



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
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Press Release

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Supervisor welcomes 125 volunteers to homeless event.

ANTIOCH (Sept. 10) -- Supervisor Federal Glover, District V, welcomed about 125 volunteers at "Homeless Connect 3" an annual event organized by the County to provide services and counseling to the County's homeless population.

Organizers estimate that almost 600 people took advantage of the services provided at Homeless Connect, which was held at the County Fairgrounds in Antioch. Homeless were bussed in from homeless shelters from as far away from West County and Concord and returned to their part of the county.

Cynthia Belon, coordinator of the county's homeless program, estimated that there are about 15,000 homeless in the County throughout the year, a number that is increasing as people lose their homes because of the foreclosure crisis.

During the daylong event, homeless people were able to avail of a host of services including haircuts, massages, health checkups, dental exams and were able to get their driving licenses renewed as well as get directed to the services available in the county throughout the year.

Every year, the event is held in a different part of the county. During last year's event in Concord, service providers and volunteers helped about 400 people who are homeless. Organizers expect to serve even more people this year, said Cynthia Belon, Director of the Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) Homeless Program.

"Project Homeless Connect helps a lot of families and individuals meet a variety of important needs, all at one time, as well as making positive connections to end their homelessness," Belon said. "In these difficult financial times, this event is even more vital."

Sponsored by Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS), the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program and the City of Antioch, Project Homeless Connect 3 also offers alcohol and drug referrals, wheelchair repairs, employment information and much more. The event depends largely on volunteers support.

People will have the opportunity to meet with a judge for the potential resolution of minor legal offenses starting at 1:30 p.m. Identification cards also can be ordered from the Department of Motor Vehicles and personal grooming services will be available, along with massages.

"This event could not be a success without your efforts," Glover told the volunteers before the event opened.

Volunteers, which came from the ranks of County staff as well as local agencies and businesses, fixed bicycles and wheelchairs, provided vaccinations and care for pets, provided lunch, informed people of housing options as well employment advice.

The day is part of the County's 10-year plan to end homelessness in Contra Costa County. In 2004, the Board of Supervisors and chaired by Glover at the time, approved the plan to address the needs of the homeless population.