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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Mateo County Tattoo Removal Program Reopening Friday, January 31st

Redwood City, California- The San Mateo County Tattoo Removal Program is happy to announce its **GRAND REOPENING** after a two year hiatus caused when the old laser machine became unusable and could not be repaired. Over the past two years, many people have worked hard to raise funds and many more have donated to purchase the new laser machine that cost approximately \$100,000.

The San Mateo County Tattoo Removal Program is located at the Redwood City PAL Community Center. Laser tattoo removal works through an intense beam of light that pulses harmlessly through the top layers of skin. This laser energy breaks up the tattoo pigment into smaller particles, which are then removed by the body's immune system. It is very painful and takes many sessions over several months to complete the tattoo removal process.

" We would like to thank each and every donor that made purchasing this new machine possible. Without you, we would not be able to help our participants. Some have called every week for the past two years to find out when we would be able to start the program again. We are excited to be able to start helping them change their lives again. " Manuel Velarde, Juvenile Specialist, RCPD.

The San Mateo County Tattoo Removal Program started in 1995 and has served hundreds of San Mateo County residents with tattoo removal services. The program is a collaboration of the San Mateo County Probation Office, Redwood City Police Department and San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, San Mateo County Sheriff's Activities League and Redwood City PAL.

The mission of the program is to provide tattoo removal to people who have proven they are transitioning out of the gang life style. This program is also helping the domestic violence victims with healing from the abuse they suffered as many perpetrators force their victims to tattoo their names on them to mark the victim as property.

“Everyone deserves a chance to have a new start. I believe this service will enable some young people to overcome the effects of past choices which do not reflect where they want their lives to go now,” says Sheriff Greg Munks who supports the program. “I’m glad to play a part in helping them change directions.”

Participants that are trying to change their lives are often hampered by visible tattoos from their past choices. Tattoo Removal Project provides a gateway to employment, increased self-esteem and improved social mobility through the latest in laser technology. This much needed program serves San Mateo County residents that may be are on probation, parole or in treatment.

Besides providing innumerable new-found freedoms, the Tattoo Removal Program was also designed to give each participant the opportunity to give back to society. They complete community service hours to participate in the program and to date they have performed thousands of hours of public service work for our community.

Thanks to the donated physician services and other community support, laser tattoo removal treatments are provided free of charge. To see if you would be eligible for the program, please email Manuel Velarde at mvelarde@redwoodcity.org.

The community is welcome to attend the GRAND REOPENING ceremony on January 31, 2014 from 1:00-2:30pm at the PAL Community Center, 3399 Bay Road, Redwood City. Please RSVP to Barbara Bonilla at bbonila@smcgov.org.

Release Date: January 21, 2014

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Activities League exists to provide positive programs for the youth of the community in sports and recreation, life skills, and educational activities while building the bond between law enforcement and youth. San Mateo County SAL has twelve chapters serving over three thousand students throughout the county – seven coastside chapters and five bayside, serving the unincorporated areas of the county, and contract cities. San Mateo County SAL is a member of the California Police Activities League and the National Police Activities League. To get involved or provide support, email sleong@smcgob.org to receive our e-Newsletter.