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## New Housing Facility Has Changed Lives

Maurice Ramirez  
Thursday, April 4, 2019



Maurice Ramirez Charles Mealey, 81, a veteran who served with the Strategic Air Command, was formerly unhoused until he received a helping hand from Operation Dignity. He has now found permanent housing at the City of Alameda's Everett Commons.

New residents of Everett Commons, including a family originally from Kabul, Afghanistan, enjoyed showing Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft their homes during the ribbon-cutting ceremony March 27. In addition to being a single-story unit, the facility has ADA features such as a wheelchair-accessible kitchen and bath counters and wider hallways to meet their needs.

Charles Mealey, 81, a veteran, was unhoused before going into transitional housing at Operation Dignity at Alameda Point. Mealey served in Strategic Air Command until 1958. He then worked in Oakland as a painter and landscaper. Mealey moved into one of the units at the Everett Commons development in December.

"This is the best opportunity I've had in a long time," he said. "Now I just want to help my veteran friends." He's helped two of his friends become residents at this same complex already and now wants to get one of his artist friends to do a mural on the wall in the back parking lot.

Kimberly Peters graduated from Island High in 1989, which was located on the very same lot as Everett Commons. She found out that she was accepted back in March 2018, and moved into her unit in December.

Referring to a large tree fronting the property, she recalls being in the School Aged Parent Infant Development Program, the teen parents day care, and playing with her then-11-month-old son there. Today she has a job just down the street and feels extremely lucky for the affordable housing.

"I'm proud to be in recovery," Peters said. "I believe in being persistent and moving forward. And never giving up."



Maurice Ramirez Kimberley Peters is grateful for her new home on land that once housed Island High School, her alma mater.

*Editor's note: While covering the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new City of Alameda-run housing complex Everett Commons, photojournalist Maurice Ramirez discovered some of the stories behind the new residents.*

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