sept. 11. Carranza shares the townhome with her husband and three children.

CHISPA's townhome projects are spacious and affordable

By ZACHARY STAHL
The Salinas Californian

Marta Pantoja lived in tight quarters while sharing a one-bedroom apartment in Soledad with her husband.

Now the housewife lives at a 60-unit affordable rental development called Market Street Townhomes and has a two-bedroom apartment with more space for her family.

"I always wanted to have a living room," Pantoja said in Spanish. "I am very comfortable living here."

Pantoja lives in one of eight rental properties completed so far by Community Housing Improvement Systems Planning Association in south Monterey County.

CHISPA's latest developments have a mix of self-help units — where families take part in constructing their homes in order to buy them at a reduced price — moderate-income homes and rentals to meet the needs of very-low, low and middle-range income groups, said Alfred Diaz-Infante, president and chief executive officer of CHISPA.

Diaz-Infante said farm-worker families primarily live in CHISPA's apartments, for which tenants must meet certain income requirements.

Market Street Townhomes was completed in 2005.

The complex has a community room that has computers and offers English as a second language and baile folklorico classes, said Salvador Rangel, CHISPA's director of property management.

Residents also are encouraged to take the next step and advance to homeownership by applying for CHISPA's self-help or moderate income housing programs, officials said.

"Our focus is more than just

DETAILS

Rental properties operated by CHISPA are open to low- and very-low-income residents. For example, to qualify, a four-member household cannot earn more than \$34,265 a year. Rents range from \$420 to \$911 per month, based on the number of bedrooms and family income. Section 8 housing vouchers are also accepted. Information: 757-6254.

putting a roof over someone's head," Rangel said. "It's to enhance their quality of life."

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