



Second Chance

6145 Imperial Avenue
San Diego, CA 92114-4213

619 234 8888 TELEPHONE
619 234 7787 FACSIMILE
www.secondchanceprogram.org

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES.
INSPIRING LIVES.

News Release

Contact: Scott H. Silverman
(619) 234-8888 (office)
(619) 993-2738 (cell)
ssilverman@secondchanceprogram.org

Jonathan Heller
(858) 541-7800
(619) 808-9323 (cell)
jheller@swspr.com

Mayor Sanders, Congresswoman Davis to Honor Second Chance Graduates *Dignitaries Laud Successful Completion of 100th STRIVE Class*

SAN DIEGO (October 17, 2006) – San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders, Congresswoman Susan Davis (D-San Diego) and a host of other officials will recognize the achievements of about 50 ex-inmates and homeless on Friday (October 20) who will comprise the 100th graduating class of Second Chance, a San Diego nonprofit organization that has taught life skills and job-readiness skills to the chronically unemployed since 1993.

The event starts at 11 a.m. at the Second Chance offices, 6145 Imperial Ave. in Encanto.

"Everyone should be aware of the excellent work Second Chance has done to help people turn their lives around," Sanders said. "They take people who have lived on the fringes of society and transform them into productive members of the community."

"Second Chance should be commended for undertaking a tough job and doing it extremely well," Davis said. "I am honored to be asked to take part in the 100th graduation of this excellent class."

SeaWorld, a major corporate sponsor of Second Chance, will host a gala fundraiser at the theme park Saturday, Oct. 21 to celebrate the milestone. Tickets are still available for the event, which will feature a private Shamu appearance, live music and more.

Second Chance operates as an affiliate of the national Supportive Training Results in Valuable Employees (STRIVE) program, which has historically placed 80 percent of its graduates in jobs, most of them paying well above the minimum wage.

(more)



Second Chance provides those in need with alcohol- and drug-free housing, a three-week intensive course to learn job-readiness skills and life skills, mental health counseling, case management and job-placement services for two years.

"We teach the hardest to employ job candidates that success starts with them," said Scott Silverman, Second Chance's executive director and founder. "We just help them unlock the potential already inside them."

Silverman created the Prisoner Re-Entry Employment Program (PREP), which helps ex-convicts obtain and keep jobs. Second Chance staff travel to prisons to recruit inmates who are nearing parole, and those who qualify are picked up at the prison gate on release day and enrolled in the STRIVE program.

A recent study by the Social and Behavioral Research Institute at California State University San Marcos documented a 57 percent drop in recidivism among PREP graduates as compared to parolees who do not attend PREP.

Among its ex-offender graduates, fewer than 30 percent recommit crimes and return to prison within two years. That's significantly lower than the statewide recidivism rate of 70 percent.

Many people come to Second Chance with little or no job experience, mental health and substance-abuse issues, and criminal records.

Second Chance serves more than 9,000 people a year out of its Encanto offices and has an annual budget of \$2.5 million. About 80 percent of its funding comes from private donations, and 20 percent from public sources.

PREP and STRIVE are critical in a city such as San Diego, which absorbs 11,000 released inmates each year, the 4th highest total of any U.S. city.

The programs also benefit the broader community by helping to re-unify families, reducing the ranks of the unemployed and boosting individuals' opportunities for home-ownership.

For more information on Second Chance, visit www.secondchanceprogram.org.

###