



School builds homes where teachers live rent-free

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(CBS/photos from Kristen Calderone/CBS Newspath)

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (CBS/CBS Newspath/WKRC) - Schools nationwide are dealing with a teacher shortage, and low wages are a big part of the problem. But one school in Connecticut is trying to do something new by building homes where teachers live rent-free.

A few blocks from The Friends Center for Children in New Haven, work was underway on a place for its teachers to live. For two pre-school teachers and their families, the 2,100 square feet will have the comforts of home, at almost no cost.

“They do pay their own utilities, but they have free rent,” said Allyx Schiavone, CEO of The Friends Center for Children.

Schiavone said this housing helps solve a big problem: how to raise teachers’ pay (or compensation) when schools don’t have the budget for bigger salaries.

“What we do is we take the teachers’ salary and we add the benefit on top of it, which brings them to really a more... professional wage,” Schiavone said.

Next month, teacher Kristen Calderone and her 9-year-old son will move in, next door to Paris Pierce and her three children.

"I'm just in awe of what's happening," said Pierce.



(CBS/CBS Newspath)

The housing is valued at about \$1800 a month, the equivalent of a 50-percent boost in take-home pay. They say they can now build savings -- and live in a safe place.

"I did spend a portion of my son's infancy homeless, and so security and having a home is a really big thing for us," said Calderone.

"It's pretty remarkable," said Schiavone. "Not only is it a brand new house, but it's a house they got to design."

They collaborated with Yale architecture students, who are constructing the homes. Four more are planned in a two-acre teachers' village.

"The most amazing aspect of it is it's a one-time investment," said Schiavone. "So we're paying for the house, and then we have that return for the teacher and for our program forever."

It's a blueprint they hope more schools and leaders will consider to build a future for teachers, from the ground up.

The school says the housing program will eventually save them \$500,000 every year and help it effectively raise salaries for all teachers, even those who do not live in school housing.