



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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FOR: CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT

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## **National Project Homeless Connect Celebrates Individual Success Stories**

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. – “Five years ago my ‘home’ was on the corner of Polk and Sacramento. You know where Brownie’s Hardware store is? That’s where I slept. Somehow the concrete seemed more comfortable there. I often went days, even weeks, without talking to anyone. Then one day four people came up to me and said “Hi, we’re from Project Homeless Connect, can we help you?”

For Kendra Stewardson that moment, five years ago this month, changed her life. The Project Homeless Connect volunteers brought her to the first ever PHC event. Within a short time Kendra had an apartment and a job. She has never looked back.

This December 9<sup>th</sup> Kendra will be back at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, but this time as a volunteer for Project Homeless Connect, helping give others the same chance to rebuild their life. This event is also part of National Project Homeless Connect Week (December 7-13) which is being marked in San Francisco and dozens of other cities around the U.S. What began as an idea in San Francisco has since spread to more than 200 cities around the country, and even internationally.

“We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved so far, not just here in San Francisco but nationwide” says Judith Klain, Director of Project Homeless Connect. “But we know that we still have so much to do. We had a record number of clients at our last PHC event, and we expect to see equally large numbers at the next one on December 9<sup>th</sup>. However, we are fortunate to live in a community where people respond to this rising need by volunteering in greater numbers. Without them we couldn’t do the work we do, or help the people we help.”

Klain says volunteers are more than ever the key for the next Project Homeless Connect (PHC) event at the **Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, 99 Grove Street in San Francisco, on Wednesday, December 9 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Volunteers help provide desperately needed services to all those who come to the event. Those services range from helping people get temporary housing, to signing up for safety net programs such as SSI or General Assistance, accessing health care with medical, dental and vision check-ups, even something as simple as getting a haircut or their wheelchair repaired.



Many of the volunteers in December will be from Kaiser Permanente, which is sponsoring the event for the second year.

“The health of any community is not measured in dollars and cents but in how it takes care of those in need,” says Dr. Mason Turner, Chief of Psychiatry Kaiser Permanente San Francisco and Associate Director of Regional Mental Health. “At Kaiser Permanente we recognize how important it is to give back to the community, to reach out to people who are not as fortunate as we are.”

“Without Project Homeless Connect I would still be on the streets, says Kendra, “there’s even a chance I’d be dead. I owe them my life. That’s why I come back and volunteer every time there’s a PHC event. Because what we do here has the power to save lives.”

For more information contact Kevin McCormack or go to [www.projecthomelessconnect.com](http://www.projecthomelessconnect.com)

#### **About Project Homeless Connect**

Project Homeless Connect makes a real difference in the lives of the City’s homeless by bringing together almost 250 non-profit agencies, private businesses and volunteers to assist San Franciscans in need. Since the program’s inception in October 2004 as a joint effort of San Francisco’s health care, housing and human service systems, Project Homeless Connect has been supported by tens of thousands of volunteers, individuals and companies giving their time, cash, clothing, food and essential services. To date, this program has provided services to thousands of the City’s most economically disadvantaged men, women and children with basic human needs and housing. Project Homeless Connect is a key component of Mayor Newsom’s 10-year plan to abolish homelessness in San Francisco. This unprecedented approach to helping the homeless has been adopted as a national model in more than 170 jurisdictions in the U.S and has also been implemented in Canada and Australia.

#### **About Kaiser Permanente**

Kaiser Permanente, founded in 1945, is a non-profit integrated health care organization, with physicians, nurses and staff working in collaboration to provide high quality care to patients and address the health care needs of communities served by the organization. The Kaiser Permanente Northern California Region serves almost 3.2 million members. It includes 6,400 physicians in The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG) and about 54,000 employees. The region has 20 major medical centers. In 2007, Kaiser Permanente dedicated about \$447 million to a variety of community programs and agencies in Northern California. For more information, visit [www.kaiserpermanente.org](http://www.kaiserpermanente.org)