

30 YEARS Washington State Housing Trust Fund



“I’m proud of what I’ve accomplished. I’m excited to make room for someone else here.”

- Stephany Zuniga
at Evergreen Vista II
(Olympia)

Mother of Five Found a Path to Success—Not Just an Apartment—Through Public-Private Partnerships

Before coming to Olympia, Stephany Zuniga grew up and worked in Bremerton. She had been topped out in her pay for six years in a dead end job, “living in run-down places because that’s all I could afford.” Stephany had to get out of that community and she joked that she was going to leave Bremerton and “drive until her car broke down.” Her car gave out near Olympia.

Stephany found an apartment at Mercy Housing’s Evergreen Vista II in Olympia. Mercy is a national nonprofit that owns and operates 47 affordable communities in Washington. Evergreen Vista was funded in part by the Washington State Housing Trust Fund and by private investments through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program administered by the Housing Finance Commission. It provides 50 two- and three-bedroom apartments for families, including some families coming directly from homelessness.

Part of what Stephany loves about Evergreen Vista is that it’s not just an apartment, it’s a community. “It’s hard to find resources when you move someplace new. The staff at Evergreen Vista has become my family.” Stephany and her children have taken advantage of many



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services that are available right at the apartment complex, like Head Start, career counseling, and trainings that she took when she was in-between jobs to strengthen her résumé.

She found short-time help in other ways through Evergreen Vista. Not long after coming to Olympia, Stephany lost her new job here, and staff at her apartment complex helped her find the Community Jobs Program, a job training and placement program overseen by the Department of Commerce funded through Washington WorkFirst. Now she works as a Long-Term Care Customer Service Specialist at Department of Social and Health Services.

Stephany also took a first time homebuyer class at Evergreen Vista. As a result, she just recently made an offer on a house and plans to move to her new home in the fall of 2016. “Home for me is a place we can be in complete comfort, it’s a place where my kids can run and play. I’ve always wanted my kids to have their own yard.”

“If not for Evergreen Vista, I’d still be in a dead-end job in Bremerton. I’m proud of what I’ve accomplished. I’m excited to make room for someone else here, now that we are ready to move into our own home.”

