

**My name is Ellen Brokaw and I currently chair the Santa Paula Affordable Housing Task Force and the Santa Paula House farm Workers Committee..**

**Many of us who will be sharing our ideas with you today are members of the relatively new Affordable Housing Task Force. We come together with different priorities and experiences but are united by the knowledge that a home is the basic foundation for a healthy person, family, and community. And we know that, since we want to live in a thriving city, we need to care not just about our own homes, but about how everyone is housed – or not housed- in Santa Paula.**

**There are many in Santa Paula who struggle to either find or to pay for their homes. Some of them are grandchildren of people like me; some are teachers in our schools or nurses at Santa Paula Hospital, some are working full time at low wages (service workers and farm workers), some have no homes at all. All of these Santa Paulans need affordable, safe, and healthy homes.**

**My special focus is on the needs of the many farm worker families that live in Santa Paula. Some have lived in Santa Paula for decades and now own their own homes. Most are renters who struggle to find decent and affordable space where their children can maintain good health and thrive in school..**

**In 2001 I joined Dora Crouch and Al Guilin who were meeting regularly to pray for decent, safe and affordable homes for farm workers in Santa Paula. That prayerful beginning grew into the Santa Paula Farm Worker Housing Committee, now called “Santa Paula House Farmworkers!” This Committee does not build homes for farm workers. We instead share information about the dignity of farm work, the values of farm worker families, and the struggles to house those families. We also advocate for more permissive land use regulations, zoning, fee structures, funding mechanisms etc. designed to produce more affordable housing**

**You don’t build any homes either. But you have the power and responsibility to work with stakeholders and the community to create a structure of policy, regulation and incentives that will make it easier for the building experts to provide the whole range of housing needed and for current homeowners to participate and benefit (by adding additional dwellings on their lots when space allows). You have a talented staff with lots of knowledge and good ideas. And now you have the Santa Paula Affordable Housing Task force whose members intend to both support and nag you in this important work.**

**Thank you!**

**12/18/19**