



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

**News Release**

January 30, 2013

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## **RECORD NUMBER OF HOMELESS SAN DIEGANS—1,150 ATTEND PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT FOR CLOTHING AND SERVICES**

*Among those served were 92 families with children*

**San Diego, CA**—Chris, 25, came to San Diego in November from North Dakota for an online listing for a sales job that “turned out to be a real bad scam.” He was among a record 1,150 homeless San Diegans who obtained clothing, food, haircuts, flu shots and other free services at the seventh annual Project Homeless Connect, a one-day resource fair held today at downtown’s Golden Hall.

“I think it’s cool that people can come and get everything that they need,” said Chris, who has been living on the streets. He left Project Homeless Connect with a down vest and some other clothes, a blanket with a sun and moon design he considers simply “beautiful,” and enormous appreciation for the work that made it all possible.

More than 550 volunteers and 71 service providers came together to provide the assistance. The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) was lead organizer for the event for a third straight year, providing financial support and volunteer recruitment through the agency’s website. Major partners were the Interfaith Shelter Network, Family Health Centers of San Diego, and St. Vincent de Paul Village.

“Today Project Homeless Connect has shown how much we can accomplish when we devote a day to focusing on a very vulnerable population,” said Richard C. Gentry, SDHC President & CEO. “We are enormously grateful to the volunteers and organizations who came to Golden Hall to make a difference and make this event a success.”

Mayor Bob Filner served as an honorary co-chair along with City Council President Todd Gloria and Ms. Bronwyn Ingram.

The Mayor thanked the volunteers for providing their time and care for homeless San Diegans. “It’s difficult to comprehend that these ordinary needs that most of us take for granted have got to be met,” said the mayor. “Our people have got to look the homeless in the eye and say that when one of us is suffering, we’re all suffering.”

Patricia, 55, arrived before the doors opened and said she would be asking about housing, clothing, a haircut and legal aid for an encroachment ticket she got for sleeping in the streets.

Registration for Project Homeless Connect was paperless for the first time, using computers at the entrance. “This approach helped streamline the intake process and provided real-time information on how many people registered today,” said Todd Gloria.

Cox Communications provided the increased Internet bandwidth for the project, Windstream provided a wireless network and Hewlett Packard donated wireless cards for the computers.

Ronald, 37, has been homeless on-and-off for about seven years, He picked up new jeans, shoes and socks, a sweatshirt and some other warm clothes along with information on housing for him and his pregnant fiancée. He enjoyed a doughnut with sprinkles but said “the best thing for food was these right here,” showing a large container of raisins. “Delicious – they’re good for you.”

“It’s really nice that the community came together to be able to help people,” Ronald said. “There are a lot of people in need.”

Tables of clothing, shoes and socks quickly emptied. There were lunches and desserts, water and soda, and a wide variety of toiletries such as toothpaste and shampoo—all donated by San Diego businesses and individuals.

Among the attendees was Tim, 56, who used to distribute clothes as a volunteer at holiday events for homeless San Diegans put on by the City of San Diego in the mid-80’s. Tim, homeless for about a month after losing a janitorial maintenance job, picked up a pair of dress shoes (“for my job interviews”), casual shoes for walking around, a shirt and slacks.

The 550 volunteers (including those assisting with set-up on Tuesday) also was a record.

Ms. Ingram led Team First Lady San Diego, a volunteer group at the event. “Project Homeless Connect is a very important annual event because it’s something that actually connects the services that are available to the people who are in need of the services,” Ingram said.

Chartae Witherspoon, from Ashford University, was one of the volunteers at Project Homeless Connect, escorting attendees from station to station. “The people have been very, very grateful for the help,” she said.

Witherspoon was a first-time volunteer but will be back. “It’s a good way to let the community know that we care and want to help,” she said.

Also planning to return was hair stylist Cynthia Orci from California Hair Design, one of the major service providers for Project Homeless Connect. “I wanted to give back to my community somehow and I think this was the perfect time and event to do so,” she said. “It’s very heartwarming.”

Last year, Project Homeless Connect served 941 homeless San Diegans, including 112 families with children. [Read the 2012 Project Homeless Connect Report.](#)

Below is a list of service providers who participated today at Project Homeless Connect:

- Alpha Project
- Bellus Academy of Hair Design
- California Hair Design
- Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego – Homeless Women’s Services
- Center for Justice and Social Compassion
- Central Region Public Health Center
- Community Research Foundation (CRF)
  - Areta Crowell BPSR Center
  - Douglas Young BPSR Center
  - Downtown Impact
  - Heartland Center
  - South Bay Guidance

- Wellness and Recovery Center
- County of San Diego
  - Behavioral Health Services
  - Health and Human Services Agency – Centre City Family Resource Center
  - Metro Family Resource Center
- Downtown San Diego Partnership
- East County Transitional Living Center
- Episcopal Community Services - Friend to Friend
- Kaplan College Nursing Program
- Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc.
  - Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy
- McAlister Institute - HOPE
- Melody's Mobile Dental Hygiene
- Mental Health America of San Diego County
- Mental Health Systems (MHS)
  - MHS - Center Star Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
- National Center for Deaf Advocacy
- Neighborhood House Association
- People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)
- Phoenix House
- Point Loma Nazarene University - Nursing Program & foot washers
- Recovery Innovations
- San Diego Book Project
- San Diego County Dental Society
- San Diego Humane Society
- San Diego Rescue Mission
- San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program
- San Diego Youth Services
- Second Chance
- Sharp Memorial Hospital - stroke risk factor screenings
- Team First Lady San Diego
- The Association for Community Housing Solutions (TACHS)
- The Salvation Army
  - Adult Rehabilitation Center
  - Centre City Corps Community Center Corp.
  - Centre City Corps Community Center, Family & Social Service Office
  - Shelter Transition Employment Program Services (STEPS)
- U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
- University of California, San Diego (UCSD)
  - Bridges to Recovery - substance abuse treatment
  - Gifford Clinic - health screenings
  - Hepatitis Care Connection Program
- Union of Pan Asian Communities Counseling & Treatment Center
- Veterans Community Services
- Veterans Village of San Diego
  - Courage to Call
- Volunteers of America
- YMCA Childcare Resource Service
- YWCA of San Diego County

## **Large Donations – Thank You**

### **Food and Beverages**

- David Ross “The Waterman” - 700 bottles of water
- Einstein Brothers Bagels, San Carlos - bagels
- James Justus - 700 bottles of water
- Just Call Us Volunteers - salad and bread
- Souplantation, La Mesa - muffins
- San Diego Rescue Mission - desserts and beverages
- St. Vincent de Paul Village – 1,200 meals
- The Coca-Cola Company - 1,150 bottles of water

### **Clothing**

- Cleary Company – 1,000 pairs of shoes
- San Diego Housing Commission staff – 700 pairs of socks
- The Gold Diggers - shoes and socks

### **Toiletries**

- Dr. David E. Brockett - dental supplies
- Dr. Kriston Gallipeau (Bankers Hill Dental) - dental supplies
- Jack Elmore - toiletries
- ResMed - 1,200 backpacks
- San Diego Dental Society – 500 toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss
- San Diego Gas & Electric - 1,200 first aid kits
- Sunstar Butler - toothbrushes and dental floss

### **Intake Technology**

- Hewlett Packard - wireless cards
- Windstream - wireless network for the day
- Cox Communications - increased bandwidth for Golden Hall – day of event

## **About Project Homeless Connect**

Project Homeless Connect, a national best practice model, originated in San Francisco in October 2004 and brings much needed services together in one place on one day making it easy for homeless people to get the help and answers they need. Utilizing community volunteers, service providers, businesses and government, the goal of Project Homeless Connect is to provide basic needs and services to those in need and to also help people get off the streets and into a more stable living environment.

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