

Christian Bale Launches Initiative to Keep Foster Siblings Together

Actor Christian Bale has broken ground on a project he has envisioned for 16 years—the building of several houses and a community center intended to keep foster care siblings together.

The Oscar-winning actor who played Batman in the “Dark Knight” movie trilogy stood alongside local officials last week in Palmdale, a community about 60 miles north of downtown Los Angeles, as they celebrated the new village’s construction.

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Even though he was born in Britain, Bale, 50, has lived in Southern California since the 1990s. Around 2008, he had the idea to build such a community after learning about the huge number of foster children in Los Angeles County, and finding out how many brothers and sisters get separated by the system.

“I was stunned and mad to learn that we have more foster kids here than anywhere else in the country. I was also kicking myself for not knowing that before. So I thought, ‘Well, this is it. Let’s focus on this,’” Bale told The Hollywood Reporter (THR). “My wife and I decided that we were going to do everything we could in our power to change that.”

At first, he thought getting the community built for foster kids wouldn’t take that long.

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“I had a very naïve idea about kind of getting a piece of land and then, bringing kids in and the brothers and sisters living together and sort of singing songs like the Von Trapp family in ‘The Sound of Music’,” Bale said.

But he then learned, “It’s way more complex. These are people’s lives. And we need to be able to have them land on their feet when they age out. There’s so much involved in this.”

Bale visited Chicago and spent several days in children and family services meetings. He recruited Tim McCormick, who had set up a similar program, to head the organization that became known as Together California, a group Bale would co-found with UCLA doctor Eric Esrailian, a producer on one of his films.

“He said we’ve got to do this in California,” McCormick said. “To his credit, through all sorts of challenges, COVID and everything else, he never gave up.”

The men eventually found a sympathetic leader in LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger. In Palmdale, a semi-rural city of about 165,000 people, they found a city with both a need and a willingness to take part.

The 12 homes, anchored by the community center, are set to be finished in April of 2025. {eoa}

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