



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

**News Release**

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## **THE GENEROSITY OF SAN DIEGANS MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR 854 HOMELESS SAN DIEGANS AT THE 8<sup>TH</sup> PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT - DOWNTOWN**

*Participants received clothing, food, flu shots, dental exams and other services*

**SAN DIEGO, CA**— Karrie, who is staying with her 9-year-old son and 7-year-old daughter at the San Diego Rescue Mission, received free dental exams for herself and her children and other services at The 8<sup>th</sup> Project Homeless Connect-Downtown (Project Homeless Connect).

“It connects me to resources that I didn’t even know are out there,” Karrie, 34, said of Project Homeless Connect, which is organized by the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC).

[Project Homeless Connect](#) helped 854 homeless San Diegans receive clothing, food and a variety of services today, such as flu shots, dental exams, haircuts, housing assistance information, identification cards from the State Department of Motor Vehicles, and tests for HIV and Hepatitis C.

Project Homeless Connect was prepared to provide services to more than 1,000 homeless San Diegans.

“The good news is that fewer homeless San Diegans may have needed help from Project Homeless Connect, possibly because the city-sponsored, year-round homeless residential and service center opened earlier this year, which provides services with an on-site medical clinic,” said SDHC Vice President of Housing Innovations Mathew Packard. “Also, Project Homeless Connect was held earlier in the winter than previous years.”

Hundreds of volunteers and 86 service providers came together to help homeless San Diegans at Project Homeless Connect and Interim Mayor Todd Gloria served as the Honorary Chair.

“This event is really an entry point or an opening of a door for folks to hopefully to be able to change their lives,” Gloria said at Project Homeless Connect. “It’s great that the San Diego Housing Commission creates this event and allows San Diegans to take their compassion and funnel it toward something positive that actually helps to end homelessness.”

Volunteers escorted homeless participants to stations set up throughout Golden Hall, where services were provided. For Pam, a 64-year-old first-time volunteer who escorted Karrie and her children, the experience was personal.

“I lost my daughter four and a half years ago,” Pam said. “I always said I was going to do this because she was always so kind to homeless people.”

A real estate broker, Pam said she also helped a homeless man with mental health issues during Project Homeless Connect.

“It makes me feel good to be able to treat these people like people,” Pam said. “When you see them on the streets, you just kind of ignore them and pretend they’re not there. They are people. They have families. They have stories to tell.”

One of those people with a story is Linda, 55, who has been homeless “on and off” since 2006, when her mother died. A long-time caregiver for her mother, Linda said she became homeless because her mother did not have a will, and her house had to be sold after her death.

Linda, who attended Project Homeless Connect two years ago as well, said she needed to check to see if she still on the waiting list for federal Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) rental assistance administered by the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC). She also received a haircut for the first time in a year.

“It needed some professional trimming,” Linda said of her hair.

Linda received a haircut from Cade White, a self-employed hairstylist who graduated from Bellus Academy and volunteered to provide haircuts at Project Homeless Connect.

“Regardless of who it is or where they come from, everybody feels better when their hair is maintained,” White said.

In addition to services provided today, tables were filled with donated clothing, shoes and socks for homeless San Diegans. San Diego businesses and individuals also donated lunches and desserts, water and soda, and a wide variety of toiletries such as toothpaste and shampoo to assist homeless San Diegans.

San Diego City Councilmembers Marti Emerald and Lorie Zapf, Police Chief William Lansdowne and Fire Chief Javier Mainar also stopped by Project Homeless Connect to lend their support.

Registration for Project Homeless Connect was paperless for the second time, using computers at the entrance.

Cox Communications provided the increased Internet bandwidth for Project Homeless Connect, and Skyriver Communications provided the wireless network. \*Meeting Tomorrow provided rental laptops at a discount to Project Homeless Connect.

At the previous Project Homeless Connect, held on January 30, 2013, 1,143 homeless San Diegans were served, including 92 families with children. [Read the 2013 Project Homeless Connect Report.](#)

SDHC was the lead organizer for Project Homeless Connect for the fourth consecutive time, providing financial support and, through SDHC’s website, volunteer recruitment. Major partners were the City of San Diego, Interfaith Shelter Network, Family Health Centers of San Diego and St. Vincent de Paul Village.

For more information, visit [www.sdhc.org](http://www.sdhc.org).

*NOTE: \*Updated 12.6.13 to correct name.*

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