

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Diego Hunger Coalition Welcomes Community Leaders

Blanca Meléndrez, Gary Petill, and Julie Rice join the SDHC Board of Directors

San Diego, October 24, 2019 – **San Diego Hunger Coalition** welcomes three community leaders to its **Board of Directors**: Blanca Meléndrez, Gary Petill, and Julie Rice. **Meléndrez** is Executive Director of the U.C. San Diego School of Medicine Center for Community Health. **Petill** is Director of the Food and Nutrition Services for San Diego Unified School District. **Rice** is Owner and Principal of local nonprofit consultancy, Managed Giving. All three community leaders bring expertise and experience to the Hunger Coalition that align with current initiatives and will advance the **Hunger Free San Diego** solution-based approach to ending hunger in our region.

“Blanca, Gary, and Julie are all long-term collaborators and supporters of the Hunger Coalition, and they each bring a unique skillset, perspective and wealth of expertise to the table,” says Ron Troyano, Chair of the San Diego Hunger Coalition Board of Directors. *“Their energy, excitement, and new ideas will complement and enhance the phenomenal talent that governs and staffs our organization as the Hunger Coalition’s mission to end hunger in San Diego reaches new heights in the year ahead.”*

Blanca Meléndrez, MA is a nonprofit leader with 20 years of local, regional, and national experience in the non-profit and government sectors. She currently serves as Executive Director of the U.C. San Diego School of Medicine Center for Community Health (CCH) where she fosters local, state, and nationwide-wide efforts to improve health outcomes for California’s low-income residents and underserved neighborhoods by applying a racial equity lens. Her eye towards equity, diversity, and social justice will support the Hunger Coalition’s dedication to an effective and equitable food assistance system. Ms. Melendrez is a member of the Hunger Free San Diego Advisory Board.

Gary Petill is the Director of Food and Nutrition Services for San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD). He has been in his current position with SDUSD since 2002 and has 23 years of prior experience in hospitality management. Gary currently oversees 300 schools and maintains a \$62 million budget for the school district. Under his leadership, SDUSD has received awards for excellence in youth meal programs from the California School Board Association, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the California Endowment. He brings to the Hunger Coalition a wealth of knowledge about child nutrition and school meal programs. Mr. Petill is a member of the Hunger Free San Diego Advisory Board and an advisor to the Hunger Free Kids program.

Julie Rice, Owner and Principal of Managed Giving, is a talented communications and development professional with experience in both the public and private sectors. She served as an aid to U.S. Senator Al Gore, a press officer for the U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, and on the 1992 Clinton-Gore and 2000 Gore-Lieberman presidential campaigns. She has developed community partnerships between nonprofits and major corporations such as Nike, Kellogg, and Wrigley. Julie specializes in strategic plan creation and implementation, materials evaluation and development, grant writing, and community partnerships and outreach. Ms. Rice comes to the Hunger Coalition with a successful track record of expanding and enhancing relationships in the nonprofit and hunger relief communities.

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San Diego Hunger Coalition leads coordinated action to end hunger in San Diego County supported by research, education and advocacy. San Diego Hunger Coalition has served San Diego communities since 1974. For more information, please contact Joe Shumate, Communications Officer, at joseph@sdhunger.org.

