



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

## News Release

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

### **1,145 SAN DIEGANS TOOK STEPS IN REBUILDING THEIR LIVES AT THE 9<sup>TH</sup> PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT – DOWNTOWN**

*Close to 400 volunteers and 90 service providers assist homeless participants; effort to add homeless San Diegans to a housing database was a new service*

**SAN DIEGO, CA**—For Ruby and her family of six, adding their names to a database list for housing today, a first-time effort at The 9th Project Homeless Connect – Downtown San Diego (Project Homeless Connect), was a hopeful step toward the stability, peace of mind and comfort of a permanent home.

Ruby, 35, her husband Gary and their four children were among the 1,145 San Diegans who participated in Project Homeless Connect, a one-day resource fair for homeless San Diegans that was organized by the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC).

After living in motels and, most recently in an overnight shelter with her husband on the streets, Ruby wants a home to get back on her feet. “I don’t have to worry about where I’m going to go at night, I don’t have to worry about safety,” she said about having a home. “I can start doing more job searching. I have more time – I don’t have to carry stuff around with me.”

Mayor Kevin Faulconer, the Honorary Chair for Project Homeless Connect, spoke and shook hands with homeless San Diegans as they waited in line to enter the event in Golden Hall at the San Diego Community Concourse.

“This is all about coming together as San Diegans to really help make a difference in people’s lives,” Mayor Faulconer said at the opening of the event. “What today is about is helping people get off the streets and making those connections into supportive housing.”

For the first time, homeless San Diegans at Project Homeless Connect had the opportunity to add their names to a database list for housing.

Information will be entered into the Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System, which was launched in June 2014. This system allows homeless housing providers to instantly share this information with each other. They use this information to screen homeless individuals for the most appropriate housing options based on who is most in need:

- Homeless San Diegans who have been on the street the longest; and
- The most vulnerable homeless San Diegans, based on their physical or mental health needs.

In addition, clothing, haircuts, flu shots, dental screenings, and housing and employment counseling also were available at Project Homeless Connect to hundreds of San Diegans, the majority living on the streets or in transitional housing.

A mobile medical unit from Family Health Centers of San Diego provided medical screenings. St. Vincent de Paul Village served hot meals at lunchtime. The California Department of Motor Vehicles provided identification cards, which give homeless individuals access to important documents needed to obtain housing and employment.

Close to 400 volunteers and 90 service providers came together at [Project Homeless Connect](#).

“The organization here is incredible, and the way in which this is being handled is amazing,” City Council President Sherri Lightner said. “To get this many volunteers and have them be organized, I’m just very grateful.”

City Councilmember Todd Gloria said Project Homeless Connect brings everyone together to try to move homeless San Diegans off the streets and into housing.

“I’m incredibly grateful to the San Diego Housing Commission for the leadership role they play,” Councilmember Gloria said. “Obviously, we have too many people living on our streets, and a project like this one is one of the ways we can get people in the door and hopefully up the ladder of housing affordability so they’re no longer on the streets.”

Faith, 59, is a San Diego State University graduate and licensed vocational nurse who has been homeless for nine months. She arrived early at Project Homeless Connect to take advantage of housing information and to replace a stolen identification card.

“I would like a permanent housing solution,” said Faith, who spends her nights at a women’s shelter but also has lived in abandoned houses. “I would like a haircut, so I can present myself in a better way to get a job.”

SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry said Project Homeless Connect meets the needs of homeless San Diegans.

“I’m thankful for the dedication and hard work of San Diego Housing Commission employees, volunteers and service providers,” SDHC President & CEO Gentry said.

City Councilmembers Mark Kersey and Chris Cate, along with SDHC Board Chairman Gary Gramling and Commissioner Kellee Hubbard, walked through Golden Hall, where volunteers, including a team from Council President Pro Tem Marti Emerald’s office, escorted homeless participants to service provider stations.

Christine Wood of Spring Valley said she signed up to volunteer after seeing a television spot about Project Homeless Connect. “I think that people need help,” she said. “You don’t want to give them a handout, but a hand up.”

Lt. Debra Farrar, who oversees the San Diego Police Department’s Homeless Outreach Team, said being homeless is “a complex issue,” with issues ranging from mental illness to not being able to afford a down payment. Some seeking help are chronically homeless; others may be just one paycheck away from homelessness – but all receive assistance at Project Homeless Connect, Farrar noted.

In addition, San Diego Fire Chief Javier Mainar said services provided at Project Homeless Connect can help reduce homeless individuals' reliance on publicly funded emergency services and "get them out of the 911 system."

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

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

The previous one-day resource fair, The 8th Project Homeless Connect, was held on December 4, 2013, serving 854 San Diegans, including 99 families with children. [Read The 8th Project Homeless Connect Report.](#)

On January 30, 2013, The 7<sup>th</sup> Project Homeless Connect served 1,143 San Diegans, including 92 families with children. [Read The 7<sup>th</sup> Project Homeless Connect Report.](#)

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

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