



October 6, 2011

## Message from the President & CEO



*Richard C. Gentry,  
President & CEO*

This is the first in a series of electronic updates I will be sending to keep you informed about the San Diego Housing Commission.

Our mission is to create affordable housing opportunities for low-income families, help our clients in Rental Assistance become more self-sufficient and find long-term solutions to end homelessness.

I hope you will find these updates informative, and I hope to hear from you.

## Project Homeless Connect

In observance of Housing America Month, we recognize that there are some 6,000 individuals living on the streets of the City of San Diego who need our help.

This week, we held a news conference to begin recruiting our volunteer team for the [6th Annual Project Homeless Connect](#), a one-day resource fair for San Diego's homeless. It will be held January 11, 2012. Numerous services will be provided, such as medical evaluations, housing referrals, dental screenings and haircuts.

We also released a [report](#) that provides a snapshot of 660 homeless individuals who participated in the 5th Annual Project Homeless Connect, held on January 5, 2011. The findings are based on 547 surveys.

For the second year, the San Diego Housing Commission is the lead organizer for Project Homeless Connect. Our major organizing partners are the Family Health Centers of San Diego, St. Vincent de Paul Villages and the Interfaith Shelter Network.

## Connections Housing Downtown

To further address homelessness, we have committed \$2 million, including 89 Project-based housing vouchers, to support [Connections Housing Downtown](#), a one-stop center with on-site medical care.

This innovative program will provide 150 interim beds, 73 permanent beds, supportive rental units and services to prepare residents for independent living. Connections Housing Downtown will provide job counseling, mental health screening and drug and alcohol treatment—all under one roof.

Connections Housing Downtown is a collaboration with Family Health Centers of San Diego, Affirmed Housing Group and People Assisting the Homeless (PATH).

## Innovative Housing Programs

The San Diego Housing Commission is one of only 35 housing authorities in the nation to be designated a "Moving to Work" agency by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD).

This key designation has helped us create innovative Sponsor-based voucher programs to provide housing for the most vulnerable homeless individuals in the City of San Diego.

### Registry Week Partner

The more we know about our homeless citizens, the more we can help them.

Spearheaded by the Downtown San Diego Partnership and Centre City Development Corporation, Registry Week, held in September 2010, counted more than 1,000 homeless individuals and surveyed 700 of them. These surveys revealed 279 people who, based on the Common Ground Vulnerability Index, had a greater risk of dying if they remained on the streets.

The San Diego Housing Commission provided 125 Sponsor-based vouchers to help these vulnerable citizens find a home.

### Home Again Partner

A recent study shows that, over a year-and-a-half, one chronically homeless individual consumes about \$100,000 in emergency medical services.

The United Way's Home Again pilot program identified 25 chronically homeless individuals who were frequent users of public resources. The San Diego Housing Commission stepped in to provide Sponsor-based housing vouchers to move these 25 people into more stable living arrangements.

## Helping Homeless Veterans

One of the greatest tragedies of homelessness is how many veterans are affected—as many as 40 percent of San Diego's homeless are veterans.

The San Diego Housing Commission is an investment partner in Veterans Village of San Diego, the region's largest provider of housing and social services for homeless veterans.

We have invested \$8.7 million to help them create 320 transitional beds. In addition, we are helping Veterans Village develop a new, 24-bed facility for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, to be completed in 2012.

The HUD-Veterans Affairs for Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher program combines rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System, 360 VASH vouchers allocated to the San Diego Housing Commission are helping homeless veterans find permanent homes and rebuild their lives.

In coming months, I will be sharing more news about innovative partnerships and programs at the San Diego Housing Commission. We're about people.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Respectfully,

Richard C. Gentry  
*President & Chief Executive Officer*  
San Diego Housing Commission



Project Homeless Connect news conference - [Watch the video](#)

Speakers (left to right):

- **Kevin Faulconer**, San Diego City Council President Pro Tem, District 2;
- **Todd Gloria**, San Diego City Councilmember, District 3;
- **David Alvarez**, San Diego City Councilmember, District 8;
- **Sherri Lightner**, San Diego City Councilmember, District 1;
- **Jimmie Slack**, Chief of Staff, San Diego City Council President Tony Young's Office, District 4;
- **Boyd Long**, Assistant San Diego Police Chief;
- **Brian Fennessy**, Assistant San Diego Fire Chief;
- **Sister Patricia Cruise**, President & CEO of Father Joe's Villages.



Also, in attendance was Nicole Beydler of the California Association of Housing Authorities, in partnership with the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials.

In recognition of Housing America Month, she presented an award to the San Diego Housing Commission for our dedication to address homelessness and to create affordable housing for low-income families.

