



**June 11, 2010**

FOR: **CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT**

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## **Project Homeless Connect Helps Youth “Aged Out” of Foster Care**

Event targets young people left homeless after leaving foster care

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. – Every year around 2,300 teenagers “age out” of foster care in California, meaning they reach the age of 18 without ever having been placed with a permanent family. A staggering 65 percent of those youth leave foster care with nowhere to go; many end up homeless. That’s why Project Homeless Connect is teaming up with the non-profit group Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY) to try and change that.

“They are called emancipated youth, but often there is nothing emancipating about what happens to them after they leave foster care,” says Sara Razavi, Executive Director of HEY. “Imagine being told you have to leave your home, with nowhere to go, no resources to fall back on, and no money to help you. That’s what happens far too often to youth in foster care when they turn 18 and ‘age out’ of the system. It’s no surprise then that 40 percent of the people in California’s homeless shelters are former foster children.”

HEY is teaming up with Project Homeless Connect (PHC) at an event to be held in the Bayview Hunters Point community on Friday, June 11. The partnership is in honor of National Foster Care Month.

“We are hoping that we’ll be able to reach out and guide these young people to resources that can help them find accommodation, and help them build a future,” says Judith Klain, Director of Project Homeless Connect. “We know that if we do nothing they have a bleak future. Some 70 percent of all inmates in California’s prisons have spent time in foster care. One third of all those youth who are ‘aged out’ will end up in prison within one year. That’s unacceptable.”

This PHC event is being held in the Bayview because the community has been one of the hardest hit by the recession;

- The neighborhood has the second largest homeless population in San Francisco
- More than 20 percent of the population live below the poverty line

“The situation in the Bayview has become increasingly alarming,” says Gwendolyn Westbrook, Executive Director of the United Council of Human Services. “We have seen dramatic increases in



the number of people coming to the meal programs in our dining room. That along with budget reductions is making it more difficult to serve the homeless.”

PHC normally holds its outreach efforts at the Civic Center, but getting there from the Bayview, particularly for families or people lacking transportation, can be difficult.

“We know many people are struggling, every day, just trying to survive,” says Klain. “So we felt we owed it to the people of the Bayview to bring our services to them, to reach out to them in their own neighborhoods, and make it as easy as possible for them to get the help they need.”

Project Homeless Connect brings together a wide array of health and human services at one location so that people can accomplish in one day what might otherwise take several months. Among the services offered are dental care, eyeglasses, family support, food, HIV testing, housing, hygiene products, medical care, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, SSI benefits, legal advice, California identification cards, voice mail, employment counseling and job placement, wheelchair repair, methadone, needle exchange, and more.

PHC is expecting around 1200 people to come to the event seeking services and help from the volunteers. Fortunately Deloitte LLP is again stepping up and providing volunteers by making the event part of its National Impact Day for employees.

Project Homeless Connect is at the **Bayview Playground in Bayview Hunters Point (on 3<sup>rd</sup> St at Armstrong Ave) on Friday, June 11 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

The program, which began in San Francisco five years ago, has become the model for more than 220 similar programs in other cities around the U.S.

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 220 jurisdictions in the U.S and has also been implemented in Canada and Australia.



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