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El Cerrito-based D+H Construction ties its philanthropy with work in affordable housing

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D+H Construction focuses its philanthropy on a familiar area: affordable housing. Founded in 1981, the El Cerrito-based construction company does roughly 95 percent of its work with nonprofit developers, building affordable housing and housing for seniors and people with disabilities, says president and co-owner Marshall Snow. D+H doesn't just partner with nonprofits; the company gives to organizations that provide residents with access to transportation and health and social services. Snow says they don't just want more affordable housing, but better housing, too.



MICHAEL MEJIA
Marshall Snow, president and co-owner of D+H
Construction

What is the focus of D+H's philanthropic efforts? As contractors, we're so involved with housing. Our day-to-day involvement is hands-on, building affordable housing for people in need. So, we tie in the philanthropy, we tie that into the clients we work for. It goes hand in hand. I mean, it's one thing to build housing, but we can also contribute so that the housing can have the services that residents need and improve the living conditions beyond just the construction.

What are some examples of the company's giving? We continue to support the same organizations year after year. And, also, not just organizations that directly build and provide services, but, you know, other nonprofits that are working toward campaign fundraising and state legislation to improve the stock of affordable, quality housing. A recent sponsorship we did was for a nonprofit, Satellite Affordable Housing Associates, where we donated \$10,000 directly for their resident services program. So, that's completely separate from our construction involvement. This is so that residents can have transportation. They get the services they need, whether that's health or social services or whatever they can to improve the day-to-day living conditions for the residents.

How do you decide on and vet what organizations to give to? In the Bay Area, it's a pretty close-knit group of organizations that are leading the way for affordable housing. They're organizations we've worked with over the years and since it's such a small community, people kind of just move around within that community. We might know people that have worked for, say, Eden Housing for five years and they've gone on to another nonprofit developer or another organization promoting affordable housing. I'd say there are maybe 10 or so organizations leading the way that are really active in promoting housing so we definitely tend to gravitate towards them. But then there are occasional, smaller, unique opportunities that come along, too.

Are there any plans or changes on the horizon for the company's giving? We just want to continue to focus on the need for more housing and more services that support the residents in affordable housing. I think we've evolved over the years. In the past, it was just something we felt the need to do and we felt we were doing a good thing. Now and moving forward, I think we're really going to put a bigger focus on our giving because we're paying attention and we're seeing the results more now than we have in the past. It's becoming more ingrained in our culture at D+H.

Wyatt Kroopf
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