

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California



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Contact: Amy Hewes

805-756-6402; ahewes@calpoly.edu

## Cal Poly Engineering Students To Perform 'Extreme Makeover' at Controversial Homeless Site

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly's annual PolyHouse project is known for changing lives by renovating the homes of Central Coast families dealing with issues related to disabilities.

This year, students in Cal Poly Engineering's project management class are going to new makeover extremes by taking on one of the region's most challenging and controversial residential issues. They are set to transform Sunny Acres, a 72-acre ranch with a collection of tents, trailers and sheds, into safe and habitable housing for dozens of homeless men and women.

Over the years, controversy surrounding the site has made national news with stories appearing in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Huffington Post and elsewhere.

"This spring, we hope to resolve the long-standing issue," said Roya Javadpour, professor of industrial and manufacturing engineering and director of the PolyHouse program. "For the past 10 years, Sunny Acres has housed homeless people and provided a unique rehabilitation program. Unfortunately, the grounds and facilities have been a point of contention because of code violations and unsightliness."

According to Javadpour, the objective is to help Sunny Acres comply with building codes and build collaborative partnerships that enhance the probability of long-term success. The class also plans to lay the foundation, literally, for an 8,000-square-foot residence that will provide safe housing and serve as a resource for those struggling with homelessness, addiction and psychological challenges.

County planners, the county board of supervisors, area homeless advocates and other government and community leaders are actively supporting the endeavor.

"We want to make Sunny Acres a point of pride for the community, a place that transforms lives," said Javadpour, "It an ambitious plan – especially the construction of a new residence facility – but we know that we can accomplish our goals with the community's help."

The project is funded only by student-raised contributions from the community. The work outlined will require about \$400,000 in cash donations and in-kind gifts and is expected to be completed by the end of May.

"We are committed to making a difference, and we are definitely dreaming big in our goal to provide housing at Sunny Acres," said Javadpour. "But every year, I am awed by the devotion of our students and the generosity of individuals and businesses."

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