



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Home found for the Friend to Friend Program! Services adapted to benefit mentally ill homeless adults in San Diego.

San Diego, California – After a four-month search, Episcopal Community Services has secured a location to house its Friend to Friend (F2F) Program serving mentally ill homeless adults. The previous program previously operated for 22 years out of the same Clubhouse location in the downtown area until the long-term lease was terminated in December 2007. F2F is funded in part by both the County of San Diego through a partnership with the Community Research Foundation, as well by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

As it currently operates, F2F provides a wide array of services to assist chronically homeless men and women presenting a diagnosed mental illness. Services include street-based outreach, site-based outreach at collaborating agency sites, vocational reintegration services, and other essential components geared towards independent living. The F2F staff has been temporarily based out of ECS' administrative offices in City Heights.

Starting June 1, 2008 the new program site, located at 4080 Centre Street, Suite 104, in Hillcrest, will feature client meeting spaces, a conference area, and a small resource and computer center for client use. The central location is easily accessible by public transportation and is accessible for persons with disabilities.

As a result of the move in December, the F2F program services were adapted to become more mobile and client-specific. "What we've learned these past four months is that while our former Clubhouse provided a respite from street life, clients would come every day but did not seek help beyond meeting an immediate need. Rather than relying on clients to come to us for help, we've risen to the challenge of being on the streets where our clients are, providing our services and resources through a more one-on-one approach. Don't misunderstand," said Holly Younghans, ECS' Assistant Vice President of Housing & Supportive Services, "a place for meeting basic needs such as showers, laundry, food, and respite from street life is important, and we work directly with the other providers in the community who offer those very things. However, chronic homelessness and mental illness are complex issues, and in order to make a long-term difference in the lives of the men and women we serve, additional strategies – including those implemented by the revamped F2F Program – are vital to a regionally comprehensive response."

The F2F program will begin services at the 4080 Centre Street location in June 2008. Street and site-based outreach will continue as a key point of entry for new clients, while ongoing counseling, job coaching and other services will take place at the new location. For more information, contact Sarah Koenigsberg, Program Manager at (619) 228-2837.

Episcopal Community Services was founded in 1927 to provide chaplaincy and social services to people confined to hospitals and public institutions. Today, Episcopal Community Services continues to respond to the increasing social services needs of the community and is currently responsible for providing over \$18 million of services in the areas of homelessness, HIV/AIDS, employment, mental health, child care and education, domestic violence and substance abuse. For more information about ECS please call (619) 228-2800 or visit www.ecscalifornia.org.

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