

VALLEY OF THE SUN UNITED WAY ENDING HOMELESSNESS PROJECT CONNECT



BACKGROUND:

On any given day thousands of people experience homelessness in Maricopa County. Many of these individuals and families are experiencing homelessness for the first time and require only temporary assistance to get back on their feet. Project Connect is part of Valley of the Sun United Way's (VSUW) long-term, multi-faceted strategy to end homelessness in our community. Project Connect is based on a national model for quickly connecting homeless individuals with vital human services.



HOW IT WORKS:

Project Connect is a one-day outreach event that brings together more than 30 human service providers to one central location, increasing access to services for many individuals. Attendees are connected with a wealth of information, tools and resources to tackle the issues they face each day. Individuals can obtain food, clothing, identification documents and vital records, shelter, wellness checks, haircuts and employment services, among many other things.

PROJECT CONNECT HIGHLIGHTS:

VSUW hosted 12 Project Connect events in 2010 and since 2008, VSUW has coordinated more than 25 events resulting in more than 5,500 individuals receiving services. VSUW is committed to collaborating with public, private and faith-based partners to continue to host monthly Project Connect events across the Valley.

VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers play a crucial role in ensuring Project Connect guests receive the adequate resources to meet their needs. In 2010, more than 1,700 different volunteers served almost 7,400 hours to meet the needs of Project Connect guests.

Volunteers work one-on-one with guests and escort them to the array of service providers available on site. In addition, volunteers are responsible for registering guests, serving food, distributing clothes and providing other event support. Register for an upcoming Project Connect event at www.vsuw.org/volunteer.

DONATIONS:

Project Connect host sites offer so much more than just space to hold an event. Depending on their available resources and capabilities, host sites contribute clothing, toiletries, food, tables and chairs, volunteers and more. Despite these generous donations additional items are always needed, such as: razors, combs, new socks and underwear, hats, reading glasses, roll-on antiperspirant, women's sanitary supplies, first aid items, and sunscreen.

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GOALS:

- Support a network of providers to deliver a minimum of 75,000 services annually.
- Reduce homelessness in Maricopa County by 75 percent by 2020.

