



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

**News Release**

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**Media Contact: Maria Velasquez, Vice President**  
**Community Relations & Communications**  
619-578-7560 [mariav@sdhc.org](mailto:mariav@sdhc.org)

## **SAN DIEGO HOUSING COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM SCREENED 79 CHILDREN FOR LEAD POISONING**

*Lead Poisoning Prevention Week event is the sixth in a series of screenings*

**San Diego, CA**—In a program that could prevent devastating, lifetime health impacts, 79 children were tested for toxic lead in their blood in a blood level screening event at the Neighborhood House Association. Of those, one tested positive for lead.

The free testing was in recognition of National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 21-27. This year's theme is "Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future."

Blood-lead testing was conducted under the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) "[Home Safe Home](#)" program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and in partnership with La Maestra Community Health Center and the Environmental Health Coalition.

"We're very fortunate in San Diego to have federal funding to sponsor a program for families who may be unaware that their children may be suffering from lead poisoning," said Richard C. Gentry, SDHC President & CEO. "Since 2010 we have helped test 384 children. These early tests are critical for protecting their health and safety."

Using a pin prick to a finger, the tests determine how much lead is in a child's blood using portable analyzers purchased by SDHC. Exposure to such sources as lead-based paint can have severe effects on children including brain damage, learning disabilities, reduced muscle and bone growth and hearing loss.

Test results are available within a few minutes. Families with children who test positive for lead are referred to local clinics for further medical evaluation, including a blood retest to confirm the initial results and provide a more accurate diagnosis. Families also are provided with information on how to eliminate lead hazards from their homes.

The event was the sixth blood-lead screening event conducted through the program since October 27, 2010. In addition to the 79 children, three pregnant women were tested; none showed elevated blood-lead levels.

Lead is most commonly found on exterior-painted surfaces, interior woodwork, doors and windows, and exposure can come from breathing in or ingesting dust from lead-based paint as it chips or deteriorates over time. Children in homes built before 1978, when lead-based paint was banned nationally for residential use, are considered to be at higher risk for exposure.

In five previous blood lead testing events since October 27, 2010, a total of 384 children were tested and eight were found with lead in their blood.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Children tested</b>	<b>Tested positive</b>
Cherokee Point Elementary School	October 27, 2010	106	0
King Chavez Elementary School	April 14, 2011	117	2
Neighborhood House Association	September 17, 2011	24	0
Environmental Health Coalition Health Fair (Cesar Chavez Park)	September 24, 2011	12	0
Fiesta del Sol (Cesar Chavez Park)	August 11, 2012	125	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>384</b>	<b>8</b>

The testing is part of a grant to eliminate hazards to children from lead-based paint, also allowing SDHC to remediate homes with lead-based paint hazards. SDHC has received eight HUD Lead Hazard Control grants since 2002, totaling \$22.4 million.

- 2002 \$1.89 million
- 2005 \$7.0 million
- 2008: \$7.0 million
- 2010: \$4.1 million
- 2012: \$2.48 million

The most recent grant, announced [June 14, 2012](#), will allow SDHC to test 175 homes for lead-based paint hazards and remediate 135 of them.

In addition to blood testing and lead-based paint remediation, SDHC uses the HUD funds to conduct “Healthy Homes” assessments for such problems as roaches, rodents, dust mites, mold and moisture, poor indoor air quality and debris or unsafe conditions that can cause injuries.

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

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