



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE :

## **SAHA AWARDED NEARLY \$30 MILLION TO REVITALIZE EASTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD**

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (December 13, 2012) – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) a \$29,750,000 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant to revitalize the Wheatley Courts area on the city’s Eastside. San Antonio was one of only four communities nationwide to receive a 2012 Choice Implementation Grant.

“This award speaks volumes about the momentum that exists in San Antonio to revive older neighborhoods by creating good schools, safe and comfortable housing, and job opportunities,” Mayor Julián Castro said.

The fiercely competitive grant, which had 42 national applications, provides funding to transform neighborhoods of extreme poverty into mixed-income neighborhoods by revitalizing distressed public housing, improving economic opportunities and leveraging investments in critical community services.

“HUD’s Choice Neighborhoods Initiative supports local visions for how to transform high-poverty, distressed communities into neighborhoods of opportunity,” said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. “We’re emphasizing a comprehensive approach to revitalizing neighborhoods by considering the totality of a community with regard to health, safety, education, jobs and quality housing in mixed-income neighborhoods.”

In March 2011, SAHA was awarded a \$250,000 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant, to develop a  
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Transformation Plan for the Wheatley Courts and surrounding area. Over the following year, SAHA held numerous community planning sessions, which were attended by neighborhood residents, area businesses, public agencies, local stakeholders and community leaders. SAHA submitted the resulting Transformation Plan to HUD in April 2012, along with the Implementation Grant application.

“We worked very closely with community members to develop and deliver a Transformation Plan that creates a community of “choice” - a safe, healthy, vibrant, thriving community for children, families and seniors,” said SAHA Chairman of the Board Ramiro Cavazos. “We’re thrilled that HUD recognized the need and the value of the Plan for San Antonio’s Eastside.”

This revitalization effort is an extraordinary collaboration among public and private institutions that builds on the investment of the United Way-led Eastside Promise Neighborhood initiative, which received a \$23.7 million grant in December 2011 from the Department of Education, to bolster children's educational achievement and foster community development on the Eastside.

Choice/Promise partners include Mayor Julián Castro, the City of San Antonio, Councilwoman Ivy Taylor, United Way, Trinity University, San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD), the Wheatley Resident Council, VIA, Family Service Association, San Antonio for Growth on the Eastside (SAGE), St. Philip’s College, Neighborhood Housing Services of San Antonio, HIS Bridge Builders, Merced Housing, Antioch Baptist Church, the San Antonio Spurs, and others.

“From visiting with area residents and SAHA leaders, I share their enthusiasm for the opportunity these federal funds afford Wheatley Courts. Strong partnerships are the foundation of success. Working together, we can achieve more for our families and community -- building more successes like the one we celebrate today,” said Congressman Lloyd Doggett.

The Choice Neighborhood efforts support positive outcomes for families in education through Promise Neighborhoods, while increasing employment and self-sufficiency through targeted job-training programs.

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San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA)

*SAHA serves the housing needs of over 70,000 children, adults and senior citizens through its Public Housing, Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and Mixed-Income housing programs. The agency employs over 500 individuals, with an annual operating budget of \$172 million, and real estate assets valued at over \$500 million.*