



Rebuilding, Two Doors Down

Marin City residents renovated their own community — and found new career paths — through a 12-week program at Golden Gate Village.



Kyandre Calloway and Autriyana Hardy stand in front of a renovated unit on Drake Ave. Photo by Olivia Wynkoop.

By Olivia Wynkoop

Golden Gate Village is where Kyandre Calloway has spent nearly his entire life. Fifteen years of walking down the same streets, past the same neighbors he'd never really met.

Then he heard about a construction trades training starting up inside two vacant units at the complex, just steps away from him.

"I was surprised, and interested," he said. "It was something new for sure out here."

From November 2025 through January 2026, Calloway was one of 21 Marin City residents who trained three days a week in electrical, plumbing, and carpentry while completely revitalizing two vacant apartments on Drake Avenue. They replaced cabinets, rebuilt walls, rewired electrical, refinished floors, and painted throughout.

Though each student chose a specialty, their collective goal was to garner enough experience under their belts to qualify for union apprenticeships and trade hiring.

The program was designed and run by Juanita Douglas, executive director of Tradeswomen Inc., with 43 years in the construction trades and a Marin City resident who had been watching what was happening to her community.

"I was watching this community die," she said. "These young people were not receiving opportunities, and I knew I could give it to them if I was given the chance."

When she learned that Golden Gate Village was preparing for a major revitalization, she approached Marin Housing Authority and Burbank Housing with a proposal to train residents to work on their own home and secured union council backing to ensure graduates would be eligible for hire.

Beyond hands-on construction, the curriculum brought in mental health clinicians, financial literacy, math, safety training, and a general contractors showcase.

Nearly every participant lived steps away from the training site, but earning their trust still took time.

"The first four weeks were hard because they didn't trust us," Douglas said. "They had been promised so many things that were not followed through."

Calloway had done some carpentry on his own, but always solo. His first moments in the classroom made him second-guess enrolling in the program.

"I was ready to quit, not going to lie. Class for me is not good, no bueno," he said. "I was really stressed out and overstimulated."

A conversation with Douglas helped him push through. She told him about starting in the trades herself in 1984, when she was one of the very few Black women in the field. "She eased my mind," he said. "After that, I just didn't want to leave."

Calloway found his footing once they moved into the renovation

work, and the experience pushed him in ways he didn't expect.

"At first, I wasn't the type of person to ask questions, to speak up about how I feel or if I was struggling," he said. "After this program, if I feel some type of way, I let it be known."

On graduation day, seeing people walk through the finished units, he thought about what the apartments had looked like when they started: a disintegrating mattress, greasy cabinets, things broken everywhere. "It went from looking horrendous to something very beautiful," he said.

Autriyana Hardy enrolled alongside her mom and switched from electrical to carpentry mid-program; she built the stairs in one unit while her mom installed the recessed lights in the ceiling.

"Once I got in the program and saw what we'd be doing, I fell in love with it," she said. "It was an amazing opportunity they were giving us."

Both are now working toward their licenses. The general contractor overseeing the Golden Gate Village revitalization has committed to interviewing every graduate and has already sponsored one participant directly into a carpentry apprenticeship.

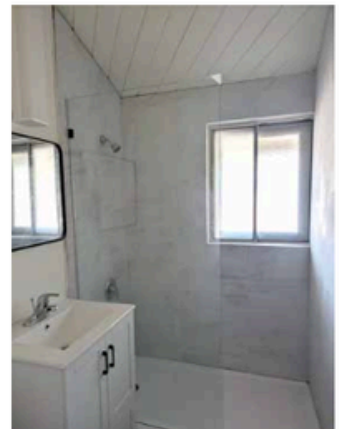
For Calloway, the program's impact goes beyond the job prospects; he can now walk through his neighborhood and really recognize people.

"I could have done that anytime throughout my 15 years of living here," he said, "and it took this program to actually communicate with people outside."

I was watching this community die. These young people were not receiving opportunities, and I knew I could give it to them if I was given the chance.

Juanita Douglas

Executive Director, Tradeswomen Inc.



Renovation of one of the units. Photos by Doreen Gounard.