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SENIOR COMMUNITY CENTERS EXPANDS NUTRITION SERVICES TO SOUTH COUNTY

Nonprofit Organization to Serve Meals to Low-Income Seniors in Otay Mesa, Chula Vista and San Ysidro

SAN DIEGO - October 1, 2008 - Furthering its commitment to help San Diego's low-income seniors thrive, Senior Community Centers is expanding its nationally recognized nutrition program to provide services to residents in Otay Mesa, Chula Vista and San Ysidro.

Senior Community Centers will be serving more than 350 meals a day at three locations in Otay Mesa, Chula Vista, and San Ysidro and provide home-delivered meals to 175 seniors in the area, who are either too sick or frail to attend meal services.

"Senior Community Centers has been serving daily meals to low-income seniors in metropolitan San Diego for more than 30 years, and we have seen the dramatic impact proper nutrition can have on a senior," said Paul Downey, president and CEO of Senior Community Centers. "We are not only committed to keeping seniors healthy by providing them with nutritionally balanced meals, but also being a voice and a family for those who may have neither."

Overseeing the South County nutritional programs, which were previously run by Catholic Charities, is the organization's full-time registered dietitian and a professional food and nutrition services staff who are experts at preparing healthy, appetizing, and nutritious meals.

In addition to serving meals in the San Diego metropolitan area, Senior Community Centers has developed a broad portfolio of services to help impoverished seniors living in poverty not only survive, but also thrive. Services include medical and mental health care, housing assistance, homeless outreach and social services. The organization plans to offer these services to South County seniors in the near future.

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“We’re hoping to expand some of our other programs into these communities to help seniors improve their overall well-being,” said Downey. “We depend heavily on the community to continue to expand our services, and it is the community and business leaders that truly have the ability to make a difference in their neighbors’ lives.”

As well as providing a safety net for low-income seniors in San Diego, the organization’s advocacy efforts – led by Downey – have gained national attention. Downey is the president-elect of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Program, president of the California Elderly Nutrition Partnership, and president of the California Association of Nutrition Directors for the Elderly. He has been engaged in outreach for the California Elder Economic Security Standard Index™ since 2007 to educate lawmakers and the public about the gap between San Diego’s cost of living for seniors and the Federal Poverty Line, and in 2005, he was appointed as a delegate by U.S. Rep. Susan Davis to attend the White House Conference on Aging.

“On top of providing quality meals to seniors in the South County, we want the community know that our organization also stands as a symbol of advocacy for the issues that low income seniors face, and that we’re committed to bringing about systemic change at the community, city, state and federal levels on behalf of seniors,” said Downey.

Senior Community Centers is a nonprofit agency helping low-income seniors thrive by providing meals, social, medical and mental health services, homeless and housing assistance, and cultural activities. For more information, visit www.servingseniors.org, or call 619/235-6572.