

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development — Region IX



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Notes from the Regional Administrator

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No doubt we all followed the news reports on the 16-day federal government shutdown and regardless of our views on the conflict that led to it, we understand that federal agencies have very specific jobs to perform on behalf of the American taxpayer.

I am glad that the federal government is up and running again. We take pride in providing services and resources to our valued partners and working to make affordable housing available to individuals and families. HUD is back in the swing of things, and even though there may be some minor delays, we are back on the job!

I hope if you have questions about HUD programs and services or a problem that HUD can help with that you will visit us online at www.hud.gov or call us at one of our HUD offices. Our mission is to be of assistance to you so that *together* we may create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all.

We're glad to be back and working with all of you.

HUD Secretary Donovan Visits San Francisco's Mission District

On Tuesday, September 24, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan visited San Francisco to tour Everett Middle School and to hold a press conference at Valencia Gardens with San Francisco Mayor Edwin Lee.

While at Everett, a high performing school that has benefitted from a \$30 million Department of Education Promise Neighborhood Grant, the Secretary heard from school teachers and



students on the importance of education and affordable housing in their lives.



The second stop on the visit was Valencia Gardens, a former public housing site that was transformed by funding from public-nonprofit-private partnerships. HUD provided the San Francisco Public Housing Authority with 2006 HOPE VI funding to redevelop this once failing housing project into a livable community in San Francisco's Mission District. The 300,000 square-foot project includes 260 dwelling units, spacious community, day care and learning centers, a play area for children

and a plaza with a sculpture garden. Four-story buildings line the primary public access streets and three-story buildings flank the interior blocks. Valencia Gardens mingles homes for the elderly with mixed-income, affordable family housing units. Exterior entryways, with individual house numbers, porches, stoops and walkups have helped reduce crime, restored a sense of security and encouraged community interaction and a sense of ownership. It is situated in an area with nearby retail outlets and transportation hubs.

The final stop of the Secretary's tour of the Mission District was at the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA). There he met with over a dozen community partners representing a number of local agencies that are engaged in making the Mission Promise Neighborhood program a success. MEDA Executive Director Luis Granados presented the initiative's *Cradle-to-Career Continuum of Services* framework and participants raised local challenges for HUD where the agency could provide assistance.



Secretary Donovan and Mayor Lee held a press event to highlight the success of the Valencia Gardens affordable housing model and how these exemplary sites highlighted President Obama's initiative to designate a number of high-poverty communities as new Promise Zones, where the federal government will partner with and invest in communities to create jobs, leverage private investment, increase economic activity, expand educational opportunities, and improve public safety. Communities will compete in a transparent process, and demonstrate the strength and effectiveness of their local commitment to become Promise Zones. Each designated Promise Zone will

identify a set of outcomes that they will pursue to revitalize their communities, develop a strategy supporting those outcomes and realign resources accordingly.

As Secretary Donovan said, “A child’s zip code should never determine her destiny; but today, the neighborhood she grows up in impacts her odds of graduating high school, her health outcomes, and her lifetime economic opportunities.”



Before leaving San Francisco, the Secretary met with a group of HUD *Under 5* employees in the San Francisco Regional Office and listened to their ideas. *Under 5* is a grassroots network of HUD staff started by-and-for new employees who have been on board for less than five years. In San Francisco, this effort has expanded to include any

employee with an interest in collaborating with other colleagues to innovate and further new ideas that transform the way HUD does business. The Secretary expressed support for their initiatives, asked the group to voice challenges they are facing and offered to help enable their success by helping remove regulatory and policy barriers, where feasible.

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