



TO DATE 209 HOMELESS VETERANS FIND RENTAL HOUSING THROUGH “HOUSING OUR HEROES” SAN DIEGO HOUSING COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP WITH CITY OF SAN DIEGO

SDHC’s The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative, which includes the “Housing Our Heroes” landlord outreach program, is helping homeless Veterans leave the streets behind

San Diego, CA —An Army Veteran and landlord recently answered the call to rent to homeless Veterans after finding out about the [San Diego Housing Commission’s](#) (SDHC) partnership program for homeless Veterans that to date has resulted in 209 homeless Veterans finding rental housing.

“This program has been very beneficial; it’s a win-win situation for the landlords and also the Veterans who are looking for homes,” said Army Veteran Noble Robinson. “I would encourage all landlords in San Diego to look at this program, and not only look at it, but get involved.”

Robinson is also one of 130 landlords who have joined the “Housing Our Heroes” program, which is the landlord outreach component of SDHC’s The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative to provide housing opportunities for up to 1,000 homeless Veterans in the city of San Diego.

Robinson, who is renting two of his 10 rental units in Logan Heights to homeless Veterans, joined Mayor Kevin Faulconer, City Councilmember Todd Gloria, SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry, and partners at a news conference today announcing an update on the “Housing Our Heroes” program.

The announcement was made at San Diego High School’s upper athletic field, where crews were setting up for this weekend’s Stand Down 2016, at which Veterans will receive access to medical, legal and additional supportive services.

Mayor Faulconer urged homeless Veterans to attend Stand Down to connect with SDHC housing specialists, who will assist homeless Veterans who may qualify for housing opportunities through The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative.

“Really the bottom line is the ‘Housing Our Heroes’ campaign is making a difference in Veterans’ lives, and entire families are making their way off the streets,” Mayor Faulconer said. “Our heroes don’t need to spend another night on the street.”

The housing specialists will interview homeless Veterans to identify what level of services they need and their housing needs, and that information will be entered into the Homeless Management Information System, a regional database for homeless providers.

Mayor Faulconer shared the story of Luis, a 20-year Navy Veteran who asked to only use his first name to provide privacy for his family. Luis and his wife lost their jobs and were evicted because they fell behind on their rent. The couple and their three children – ages 8, 17, and 20 – became homeless and lived in their vehicle for two weeks, then in motels.

Luis and his family are among 18 homeless Veterans with families, including 34 children, who have been assisted by the “Housing Our Heroes” program. Luis and his family were the right match for “Housing Our Heroes” landlord Wallace Hickey, who wanted to help a Veteran family.

Now with a roof over their heads, Luis, a former Navy cook, as well as his wife and eldest daughter have found jobs. Luis said all he needed was this “chance” to get back on his feet.

So far, 130 landlords have answered the call to provide rental housing for homeless Veterans, listing 333 of their rental housing units.

However, Councilmember Gloria urged more landlords to sign up for “Housing Our Heroes,” particularly because 136 homeless Veterans are still searching for housing through the program.

“Landlords are critical to the success of this program. In a country as wealthy as this, the words ‘homeless’ and ‘Veterans’ should never go together. Here in San Diego, we’re working hard to make sure that juxtaposition ends,” said Councilmember Gloria, who serves as the Chair of the Regional Continuum of Care Council, which oversees Federal funding for homelessness that comes into the San Diego region.

The financial incentives for the [“Housing Our Heroes”](#) landlord outreach program include incentive payments, security deposits and utility assistance. To date, more than \$145,000 has been provided to landlords:

- \$54,750 on **incentive payments for landlords**, who receive \$500 for the first apartment they rent to a homeless Veteran and \$250 for each additional unit.
- \$91,031 on **security deposit & utility assistance** – an average of \$1,500 in security deposits and \$100 in utility assistance per household.

In addition, a new “Housing Our Heroes” rental housing listing service lets landlords immediately list their rentals – free of charge – with pictures and information about their rental unit.

SDHC President & CEO Gentry said SDHC brings years of experience in providing housing opportunities for homeless Veterans.

“In the last five years before the launch of the ‘Housing Our Heroes’ program, the San Diego Housing Commission has helped 992 Veterans obtain housing through our Federal rental housing voucher programs,” said SDHC President & CEO Gentry.

Gentry added that SDHC is also a landlord to 19 homeless Veterans in the program who are living in SDHC rental properties, which include more than 3,000 affordable housing units.

The majority of the homeless Veterans who have secured housing through the “Housing our Heroes” program are between the ages of 40 and 65, followed by 25 to 40 years of age. Homeless Veterans older than 65 represent less than 10 percent, and those 18 to 24 years of age make up less than 1 percent.

“Homeless Veterans you have to do your part. Your part is simple. All you have to do is show up and raise your hand,” said Phil Landis, the CEO of Veterans Village of San Diego, and one of the service providers of “Housing Our Heroes.”

SDHC has conducted a number of “Housing Our Heroes” outreach efforts, including:

- 18 informational meetings with agencies, apartment association groups, and nonprofits
- A mailer to 10,000 landlords, real estate and business groups; and
- 77 letters mailed to nonprofits, public entities, schools and additional service providers.

Also in attendance at today’s news conference were: CEO of PATH and Connections Housing Downtown Joel Roberts; CEO of Father Joe’s Villages, Deacon Jim Vargas; Regional Manager of Veterans Community Services Angie Stripling; President of the San Diego County Apartment Association Jeff Hickox; Executive Director of the San Diego division of the California Apartment Association Whitney Benzian; and President and CEO of Alpha Project Bob McElroy.

Background:

The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative will invest close to \$12.5 million over two years in Federal, City, and SDHC resources to provide housing opportunities for homeless Veterans in the city who are living on the streets or in shelters.

“Housing Our Heroes” is part of [HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO](#), SDHC’s landmark three-year Homelessness Action Plan, which uses the Housing First Model – to provide homeless individuals with housing as quickly as possible, with supportive services as needed.

Homeless Veterans are referred to the program through [service providers](#):

- Alpha Project - Catholic Charities - Community Resource Center
- Courage to Call - ElderHelp - Episcopal Community Services
- Father Joe’s Village - PATH - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Veterans Community Services - Volunteers of America
- Veterans Village of San Diego - YWCA

Landlords seeking information about The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative can call 619-578-7768 or email HousingOurHeroes@sdhc.org for more information.

For more information about SDHC, visit www.sdhc.org

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Media Contact:

Maria Velasquez, Chief Communications Officer
619-578-7560 mariav@sdhc.org