Spreading Holiday Cheer!

The Community Development Commission (CDC) and Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (Housing Authority) helped bring holiday cheer to over 2,400 low-income children throughout Los Angeles County.

Through the generous support of Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe and local volunteers, the spirit of the holidays shone bright at the Community Resource Center in South Whittier during the 18th Annual Holiday Food and Toy Giveaway. Boxes filled with a turkey and all the trimmings for a holiday meal were distributed to over 300 area families, along with gifts for over 625 children.

Coordination of the annual event, which has become a staple for the community, is no small task. Over 75 volunteers from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department - Norwalk Station Civilian Volunteer and Explorer Programs, Los Angeles County Fire Explorer Program, Whittier area Girl Scouts, local high school and middle school student volunteers, and dozens of area residents, dedicated hundreds of hours of their time to bring the wonderful event to life.

Additionally, the Housing Authority helped to ensure that nearly 1,400 public housing youth and 400 Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program youth, had a merry and bright holiday season. The agency hosted a series of holiday events at its public housing developments and administrative offices throughout the County, during which children and their families were treated to holiday festivities that included food, games, music, and pictures with Santa to keep as a memento. Target Stores also provided over 20 employee volunteers who rolled up their sleeves to help wrap and hand out gifts, and even do face painting. The highlight of each event was seeing the children's faces light up as they received toys donated by our generous sponsors.

With the support of partners such as Shelter Partnership, CDC and Housing Authority employees, and other private donors, the agency collected toys, food, and monetary donations to give families a holiday to remember.
County Residents Provide Input on Housing and Community Development Needs

Last quarter, the CDC’s Community Development Division’s Grants Management Unit (GMU) successfully completed its series of five Countywide community meetings. During the second quarter, GMU staff worked to compile and analyze all of the comments received from residents throughout the five Los Angeles County Supervisorial Districts, who provided input on their economic, housing, and community development needs. Anti-crime programs, graffiti removal, street/alley improvements, and trash/debris removal were among the top needs identified.

As part of the County’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application process, the community meetings not only fulfill the citizen participation component, but also help Los Angeles County’s Supervisorial District offices prioritize the County’s annual allocation of approximately $21 million. The meetings were well attended with 187 total residents on hand to learn about the CDBG Program and complete a survey on their needs. The surveys were also mailed to local residents with excellent results. In the end, a record 1,132 resident surveys were collected through the community meetings and via U.S. mail.

For complete survey results by Supervisorial District, please visit: www.lacdc.org

Care 1st Helps South Whittier Families Give Thanks

On November 26, 2014, with the generous support of Care 1st Health Plan, two struggling families from the Community Resource Center’s Homework Assistance Program were selected to receive a $40.00 gift card to be redeemed at Ralph’s or Food 4 Less grocery stores to purchase a thanksgiving meal. “The generosity from Care 1st Health Plan will really help my family during a financially difficult time. I am so thankful to receive this gift card and feel more at ease that I will be able to provide my family with a thanksgiving meal with this help,” said Indeliza Araiza, pictured to the right with her family.
Cheers to New Beginnings!

The CDC recently celebrated several grand openings bringing new housing and educational opportunities to the residents of Los Angeles County.

The CDC joined L.A. Family Housing, Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, and the Sunland-Tujunga community to celebrate the grand opening of **Trudy & Norman Louis Apartments (formerly known as Day Street)**, a newly-constructed affordable development that provides 45 units of permanent supportive housing to chronically homeless individuals and couples. The CDC provided $1.2 million toward the development, which offers a community room, meeting rooms, and offices. Residents are able to enjoy an outdoor seating and barbeque area in the courtyard. The development also includes many “green” features including a photovoltaic solar generating system, a high-efficiency gas boiler for hot water, and low-flow plumbing fixtures.

The **Janet L. Witkin Center**, located in the City of West Hollywood, was developed by Affordable Living for the Aging (ALA) and is the agency’s newest senior housing development. Named after the organization’s founder, Janet L. Witkin, the development helps low-income seniors and formerly chronically homeless seniors age in place while coping with the challenges of increased frailty. The development provides 17 units of affordable housing, including 11 units for low-income seniors, and six units for chronically homeless seniors. The building provides a community room, staff office, edible garden, and an outdoor courtyard.

After 12 months of construction, the **El Camino Real Library** celebrated its long awaited grand opening. The remodeled and expanded neighborhood library, located in East Los Angeles, offers the community a modern and comfortable facility. The CDC oversaw construction of the $4.6 million development, funded by former First District Supervisor Gloria Molina, which included refurbishment of the original 3,200 square-foot library, and a 2,300 square-foot addition. The site also features a new staff area, staff restroom, replacement of all interior finishes and furnishings, skylights, electrical upgrades including lighting fixtures, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment, internet cabling, motion detectors, and card readers at selected doors for enhanced security.
Supporting Veterans in Need of Housing

Three and a half years ago, the Los Angeles community came together in support of the United Way’s Home For Good vision to make Los Angeles a place where no one is forgotten, and no one worries about having a warm, safe place of their own to sleep each night. The Housing Authority’s Assisted Housing (AH) Division proudly took part in that commitment vowing to do its part to end chronic veteran homelessness within the County through the Veteran’s Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program.

Last June, a significant catalyst to ending homelessness occurred when First Lady Michelle Obama kicked off her Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, enlisting officials from cities around the country to find homes for every homeless veteran by the end of 2015. On stage at the Veterans Summit here in Los Angeles, the First Lady acknowledged that veteran homelessness is a problem Americans have “tacitly accepted for too long.” One in 10 homeless people in America live in Los Angeles, the First Lady said, and one in nine homeless Angelenos are veterans, according to the United Way.

A daunting statistic too familiar to the AH Division, the Veteran's Summit and the First Lady's words authenticated the Housing Authority’s persistence to continue coordinating partnerships and soliciting additional federal grants for placing homeless veterans into subsidized housing.

The AH Division has made significant strides by applying for, and receiving, an annual allocation of VASH vouchers that provide rental assistance and supportive services to assist homeless veterans and their families in Los Angeles County. During the second quarter, the AH Division was successfully awarded an additional 263 VASH vouchers to ensure more veterans and their families have a place to call home. Throughout December, the AH Division worked closely with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to get more families and individuals leased up. With the most recent allocation, the Housing Authority has provided assistance to 1,293 chronically homeless veterans since 2009 when its program began.

AH Division staff reaffirmed their commitment for 2015 to doing all they can to give Los Angeles veterans a home.

The VASH program is made possible through a collaboration between these public agencies: