



City Councilmember Scott Sherman

District 7

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Program Provides Jobs for Homeless

Alpha Project Program Modeled after Albuquerque's Successful "There's a Better Way" Program

San Diego – Mayor Kevin Faulconer and Councilmember Scott Sherman introduced the beginning of a new program run by the Alpha Project called “Wheels of Change,” that will provide day jobs for interested homeless individuals in the City of San Diego.

The program is simple. Two days a week, a van will pick up homeless people who express an interest in working. The van will drive to a designated site to pick up trash, pull weeds, clear brush, etc. for five hours. At the end of the day, workers will be driven back to Alpha Project, or the City's tent structures for the homeless, and will be compensated for their work.

In addition to giving individuals the dignity of work, the “Wheels of Change” program will also connect them with important services and help assist with transitioning to permanent housing.

The program is based on Albuquerque's “There's a Better Way” program which started as a six-month pilot program, but now has two vans that run five days a week and employs up to 20 homeless individuals a day. Over a dozen cities have implemented a similar program including Austin, Chicago, Denver, Lexington, Portland, and Seattle.

“This is all about creating more opportunities for homeless individuals to lift themselves out of extreme poverty,” Mayor Faulconer said. “Wheels for Change” will help restore dignity by allowing people to earn a paycheck and begin to get back on their feet. For many this may be just the chance they need to begin turning their lives around.”

Since the program in Albuquerque began, over 3,400 homeless received jobs, 368 individuals connected with employment services and obtained additional work, over 175,000 pounds of trash was removed, and 600 neighborhood blocks were cleaned.

“An important step to a successful transition out of homelessness is re-exposure to the dignity of work. The Wheels of Change” program provides the opportunity to participate in this confidence building experience,” said Councilmember Sherman.

“We are looking forward to starting this program and giving the clients the ability to make a difference in the local community,” said Bob McElroy, CEO of Alpha Project.

The first six months of the program have been funded by a generous private donor.

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