



For Immediate Release

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## **Mama's Kitchen Moves to New Home**

***\*\*New location provides permanent home for treasured grassroots organization\*\****

**San Diego – August 10, 2011** – Mama's Kitchen, a nonprofit organization that delivers healthy meals at no cost to San Diego men, women and children affected by HIV/AIDS or cancer, is moving their operations to 3960 Home Avenue, in the San Diego community of City Heights. This new home gives Mama's Kitchen a permanent location and increases the organization's capacity to serve more people and provide more in-house prepared foods.

For the past 17 years, Mama's Kitchen called a leased church basement of 5,500 square feet home, where all meals were prepared and packaged for delivery, and staff offices and meeting space were located. However, the organization needed to find a new home, as their landlord chose not to renew the lease because of intentions to sell the property. After much research and consideration by a Facilities Ad Hoc Committee, the board of directors of Mama's Kitchen adopted the committee's recommendation to purchase and renovate a building with ample square footage to accommodate future client needs and projected increased demand for services.

When Mama's Kitchen was established in 1990, the hope for a cure for AIDS was high. The founders intended to stay in business only as long as there was a need. At that time, a building lease was a prudent action. "As the face of the disease evolved and people with AIDS were living longer, our organization recognized it could no longer plan and operate in response to a crisis," said Alberto Cortés, executive director, Mama's Kitchen. As a result, the organization's leadership redefined its focus to reflect and accommodate the changing times and expanded its mission to also serve people living with cancer. Committed to the nutritional needs of people with AIDS and people with cancer, the leadership set out to find a facility that will accommodate the changing needs of the San Diego County residents Mama's Kitchen serves.

"Mama Kitchen's new facility represents our commitment to sustain and grow our mission so that over the coming decades we can serve many thousands of lives," continued Cortés. Located at 3960 Home Avenue, Mama's Kitchen's new 11,000

square-foot, two-story facility affords significant opportunities to improve operational efficiency and organizational effectiveness. Specifically, the location boasts:

- An industrial-sized commercial kitchen, equipped with more modern equipment that will expand food preparation capacity and improve the quality and nutritional value of prepared meals.
- A more welcoming environment for the hundreds of volunteers who walk through its doors, which will incorporate appropriate workspaces for staff and volunteers.
- Adequate conference and classroom space to accommodate community meetings, volunteer orientations, trainings and education programs that will help service recipients, and enable staff, volunteers and community partners to stay informed, build skills and share resources.

Additionally, Mama's Pantry, a service of Mama's Kitchen that provides a nutritional shopping opportunity at no cost for low-income men, women and children affected by AIDS/HIV, will move from their North Park location to Home Avenue as well, and will allow the organization to increase hours of operation and expand from only non-perishable food items to also offering perishable items, such as fruits and vegetables. The Mama's Pantry service is designed to meet the needs of clients with HIV/AIDS who can benefit from occasional nutritional support to maintain their health and stretch their food budget. Once a month, clients can visit Mama's Pantry and select their own food items (such as cereals, pastas, and canned goods) from a wide inventory. Mama's Pantry serves more than 700 low-income San Diegans every year, with 4,849 visits in 2010. Established in 2004, Mama's Pantry has hosted 20,000 visits since its inception.

The new location officially opens for business on Mon., Aug. 29, and the team has been working diligently to ensure no disruption of meal preparation or delivery service. Volunteers and clients who have questions are encouraged to contact 619-233-6262 for additional details or for answers to their specific questions.

Back's Construction is the general contractor. Hurkes Harris Design Associates, Inc., is the architect. Michael Wall Engineering is the electrical engineer. Kitchen design provided by Orness Design Group. AB Court & Associates is the structural engineer. Torrey Pines Bank is providing bridge financing and Netzel Grigsby Associates is providing campaign counsel. Project management by Hughes Marino.

#### **About Mama's Kitchen**

Mama's Kitchen was founded in 1990 when volunteers from the AIDS Assistance Fund discovered that many of their clients were becoming too ill to take care of themselves. They realized that a reliable home meal delivery service was needed to ensure that these individuals would continue to receive nutritious, life-sustaining food. In 2004, Mama's Pantry was opened to provide individuals with HIV/AIDS who are able to prepare meals the opportunity to supplement their nutritional needs. Mama's Kitchen has served over five million meals since it was founded and has never turned away a client who qualified for our services. Our commitment to our clients remains unchanged. Today, the organization has expanded its service to San Diegans affected by either AIDS or cancer. Mama's Kitchen provides three meals a day, for every day of the year, free of charge, to nearly 300 men, women, and children in San Diego County. Learn more and make a donation at [www.mamaskitchen.org](http://www.mamaskitchen.org).

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