



OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER CHRISTOPHER WARD THIRD COUNCIL DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 07, 2019

CONTACT: Ansermio Jake Estrada
Cell: (619) 227-0421 | Office: (619) 236-6633

CITY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS LAUNCH NEW HOMELESS OUTREACH COORDINATOR FOR MID-CITY COMMUNITIES

SAN DIEGO, CA – San Diego Councilmember Chris Ward (District Three) issued the following statement after a joint press conference with community leaders to announce a Mid-City outreach coordinator who will connect unsheltered San Diegans specifically in North Park and City Heights to housing, medical, and other life-saving services.

Business and community leaders know where resources need to be focused: on dedicated outreach services, built on best-practices, and conducted by trained professionals to help vulnerable individuals overcome barriers to housing and services.

“Mid-City’s new outreach coordinator is the result of a broad coalition, dedicated to moving unsheltered San Diegans into permanent housing and connecting them with an array of support services. This program is hopefully the first in a region-wide shift toward a refocus on productive, coordinated, and proactive outreach methods that meets unsheltered people where they are,” said Councilmember Ward.

“We all have a responsibility to help reduce homelessness and our North Park business community has truly stepped up to be part of the solution,” said Angela Landsberg, Executive Director of North Park Main Street.

Overall efforts for this program were spearheaded by Angela Landsberg, Executive Director of North Park Main Street, and funding and resources were dedicated from the City Heights Business Association, City Heights Community Development Corporation, Councilmember Chris Ward, Council President Georgette Gómez, former-Supervisor Ron Roberts’ office, and Price Philanthropies.

“Each of us, government leaders, community agencies, and business associations have provided funding to make this project possible. It’s only when we all work together that workable, realistic solutions can be found,” said Laura Ann Fernea, Executive Director of the City Heights CDC.

This one-year pilot program will be managed by an Executive Oversight Committee consisting of stakeholders working to provide guidance and recommendations on overall outreach efforts.

The University of Southern California will be conducting research and authoring a report at the program's conclusion. The report will track data, containing the number of individuals, housing referrals, service connections, and contacts made. The aim is for this program to become a model for neighborhood-specific outreach programs that can be adopted regionally.

Jonathan Castillo, Regional Director of PATH, said: "This project gives PATH San Diego an opportunity to serve extremely vulnerable people living on the streets in the North Park and City Heights. Through persistent and frequent engagement, we are confident in our ability to engage them in services that will ultimately end their homeless episode. Our targeted approach is unique because we are focused on engagement not enforcement, we are embedded in the community, and will be working alongside business partners and residents in these neighborhoods."

Research-based knowledge, field experience, and best practices are all necessary to conduct outreach and engagement work that effectively reaches those who otherwise may not seek out services, have a distrust of public institutions, law enforcement, or lack knowledge of the programs and services available to them.

"This collaborative effort spearheaded by the Mid-City community follows a national standard of coordinated and persistent outreach that respects the privacy of the homeless population while ensuring the surrounding community remains safe. The RTFH is excited to support this program and will be exploring opportunities to adopt it in other communities in the San Diego region," said Tamera Kohler, Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless.

Mid-City's homeless outreach coordinator will work to quickly connect people with permanent housing, providing a stable foundation in which other underlying issues can be successfully addressed. Regular and consistent documentation of outreach efforts will be the standard, ensuring no one in need of services is overlooked by maintaining an active list of the homeless population within the community.

Enrique Gandarilla, Executive Director of the City Heights Business Association, said: "City Heights is a dynamic community that has actively sought solutions to address homelessness in our area. We are excited to support this program and look forward to seeing the results."

For more information or to interview Councilmember Ward, contact Ansermio Jake Estrada at (619) 227-0421 or EstradaAJ@sandiego.gov

Councilmember Chris Ward represents San Diego's Third Council District including communities of Downtown, Little Italy, Bankers Hill, Mission Hills, Middletown, Hillcrest, University Heights, North Park, Normal Heights, Old Town, South Park, and Golden Hill; while also serving as Chair of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless.

###