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## ***Downtown Streets Team to Be Welcomed to the City of San Rafael With Ribbon Cutting Ceremony***

**August 28, 2013**— The Downtown Streets Team (DST), a non-profit organization founded in 2005, launched a brand new team in the City of San Rafael in July 2013, and on Thursday, Sep. 12 at 6 p.m. at the corner 4<sup>th</sup> Street and A Street in downtown San Rafael, the City of San Rafael and the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce will conduct a ribbon cutting ceremony to welcome the quickly growing nonprofit.

Mayor Gary Phillips, Police Chief Diana Bishop, and other elected officials/City staff who were integral in bringing the program to the city will be in attendance, as well as DST's Executive Director, Eileen Richardson. Mayor Phillips and Richardson will take a few moments to speak about the nonprofit and what the team means for the future of homelessness in San Rafael.

"We're excited to be working in San Rafael, addressing the prevalent homeless issue while putting our men and women to work in the heart of the downtown area. We're extremely grateful for the support from the mayor and council, the police department, city staff, the business community, homeless service providers and the community as a whole. This team will be an instrumental part in making San Rafael a place where people can get back on their feet, working again," said Richardson.

Local business owners are already taking note of the good work being done downtown. Andrew Hening, the Project Director of the San Rafael Team, works side-by-side with the current 17 Team Members, cleaning up downtown and already notices the positive attention the team is receiving.

"Not a week goes by where a local business owner gives our Team Members a pat on the back for a job well-done," said Hening. "The support is incredibly heartwarming and we're excited to see what we can accomplish in one year's time."

DST has teams in four other bay area cities: Palo Alto, San Jose, Sunnyvale and a franchisee in Gilroy. The nonprofit provides job training skills, case management services and mentor opportunities to homeless and at-risk individuals. Team Members attend weekly meetings and volunteer their time maintaining the downtown corridor in exchange for agency-wide services. The program is funded by the City of San Rafael, the County of Marin, the Marin Community Foundation, and Kaiser Permanente.

**About the Downtown Streets Team**...In 2005, the Palo Alto Business Improvement District conducted a survey of local business owners to determine the biggest issues facing downtown businesses. The group identified cleanliness and homelessness as the most pressing challenges. Downtown Streets Team (DST) emerged as result of the collaboration of local businesses, law enforcement, the Palo Alto Downtown Association and community leaders striving to make Palo Alto a better place to live and work. Since 2005, the organization has evolved from simply a job-training program to an organization that offers job search skills training, community mentoring, and case management services for their team members. Collectively, this approach and each of these innovative programs has helped hundreds of individuals return to self-sufficient lives. In 2011, DST expanded to serve the Coyote Creek corridor in San Jose and in August 2012, launched a new project in collaboration with the City of Sunnyvale and Sunnyvale Community Services. In 2013, DST expanded to San Rafael. With a franchises in California and Florida, and inquires from all over the country, DST is positioned to become a national solution to help end homelessness and restore dignity for those most in need.

**To learn more about the Downtown Streets Team or to make a donation, please visit [www.streetsteam.org](http://www.streetsteam.org) or call 408-502-9755.**