



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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NORTH COUNTY CONFERENCE GIVES RESIDENTS A CHANCE AT A DREAM

Free Event Provided Resources and Tools to Students and Families

Employment, transportation, childcare, housing and financial literacy all present major barriers to those who are striving to become self-sufficient in today's tough economy. Help is available, however, and on Saturday, about 200 CalWORKs participants and low-income individuals attended a free conference to assist them in expanding their skills and obtaining resources to provide the best for their family. *The Possible Dream: Making the Most of Your Future* was held on MiraCosta's Oceanside campus and co-hosted by the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), City of Oceanside Neighborhood and Housing Services, North County Lifeline, ACS State and Local Solutions, MiraCosta College, and Palomar College.

"Surviving in today's economy can be difficult for any individual or family," said Fifth District County Supervisor Bill Horn, whose district includes much of North County. "Through the conference, we have brought together our community partners to help participants address many of the obstacles they face in providing for their families."

The event featured keynote speaker Cecelia Blanks, college professor and former welfare recipient and Larry Burns, trainer, author and counselor. Skill building workshops and resources centered on family, health, money, and work were offered by numerous organizations, such as North County Transit District, North Coastal Career Center, San Diego Job Corps, American Red Cross WIC, and others. New this year was the Women's Resource Center fashion show featuring low-cost business attire from their thrift store.

"The conference provided a tremendous opportunity to our North County residents, including more than 1,400 families participating in the CalWORKs welfare-to-work program," said Third District County Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, whose district also includes parts of North County. "What they learned Saturday will assist them to become self-sufficient and serve as a role model for their children."

The summit was the result of collaborative efforts of the HHSA Self-Sufficiency Strategic Planning Committee in North County, which engages County staff and community partners in addressing barriers to employment, transportation, childcare, housing and financial literacy. Attendees included many CalWORKs participants (those on financial assistance) and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services students (educationally and socially disadvantaged students).

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