

WINTER 2006/2007

NEWS FOR OWNERS AND MANAGERS IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

From War Refugee to American Success Story

For one owner, voucher program is both a business and community service tool

We've Moved to "Smart Corner"

Please note our new headquarters and mailing address:

San Diego Housing Commission
1122 Broadway, Suite 300
San Diego, CA 92101

Note also that we are discontinuing the use of our P.O. box due to difficulties we have experienced receiving mail. Please use our new street address for all mail and hand deliveries. All agency phone numbers, including the Call Center number, 619.578.7777, will remain the same.

Our move to the new building, called Smart Corner, consolidates the Housing Commission's three offices into one, which will ultimately improve efficiencies, enhance customer service, and save costs. Located downtown near City College, Smart Corner is a mixed-use commercial, retail and housing development. The "smart" development is environmentally friendly and transit-oriented, with easy access to the trolley and bus lines.



Rental owner Phil Trinh and family at his son's UCLA graduation.

Phil Trinh gives two reasons for participating in Rental Assistance: to help people and to get a good return on his rental investment. While these two purposes seem opposite of one another, they actually work hand in hand, he says.

On the one hand, Phil emphasizes that owners enjoy certain financial benefits – such as counting on the San Diego Housing Commission's rent portion each month. On the other hand, Phil appreciates that Rental Assistance helps people in need. His generous spirit is rooted in his experience of fleeing from war-torn Vietnam in 1980.

"We were what they called 'boat people.' We came here with nothing and had to work hard and sacrifice to survive and raise our children," Phil says. "But we made it! And now I feel it is my duty to share."

To guarantee the best outcome, Phil carefully screens his tenants. For example, he runs credit checks at the applicants' expense – not just for credit history but to know the tenant is serious. He also asks how well they'd take care of the unit.

Phil's desire to help is evident in his willingness to go the extra mile for tenants. At times, he helps calculate rent portions or makes special accommodations for an elderly-disabled tenant.

Phil is an accomplished information technology consultant, and his wife works in a beauty salon. Together they own two rental properties in Mira Mesa. They have three grown children, two of whom recently graduated from UCLA and a third who will soon do the same.

Finding the Right Tenant is in Your Hands

Remember, it's in your best interest to always carefully screen your tenants. While the San Diego Housing Commission provides limited screening (of all adult household members for local drug-related or violent crimes), it is your responsibility and right to find the best individual or family for your rental unit. So be sure to follow all the steps you'd take to rent to a non-voucher family, such as obtaining credit and rental backgrounds. For information about tenant screening resources, go to the San Diego County Apartment Association's web site, www.sdcaa.com, and click on Screening Services.

Inspection Connection

Tips from Lynda Brophy, Inspection Supervisor

Review this checklist for the exterior of your property:

- Make sure property address signage is present and visible from the street, including unit numbers.
- Parking areas must be maintained and free of unsafe vehicles.
- Front and back yards should be in good condition and not have weeds over six inches.
- Roofs need to be in good repair and not leaking.
- Trash should be in trash cans and not strewn about.
- Hot water heaters must have a pressure relief valve with a discharge line of galvanized steel or hard copper. The valves should be of the same diameter as the valve opening and directed downward from six to 24 inches from the ground. (Hot water heaters located inside the apartment or house need to be vented to the outside of the unit or vented down six to 24 inches from an approved drainage outlet – and must have safety dividers or shields.)
- Handrails are required on stairways of four or more risers and/or unprotected balconies or porches over 30 inches high.
- Exterior surfaces must not have any chipped or peeling paint.
- Fences should be in good condition (not falling down, no missing parts or exposed nails).
- Mailbox needs to be present and in good condition.



For more inspection tips, go to www.sdhc.org and click on "Got housing to rent?"

More Vouchers on the Horizon?

The San Diego Housing Commission is proposing transitioning its public housing program to a voucher-based system. If the proposal is approved by the federal government's Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) – which could take several years – San Diego might eventually receive up to 1,366 more Section 8 vouchers. Families receiving the vouchers could choose to stay in their public housing unit or move to any Section 8 rental unit in the city – in which case you might see an increase in applicants. The Housing Commission would continue to own and manage the public housing units, with some households assisted with vouchers and other households renting the units at below-market rates. We will keep you informed as the proposal moves forward.



Housing Commission's new headquarters located at 1122 Broadway, Suite 300.

VIEWpoint is published by the Rental Assistance Department as a way to keep rental owners/managers updated on issues and policies regarding our programs. If you have any ideas for future stories – or if you would like extra issues sent to your staff – please contact Community Relations Specialist Janine Rojas at janiner@sdhc.org.



**San Diego
HOUSING COMMISSION**

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*A state agency authorized by
the City of San Diego*