

NEWS RELEASE

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National housing group hails San Diego's successes

*San Diego Housing Commission wins four awards for
"smart" business practices and resident programs*

SAN DIEGO - The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) has won four Awards of Merit from the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). The awards recognize outstanding, innovative achievements in affordable housing and community development.

The following Housing Commission programs and projects received NAHRO Awards of Merit:

Leveraging San Diego's Public Housing: SDHC broke new ground by becoming one of the first public housing agencies in the nation to transition out of the under-funded federal Public Housing program. Last year, SDHC received approval from HUD to retain ownership of the 1,366 local Public Housing units and switch to voucher subsidies for tenant rental assistance. SDHC will use the equity in those properties to leverage funding to develop additional affordable housing in San Diego. The achievement has been widely recognized throughout the national affordable housing community as an innovative, entrepreneurial action.

Money Moves: A financial education after-school club for low-income teens. Money Moves serves youth residing at SDHC's El Camino (EC) affordable housing community in Carmel Valley. The fun, hands-on program involves having participants use mock "EC Dollars" deposited at the "EC Bank," which can be used to save up to purchase merchandise at the "EC Store." The program gives youth direct experience in managing and saving money so they will make sound financial decisions when they come of age. Money Moves is one of many life skills learning opportunities offered at EC and other SDHC-owned housing sites.

Renaissance at North Park: An innovative, mixed-use development that embraces North Park's early years while meeting vital community needs. Renaissance North Park provides 108 units of affordable housing (senior rentals and for-sale homes), 24 market-rate homes and commercial space. The design pays tribute to North Park's early years by incorporating Art Deco, Craftsman and Spanish Bungalow styles. The success of the project is due to public-private partnerships, with funding and other support from SDHC and the City's Redevelopment Agency.

Bilingual Computer Literacy Skills Training: A program designed to bridge the "digital divide" for minority women. This series of four, 12-hour classes was created specifically for Latina adults at an SDHC-owned affordable housing site (Alaquinas Apartments in San Ysidro). The program enables limited English-speaking minority women to gain computer literacy and other technology skills. The classes also serve to introduce the residents to SDHC's economic self-sufficiency and asset-building programs.

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About NAHRO: *NAHRO is a 75-year-old, nationally renowned membership organization of 3,200 housing and community development agencies and 19,500 individual members.*

About the San Diego Housing Commission: *The San Diego Housing Commission is a public agency working to expand affordable housing opportunities in the City of San Diego. Each year, the agency helps 80,000 low-income individuals with affordable housing through award-winning programs that benefit the city's economy and revitalize neighborhoods. The agency also finances affordable housing development and advises the San Diego City Council on housing policy matters.*

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