



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

News Release

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LOGAN HEIGHTS PARENTS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FREE TESTING TO DETECT CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING

*One child out of 79 tests positive for lead poisoning—San Diego
Housing Commission partnership program helps parents prevent
harmful, long-term effects*

SAN DIEGO, CA—Local parents who live in older homes were urged to have their children checked for lead poisoning at today's free [blood-lead level testing](#) held by the San Diego Housing Commission's (SDHC's) "Home Safe Home" program.

Among the 79 children tested today at King-Chavez Primary Academy in Logan Heights, one child tested positive for high levels of lead. A [partnership](#) among SDHC, the Environmental Health Coalition and La Maestra Health Center made the testing possible.

"Blood-lead level testing is possible because of a \$2.48 million grant awarded last year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to the San Diego Housing Commission," said Maria Velasquez, SDHC's Vice President of Community Relations and Communications. "In addition, HUD has commended the San Diego Housing Commission for a 'job well done' in its 'Home Safe Home' and lead remediation programs."

To date 646 children have been tested at 8 various community events since 2010. Thirteen have had high lead levels.

Blood-lead level testing is important because lead poisoning does not produce physical symptoms, said Leticia Ayala, Associate Director of the Environmental Health Coalition.

"Childhood lead poisoning is a silent disease," Ayala said. "We don't see it. We don't smell it. Yet it is hidden in the paint of many of our older homes. There is no safe level of lead exposure."

Blood-lead levels can be detected easily with noninvasive portable Lead Care II blood analyzers bought by SDHC. The blood analyzers require only a small pinprick to a child's finger and provide results within three minutes. Families with children who test positive are referred for further medical evaluation.

In addition to blood-lead level testing, SDHC's "Home Safe Home" program tests older homes

for the presence of lead and provides funding to remove the danger from homes.

Grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development fund SDHC's "Home Safe Home" program, which is overseen by SDHC's Real Estate Division. Since 2002, SDHC has received \$22.47 million in grants.

HUD Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grants	
GRANT YEAR	GRANT AMOUNT
2002	\$1.89 million
2005	\$7.0 million
2008	\$7.0 million
2010	\$4.1 million
2012	\$2.48 million
TOTAL	\$22.47 million

BLOOD TESTING EVENTS SINCE APRIL 28-29, 2010			
Location	Date	Children Tested	Tested Positive for Elevated Blood-Lead Level
Sherman Heights Community Center	April 28-29, 2010	128	4
Cherokee Point Elementary School	October 27, 2010	82	1
King-Chavez Primary Academy	April 14, 2011	116	2
Euclid Medical Center	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	126	4
National Lead Prevention Week (Neighborhood House Association)	October 25, 2012	79	1
King-Chavez Primary Academy	February 26, 2013	79	1
TOTAL		646	13

Although lead-based paint was banned for residential use nationally in 1978, children in homes built before then remain at risk for exposure. Lead is most often 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.

Lead also may be found in the paint on imported toys or those made in the United States before 1978.

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.

NOTE: This news release was updated on August 12, 2013, to update data from the Environmental Health Coalition regarding blood-testing events held since 2010, and an interview with a parent was removed.

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