

Pittsburg, CA: February 15th, 2017

Healthy Hearts Institute (HHI) takes root in the El Pueblo Housing Development at Pittsburg, CA.

Healthy Hearts Institute (HHI), a nonprofit designed to empower individual and community transformation through health and wellness programs, launched a new website today. The [website](#) will provide access and information on the organization's progress and offer donors and volunteers information on how to get involved. HHI has recently made significant progress on its mission with the signing of a 3 year License Agreement for a large Community garden and Urban farm in the El Pueblo Housing Development in Pittsburg, CA. The development is in one of the Bay Area's largest low-income developments. The License Agreement between HHI and the Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa (HACCC), allows HHI to convert the currently unused space into a valuable resource that promotes healthy eating and active living.

Additionally, HHI was recently awarded a grant by Los Medanos Community Healthcare District whose mission is to cultivate a community in which good health flourish and advance solutions to health disparities.

Founded in 2014, HHI's mission is to empower individual and community transformation through health and wellness. HHI aims to eradicate food deserts by turning empty lots into community gardens and urban farms making healthy food choices accessible and affordable while also helping to stimulate local economic growth. With emphasis placed on mindfulness, nutrition, and physical fitness HHI will provide exceptional education and training that will empower low-income families to gain control of their physical health and overall wellbeing.

The HACCC has agreed to allow HHI to develop the Community Garden and Urban Farm on a vacant under-utilized 2-acre lot of land. The initiative will benefit residents of the El Pueblo Housing Development and its surrounding area providing low-income residents access to affordable locally grown organic fruits, vegetables, herbs, and eggs. HHI aims to provide members with the following valuable resources:

- Nutritious food choices and food education.
- Increased physical activity
- Mindfulness programs

Multiple studies have shown that natural areas such as community gardens grant a variety of mental health benefits. It helps individuals cope with and recover from stress,

improves the ability to recover from illness and injury, restores concentration, and improves productivity.

According to HHI founder Heracio Harts, “Our aim is to improve the health of our local community and provide the right resources to make this a reality through cooperative engagement. Partnering with the Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa is a giant step towards these goals and we’re excited about the opportunities we can now bring collaboratively to the local Pittsburg community and beyond.”

About Healthy Hearts Institute (HHI)

Healthy Hearts Institute is a health and wellness non-profit organization founded in 2014 by Heracio (Ray) Harts. HHI empowers individual and community transformation through health and wellness with an emphasis of mindfulness, nutrition, and fitness. HHI plans to turn empty lots and abandoned buildings into gardens and fitness centers. In addition, HHI members will undergo in-depth classroom training in areas of mindfulness, nutrition, and exercise.

About Contra Costa County Housing Authority:

Headquartered in Martinez, CA, the mission of the Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa is to provide high quality affordable housing solutions and promote self-sufficiency for low-income people of Contra Costa County. The Housing Authority provides rental subsidies and manages and develops affordable housing for low income families, seniors and persons with disabilities in Contra Costa County.