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**News Release**

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**Saranam Breaks Ground on New Westside Campus**

***Once Developed It Will House 25 Additional Families***

**ALBUQUERQUE, NM – February 22, 2022 –** Elected officials, Saranam volunteers, staff and alumni broke ground today on the organization’s new westside campus. Saranam serves families experiencing homelessness with its unique two-year program that in addition to housing provides education and intensive case management. Currently, Saranam serves 20 families at its eastside campus. The new 3.5-acre campus will have 15 new two-bedroom homes, 10 new four-bedroom homes, playgrounds, a community garden, a family center, and ample parking.

“With our existing 20-family capacity, we’ve been maxed out since 2014,” explained Tracy Weaver, Saranam Executive Director. “This second campus will allow us to more than double our capacity and double our impact.”

“It’s no secret that homelessness is a huge issue in Albuquerque,” said Mayor Tim Keller. “The work Saranam does is life changing, and we are thrilled to partner with them as they more than double their ability to serve Albuquerque’s families in need.”

When Yudima Valdes-Mesa left Cuba to escape an abusive husband, she left her nursing credentials behind and had to start over in New Mexico. With no job nor housing, she ended up being accepted into the Saranam program, and life changed for her and her son Martin.

“There is a 180-degree change in my family from day one to nearly four years after exiting - it is transformational,” Valdez-Mesa explained. “You shed one skin and become the best you can. I was molded – going from a rock to a diamond, hopeless, depressed and completely different. Now I’m successful and feel like I can achieve anything. The sky’s the limit for me and Martin!”

Leighann Plummer, another Saranam alumi, a La Cueva High School graduate, soccer player with a full-ride scholarship, ended up struggling with addiction, and struggled to make ends meet. Saranam provided a lifeline. Today she is clean and sober since 2017, is a dental assistant and on-track to finish her bachelor’s degree.

“I am successful now, but honestly I do not think I could have done this without Saranam,” Plummer said. “I know I couldn’t.”

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**ABOUT SARANAM**

Saranam is an innovative, transitional living program in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Unlike shelters or group homes, Saranam uses a two-generational approach to solve the problems that create the cycle of homelessness – poverty, lack of support, and isolation. Families live in our community for up to two years. They get a home of their own, education, and intensive case management. With their basic needs met, families can focus on pursuing higher educational goals and learning how to live independently, improve parenting skills, develop community-building skills, find stable employment, and enjoy healthier lives. Since 2004, Saranam has served 152 families with 319 children.

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