The collaboration of hundreds of agencies, businesses and volunteers is what makes Project Homeless Connect – Downtown San Diego a successful program that directly impacts our homeless San Diegans.

In one day, 1,215 homeless individuals were provided with access to services to address many of their immediate and longer-term needs at The 10th Project Homeless Connect – Downtown San Diego, which was held on January 27, 2016, at Golden Hall.

We were honored to have Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer, then-Councilmember Todd Gloria, Councilmember Chris Cate, and San Diego Fire Chief Brian Fennessy attend this one-day resource fair.

As homeless San Diegans registered for Project Homeless Connect on the day of the event, they provided information about themselves and their current life circumstances. This report includes their responses, a profile of homeless men and women participants.

The majority of these individuals were single (84.4 percent), men (60.8 percent), 45 or older (62.7 percent) and unemployed (91.6 percent). More than half (56.9 percent) had no cash income of any kind, and close to half (49.1 percent) had a physical disability.

More than 300 volunteers and 70 service providers joined forces to connect homeless San Diegans with services, such as haircuts, flu shots, dental screenings, identification cards from the California Department of Motor Vehicles, and counseling for mental health, housing assistance and alcohol or substance abuse referrals.

The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) was the lead organizer for Project Homeless Connect for the sixth consecutive time. Major organizing partners were the City of San Diego, Interfaith Shelter Network, Family Health Centers of San Diego and Father Joe’s Villages.

This important event to address homelessness reflects the commitment of our elected officials and partners, as well as the generosity of San Diegans.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Gentry
President & Chief Executive Officer
San Diego Housing Commission
After flooding from recent heavy rain swept away most of his belongings from his encampment in a Mira Mesa canyon, 61-year-old Jack was grateful for a blanket he received at the 10th Project Homeless Connect – Downtown San Diego on January 27, 2016.

“My tent and everything in it got washed away by the flooding,” said the former carpenter, who has been homeless for four years. “Everything I owned is now gone to the Pacific.”

Jack was among the 1,215 homeless San Diegans who attended Project Homeless Connect – a one-day resource fair that connects homeless individuals with services that address many of their immediate and longer-term needs.

Jack heard about Project Homeless Connect through a news story he saw on his smartphone.

He attended in the hopes of connecting with mental health service providers that could help him replace medicine he also lost to the flood.

“I don’t even have a can opener. Can you imagine? The day after it happened, I got a couple cans of food that would’ve made a good meal, but I didn’t have any way to open them. I practically cried,” he said.

More than 300 volunteers and 70 service providers joined forces to connect homeless San Diegans with services, such as haircuts, flu shots, dental screenings, and counseling for mental health, housing assistance and alcohol or substance abuse treatment referrals.

SDHC was the lead organizer for Project Homeless Connect for the sixth consecutive time, providing financial support and, through SDHC’s website, volunteer recruitment.

Major organizing partners were the City of San Diego, Interfaith Shelter Network, Family Health Centers of San Diego and Father Joe’s Villages.
1,215 Homeless Individuals Assisted

300+ Volunteers

70 Service Providers
Last January, a powerful way to help homeless San Diegans came into focus for Spencer—providing eyeglasses.

At The 10th Project Homeless Connect – Downtown San Diego, Spencer and his mom, Diana, set up a booth and handed out nearly 200 nonprescription reading glasses.

“A lot of people we gave them to were excited. They would repeat that it was one of their needs. They would also say they’re grateful for them,” said Spencer, who is also a freshman at Grossmont College.

Spencer said the popularity of the booth gave him “a powerful realization.”

Something as simple as eyeglasses can help homeless individuals apply for jobs or assistance. Giving them the gift of sight is a potential path off the streets.

“I knew I was making a difference.”

Spencer’s booth was also stocked with reading materials so homeless individuals could find a pair that fit their eyesight.

He volunteered at Project Homeless Connect at the invitation of his dad, Tom, an SDHC Construction Specialist.

“Thank you for the opportunity you guys gave me. It’s only one day out of the year, but it really does make a huge difference,” Spencer said.

Fresh with inspiration from Project Homeless Connect last January, Spencer embarked on his Eagle Scout Project, for which he raised $1,000.

Spencer and fellow scouts then assembled three oak plywood boxes, each one holding 75 to 100 pairs of eye glasses – and everything needed to display them: a table cover, mirrors, reading materials, cleaning rags, bins and Windex.

He dropped off a box each to SDHC, Father Joe’s Villages, and PATH San Diego to assist homeless San Diegans.

The Boy Scout Oath includes “helping people at all times.” In Boy Scouts since the age of 13, Spencer has taken that message to heart.

“It’s a big part of scouting,” he said. “We recite the motto at meetings and memorize it, and then follow through with our actions.”
For 9-year-old Maya, birthdays are an opportunity to help others.

Every other year she raises money that she uses to purchase pillows, and writes inspirational messages on them. Then, she gives them away through Maya’s Pillow Project.

At Project Homeless Connect, Maya gave out 100 pillows to homeless individuals.

“Just the feeling of making someone else happy makes me happy, and that’s pretty much all that matters,” Maya said.

Maya also hand writes a personalized message of encouragement on each pillow.

This was Maya’s second year participating in Project Homeless Connect.

1,215 homeless San Diegans attended the 10th Project Homeless Connect.

The data reflects the responses of those who answered survey questions as they entered Project Homeless Connect.
STANCE, the official sock of the National Basketball Association and Major League Baseball, brought its colorful and unique socks to homeless San Diegans at The 10th Project Homeless Connect – Downtown San Diego.

“In a perfect world, we wouldn’t need to be having this event, but it was amazing to see so many people in San Diego come in to give back.” said Mark Maziarz, Vice President of Operations for STANCE, which is based in San Clemente, California.

STANCE donated 8,000 new pairs of its socks for Project Homeless Connect.

They helped to put socks into care bags that the homeless participants received and handed out additional socks.

Maziarz said participating in Project Homeless Connect allowed the opportunity for the company to show its gratitude for its accomplishments and give back to the community.

STANCE reached out to SDHC after Sarah Siqueiros, STANCE’s Events Director, heard that SDHC needed volunteers and donations for Project Homeless Connect on the San Diego-based public radio station, KPBS.

Siqueiros said participating in Project Homeless Connect was very rewarding.

“Our socks are fun and they put a smile on people’s faces,” she said.

8,000 Pairs of New Socks for Homeless San Diegans

10th Project Homeless Connect Downtown

The data reflects the responses of those who answered survey questions as they entered Project Homeless Connect.
The 10th Project Homeless Connect – January 27, 2016

For the sixth consecutive time, the San Diego Housing Commission was the lead organizer for Project Homeless Connect.

Our main organizing partners – the City of San Diego, Father Joe’s Villages, Family Health Centers of San Diego, and Interfaith Shelter Network.

Community Partners, Donors & Service Providers - Thank You!

- 2-1-1 San Diego
- 25 Cities
- Access to Independence
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- All American Barbershop
- Alpha Project
- Alvarado Parkway Institute
- The Association for Community Housing Solutions (TACHS)
- Budget Mobile Lifeline
- California Department of Motor Vehicles
- California Department of Rehabilitation
- Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego
- City of Refuge
- City of San Diego
- Community Catalysts Of California
- Community Research Foundation (CRF)
- Consumer Center for Health Education & Advocacy
- County of San Diego - Animal Services
- County of San Diego - Behavioral Health Services
- County of San Diego - Central Region
- County of San Diego - Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)
- County of San Diego - Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) - Homeless Services
- CDS Communications
- The Douglas and Gloria Rumberger Foundation
- Downtown Fellowship
- Downtown San Diego Partnership
- East County Transitional Living Center
- ElderHelp of San Diego
- Episcopal Community Services
- Family Health Centers of San Diego
- Father Joe’s Villages
- Girls Think Tank
- Glitz and Glam
- The Gold Diggers
- Goldfield Stage
- Home-Start Inc.
- Interfaith Shelter Network
- JDMI Salon
- Just Call Us
- Legal Aid Society of San Diego - Homeless Advocacy Program
- Life Wireless
- Maya’s Pillow Project
- Melody’s Mobile Dental Hygiene
- Mental Health Systems - Employment Services
- Harmony West Women’s Recovery Center - Serial Inebriate Program
- NAMI San Diego
- National Association of Social Workers
- Office Depot
- PAWS
- People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)
- Point Loma Nazarene University
- Rock Church
- Salvation Army - Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC)
- San Diego Baby Boomers Meetup
- San Diego County Dental Society
- San Diego Humane Society
- San Diego Reiki
- San Diego Rescue Mission
- San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program
- San Diego Youth Services
- SDHC Rental Assistance
- Sara Robinson
- Serving Seniors
- Sharp Healthcare
- Silverado Hospice
- Society of the Sacred Heart
- South Bay Community Services
- Stance
- St. Paul’s PACE
- Style Lounge Salon
- Surelink Lifeline Phone Service
- Telecare Corporation
- UCSD
- Union of Pan Asian Communities
- Uplift - The Home Team
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- U.S. Social Security Administration
- Veterans Village of San Diego
- Volunteers of America
- The Way Back Recovery Home For Men
- YWCA of San Diego County