



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **180/2020 HOUSES 500<sup>th</sup> CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUAL**

Santa Cruz County's 180/2020 Initiative is pleased to announce that it recently surpassed housing a 500<sup>th</sup> chronically homeless individual, demonstrating a record of success in addressing one of the community's most critical needs.

Established in 2012 and endorsed by the County and all four cities in Santa Cruz County, the 180/2020 program is a unique effort that coordinates the streamlined delivery of stable housing and supportive services for homeless men, women and families. With funding from the County of Santa Cruz, the program recently was able to hire a new director, Maile Earnest, who has extensive experience working with the local homeless community and the agencies that serve them.

"180/2020's record over the last four years demonstrates that a focused effort can result in positive results," Earnest said. "We still have more to do and I look forward to the challenge of expanding on our success, but we are making a difference by providing the stability people need to change their lives and change our community."

During Affordable Housing Week, numerous organizations are holding public workshops highlighting the impacts of the local Housing Crisis on the community, which include placing steep housing cost burdens on many families and making locating housing for homeless persons a significant challenge. There are currently 100 homeless families and individuals with active Section 8 vouchers who have been unable to find housing due to a scarcity of available units and rising rents, putting them at risk of losing their vouchers.

Local organizations have been busy addressing homelessness issues. Led by the Veterans Resource Center and others, an effort to end veteran's homelessness has housed more than 200 local vets. Working with local partners, the County is also nearing a resolution on a plan to open the winter shelter. And numerous organizations, including the County, Housing Authority of Santa Cruz County, faith-based organizations and more, are preparing to launch the All-In Landlord Partnership, an incentive-based program to encourage local landlords to consider renting units to homeless persons.

"Despite numerous challenges, we are making progress. There is light at the end of the tunnel on opening the winter shelter, and our ongoing efforts to find permanent, supportive housing for chronically homeless persons and veterans is paying dividends by proving people with the foundation for a better life," said Rayne Marr, the County's Homeless Services Coordinator.

To learn more about 180/2020, go to <http://www.180santacruz.org>. To read the All In Strategic Plan to Prevent, Reduce and Eventually End Homeless, go to <http://www.unitedwaysc.org/research-reports-social-reports>.

