

Affordable Housing in the Bay Area in 2021

For my Hero Project I interviewed Pedro Galvao. Pedro Galvao is a Policy Director at NPH or Non-Profit Housing Association which is an organization that helps people in the Bay Area find affordable housing. He spoke about NPH's mission.

"The Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California's mission is to fight for a Bay Area where everyone has an affordable place to call home."

In the Bay Area there are almost 30,000 homeless people and there are expected to be even more in the future which is why affordable housing is so important in the Bay Area.

Pedro was inspired to work in affordable housing because growing up, his family rented a house in a great school district where he had teachers that recognized his potential and helped him succeed.

"Having a place to come home to, especially one that is affordable so you can afford to buy groceries, pay for medical expenses, save for college, makes it possible for people to live better lives with dignity."

A major accomplishment of Pedro and the NPH is to help strengthen a law called Surplus Lands Act, which makes local governments have to use unused land for affordable housing.

"The law has made 4,000 acres of land available for affordable housing (enough to accommodate 80,000 affordable homes if it were all built as affordable housing)."

Because of the pandemic one in seven renters in the US are not caught up on rent. Pedro responded when asked about how the pandemic affected affordable housing.

"The lockdowns from the pandemic led to a lot of people losing their jobs and unfortunately the cost of housing just keeps on going up. As we begin to recover from this pandemic and as people remain out of work, having more affordable homes is absolutely critical so that our state can remain a desirable place to live for all Californians, not just those with higher incomes."

Pedro told me his hero is Dolores Huerta, leader of United Farmworkers. Dolores fought for better working conditions for farm workers in California.

"Throughout her life she has been fighting to make California and the United States a more just place to live."

Pedro's goals for the future are to push local communities and elected state officials to build affordable housing in the Bay Area.

"We are going to keep fighting for this future by pushing our state to invest more funding in affordable housing."