

Barbara Boxer comes to Hayward to praise senior housing complex

By Eric Kurhi
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HAYWARD — Residents of Eden Housing's newest senior housing development on C Street were treated to a visit Wednesday from U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, who came by to check out their digs and give it a big thumbs-up.

Boxer, D-Calif., has been a longtime advocate of affordable housing and is no stranger to the Hayward-based nonprofit — she requested federal funding for Eden's after-school program this year, which is still awaiting approval from Congress.

After taking a tour of the grounds, which include gardens and a library, she told a group of residents gathered in the community room that they live in a "very, very special" place.

"This is a symbol of all the work Eden has done for 40 years," Boxer said. "It's the Lord's work, because housing is key to making us feel comfortable, safe and secure."

The 60-unit facility for people 55 and older is popular, and a lottery system is used to select tenants who meet the income requirements. Rents are low — building manager Janice Niedzielski said the one-bedroom apartments go for \$460 to \$780.

"We definitely could use more of this kind of housing for seniors, and families as well,"

Niedzielski said.

She said a lot of the residents are Boxer boosters, something evidenced by the two dozen or so who gathered to hear her talk and ask a few questions.

Boxer spoke about the need for more trained health care workers in the geriatrics field, lauded the benefits of this year's bipartisan-approved stimulus checks, plugged her latest novel, and, of course, addressed the need for regime change come November.

Eden Housing Executive Director Linda Mandolini said her nonprofit, while nonpartisan, greatly appreciates the work Boxer has done to preserve the tax credit provisions that are vital for building affordable housing projects.

She also said Eden officials talked to Boxer's staff about the possibility of her issuing a proclamation for Eden's 40th anniversary event, Sept. 18.

"They did one better," Mandolini said. "They said, 'How would you like to have her come down and see the site on Wednesday?'"

Councilwoman Barbara Halliday, who attended the tour and talk, said there's good reason for Boxer's visit and praise.

"Eden made a model that can't be beat in terms of giving affordable housing a good name," she said.

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