



## **SAN DIEGO HOUSING COMMISSION AND SDSU LAUNCH UNPRECEDENTED PARTNERSHIP TO PROVIDE HOUSING FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN IMPACTED BY HOMELESSNESS**

*Mayor Kevin Faulconer, City Councilmember Todd Gloria and SDHC also announce pilot program for 25 homeless families at the Monarch School and up to \$10 million to create permanent affordable housing with supportive services for homeless San Diegans*

**San Diego, CA** — Up to 100 college students who have been homeless or at risk of homelessness will receive rental assistance through a nationally unprecedented partnership launched today by the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) and San Diego State University (SDSU).

San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and City Councilmember Todd Gloria joined SDHC President and CEO Richard C. Gentry and SDSU President Elliot Hirshman to unveil the partnership, one of three new initiatives of HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO, SDHC’s landmark three-year Homelessness Action Plan ([watch the video](#)).

“Our HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO partnership will provide approximately \$1 million to the Guardian Scholars Program, and these funds will ensure that vulnerable students can pursue their college education without worrying about how they’re going to pay for housing,” Mayor Faulconer said.

Standing outside SDSU’s Zura Hall as students made their way to class, Mayor Faulconer said the new initiative is a first-of-its kind partnership in the nation between a public housing agency and a four-year university to serve students affected by homelessness.

The Guardian Scholars Program assists students who have been homeless or at risk of homelessness, including youths aging out of foster care, under legal guardianship or wards of the state.

“Our Guardian Scholars have persevered against incredible odds. And they have asked us for only one thing: to support our shared future in San Diego. Our new partnership with the San Diego Housing Commission does exactly that,” SDSU President Hirshman said.

The announcement comes at the start of the second year of [HOUSING FIRST - SAN DIEGO](#), which was launched on November 12, 2014, and which will impact the lives of as many as 1,500 homeless San Diegans.

In addition, in the second year of HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO, SDHC is launching a pilot project to provide federal rental housing vouchers to 25 families who have at least one child enrolled at the Monarch School in Barrio Logan, which is one of only a handful of schools nationwide that specifically serve homeless children.

“While securing housing is just the first step out of homelessness, it’s our hope that this initiative’s combination of housing assistance, workforce training, case management and student education will help our families build long-term self-sufficiency,” said Monarch School CEO Erin Spiewak.

For the second year in a row, SDHC will also award up to another \$10 million to developers for the creation of permanent affordable housing for homeless Veterans, seniors, individuals and families, as well as youths aging out of the foster care system, and award up to 300 Federal rental housing vouchers to address homelessness.

Councilmember Gloria, who as President of the City Council at the launch of HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO spearheaded the City’s commitment to create more permanent affordable housing in the City, announced the first-year accomplishments of HOUSING FIRST-SAN DIEGO, a three-year, five-point plan.

“The successes that we have achieved in the first year of HOUSING FIRST—SAN DIEGO are moving this City forward as we address homelessness,” Councilmember Gloria said.

HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO’s achievements include:

- Invested \$8.2 million in City, State and Federal funds toward the construction of:
  - Cypress Apartments in East Village, developed by the Affirmed Housing Group, which will provide 62 units for homeless individuals.
  - Talmadge Gateway in City Heights, developed by Wakeland Housing & Development Corp. and City Heights Community Development Corp., which will provide 59 units for homeless seniors.
  - These funds are part of the \$30 million SDHC has committed over the next three years to build permanent affordable housing with supportive services.
- Awarded 180 new Federal rental housing vouchers to assist homeless and formerly homeless San Diegans. These vouchers will provide rental assistance for residents at:
  - Cypress Apartments;
  - Talmadge Gateway; as well as
  - Alpha Square, a new construction development in the East Village neighborhood of Downtown San Diego that held its grand opening on November 18.
- Kicked off the rehabilitation of Hotel Churchill, which will provide 72 units for homeless Veterans, youth aging out of foster care and adults exiting the corrections system. The SDHC is working with its nonprofit affiliate, Housing Development Partners, to rehabilitate Hotel Churchill.
- Purchased the 120-unit Village North Senior Garden Apartments in Clairemont Mesa, setting aside 20 percent of the units, totaling 24 apartments, for homeless seniors.
- Dedicated 25 SDHC-owned apartments to be used by homeless families. Between Jan. 1 and Oct. 31, this rapid rehousing component of HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO assisted 31 families, including five that became financially self-reliant and were able to move to permanent housing.

“HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO is a bold initiative. It is creating affordable housing with supportive services to help homeless San Diegans rebuild their lives. With strong support from Mayor Kevin Faulconer, the City Council and our partners, HOUSING FIRST - SAN DIEGO has made impressive strides over the first year,” SDHC President and CEO Gentry said.

The first-year accomplishments of HOUSING FIRST-SAN DIEGO were recognized by a proclamation from U.S. Congressman Scott Peters, presented by Field Representative Brian Elliott, and a certificate of recognition from Speaker of the California State Assembly Toni Atkins, presented by Senior Field Representative Jason Weisz.

Also representing SDHC at the news conference were Chairman of the Board Gary Gramling and Commissioners Kellee Hubbard, Ben Moraga, and Dorothy Surdi.

Representing SDHC partner agencies were Phil Landis, president and CEO of Veterans Village of San Diego; Dolores Diaz, executive director of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless; Kerrie Resendes, managing director of People Assisting the Homeless; and Monarch School Principal Joseph Wiseman and Incoming Board Chair Julie Dubick.

## **HOUSING FIRST-SAN DIEGO NEW INITIATIVES**

### **Background:**

#### **Guardian Scholars Program**

The partnership between SDHC and SDSU will bolster SDSU’s Guardian Scholars Program, which provides aid for tuition, fees, books and meals for students who have been homeless or at risk of homelessness, including youths aging out of foster care, under legal guardianship or wards of the state.

Under the new partnership, SDHC will direct up to \$600,000 per year to the Guardian Scholars Program from Federal Moving to Work Funds. SDSU will raise approximately \$400,000 annually.

SDSU will use the funds to provide the students with rental assistance for dorm rooms, shared housing or apartments, but not fraternity or sorority houses. The program will begin in August 2016, in time for the start of the fall semester.

Participants must be full-time students and meet academic and program standards to receive assistance under this initiative. The Guardian Scholars Program has a 95 percent graduation rate.

SDSU President Elliot Hirshman said that recent program participants have had notable achievements including making the dean’s list, leading student government and Greek organizations and carrying out groundbreaking research.

#### **The Monarch School Project**

The goal of the three-year pilot phase of the program, which will begin in January, is to assist up to 25 families who currently live in shelters, motels, automobiles, on the streets, in parks or “doubled-up” with other families in small apartments.

SDHC will provide no-interest loans with low monthly repayments to help these families pay for security deposits or other rental costs. The students' parents will take part in work readiness programs at the SDHC Achievement Academy, a state-of-the-art learning skills center and computer lab that emphasizes career planning, job skills and personal financial education. The training is intended to help them increase their income, enabling them to transition to permanent housing.

**Award Development Funds – Up to \$10 million**

The development funds and housing vouchers may be used for new construction; the purchase and rehabilitation of existing multifamily housing; or the conversion of transitional housing to permanent supportive housing. These permanent supportive housing units will remain affordable for 55 years.

For more information about [HOUSING FIRST-SAN DIEGO](#), visit SDHC's website, [www.sdhc.org](http://www.sdhc.org).

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