



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

News Release

January 15, 2013

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

MORE THAN 150 HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS SOUGHT PROTECTION FROM UNUSUALLY COLD WEATHER AS SAN DIEGO HOUSING COMMISSION FUNDED ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS

Emergency beds opened at four locations for the past four days

San Diego, CA— More than 150 homeless individuals found protection from nighttime temperatures in the 30s and low 40s after the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) partnered with local agencies to provide funding to open additional emergency shelter beds at St. Vincent de Paul Village and three other downtown locations.

Brandon, 28, who has been homeless since 2010, said he felt “happy and relieved being out of the cold.” Before the additional beds became available at St. Vincent de Paul, Brandon said he would wear “as many layers of clothing as possible (and) bundle up in my sleeping bag.”

The collaborative plan was developed Friday when the San Diego Police Department Homeless Outreach Team expressed concern to SDHC over the risk to downtown homeless San Diegans from the forecast of near-freezing nighttime weather, some of the region’s coldest temperatures in several years. The beds opened that same night and remained available through early Tuesday morning.

“By taking quick action together, we’ve increased emergency shelter capacity and helped protect a very vulnerable population,” said Richard C. Gentry, SDHC President & CEO.

SDHC expects to commit up to \$18,000 toward the emergency action to help organizations cover their operational costs, which include food, supplies and other expenses.

“To me, it’s a blessing,” said Yvette, 44, who stayed at St. Vincent de Paul Village. Yvette, who has been homeless off and on for 10 years, said she had been sleeping on a street corner and that the cold was “unbearable at times.”

Total occupancy at the four shelters averaged 151 individuals per night at the following locations: St. Vincent de Paul Village operated by Father’s Joe Villages; Rachel’s Women’s Center operated by Catholic Charities; San Diego Rescue Mission; and Neil Good Day Center operated by Alpha Project through a contract with the San Diego Housing Commission.

San Diego Police Department Assistant Chief Boyd Long said the Homeless Outreach Team “is dedicated to the safety of all people in the City of San Diego. Through our partnership with the San Diego Housing Commission, we were able to help those who needed our help during this recent cold spell. We are here to Serve and Protect.”

Leslie, a 38-year-old homeless woman who had been spending nights by a building near Balboa Park, said when temperatures fell into the 30’s it was all she can do to “grin and bear it and just deal with it.” At St. Vincent de Paul, she said, “I feel safe. People see me and they greet me and I feel welcome.”

Shawn Rivers, residential supervisor at St. Vincent de Paul, said the shelter clearly means a lot to those who took advantage of it.

“The alternative would be to be out there in 30- to 35-degree weather, at night, with a sweater on,” he said.

“I’d like to thank the Housing Commission,” said Sister Patricia Cruise, Father Joe’s Villages President & CEO. “Without their support, we simply would not have the wherewithal necessary to provide this emergency shelter.”

SDHC administers two emergency winter shelters for homeless adults for the City of San Diego. The Downtown Emergency Shelter, with 220 beds, opened November 23 at 16th Street and Newton Avenue and is managed by Alpha Project. The Homeless Veteran’s Emergency Winter Shelter, which houses 150 men, opened December 7 in the Midway District and is operated by Veterans Village of San Diego.

For more information visit SDHC.org.

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