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Beverly Hills Completes 2017 Homeless Count

Rise in Homelessness Attributed to Lack of Affordable Housing, Mental Health Services and Overburdened Court System

Beverly Hills, CA – On Wednesday, January 25, over 49 community volunteers participated in the City's annual Homeless Count, held in conjunction with the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority's (LAHSA) countrywide effort to understand and address the complex issues of homelessness in Greater Los Angeles. The community volunteers, in partnership with the Beverly Hills Ambassador Team, Beverly Hills Police Department Bike Patrol Unit, and the City's Changing Lives and Sharing Places (CLASP) homeless outreach team, counted 22 homeless individuals, one camper, one car and three make-shift shelters in Beverly Hills. This number is higher than last year's count of just 14 individuals. Until this year, the City has seen a reduction in homelessness since the count began in 2009, recording 42 homeless individuals that year. Initially, the Count took place every two years; it then became an annual event in 2015. In 2011, 37 homeless were counted; in 2013, it decreased to 30 homeless; and in 2015, the count was at 29 homeless.

Beverly Hills Human Services attributes this year's increase to a more thorough count and a growing transient population due to lack of affordable housing, limited availability to mental health services and an over-burdened court system. In addition to the 49 volunteers, there were ten Beverly Hills Police Bike officers in the business triangle and Beverly Gardens Park, eight Ambassadors checking all City parking garages, and four Human Services staff members managing the deployment site at City Hall, for a total of 71 individuals. In addition to twelve volunteer teams driving throughout the city, the BHPD bike patrol checked known areas where transient individuals camp at night. As expected, most of our homeless individuals were identified along major bus routes and were either sleeping or passing through the City on foot.

The Ambassador Team provides services seven days a week, 21 hours per day in the business triangle and on South Beverly Drive. The Ambassadors consistent presence and extra boots on the ground has allowed the City's Human Services Division and the CLASP team to focus on intensive case management, linking the City's most vulnerable individuals to critical services (housing, mental health, medical and government benefits) needed to stabilize their lives. Moreover, Human Services works closely with Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program to connect mentally ill homeless individuals with intensive mental health treatment.

"Currently, most known homeless individuals who have been in the City for many years, are now housed, and/or getting the assistance they need and deserve," said James Latta, Human Services Administrator. "A collaborative effort between Human Services, Beverly Hills Fire Department and Beverly Hills Police Department, have enabled us to serve our homeless residents appropriately and efficiently."

The Beverly Hills Homeless Count was part of the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, a three-night effort, which began on January 24. Count numbers are reported to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and influences federal funding directed to Los Angeles County.

You can be part of the solution to end homelessness by supporting the City's Community Partners that provide the social service safety net for Beverly Hills' most vulnerable community members. For more information, contact Jim Latta with the Human Services Division, 310-285-2535 or jlatta@beverlyhills.org.

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