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**Step Up Silicon Valley Announces Pilot Project to
Move 1,000 People Out of Poverty by 2014**

For the first time, local service providers will be able to measure how effective their services are in helping families move from poverty to self-sufficiency

SAN JOSE, Calif., March 7, 2013 – Step Up Silicon Valley announced today that it is committed to moving 1,000 people out of poverty in Santa Clara County over the next 12 months. Sixteen agencies in the Step Up network have joined the 1,000 Out of Poverty campaign, including Abode Services, Bill Wilson Center, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, Center for Employment Training, Community Solutions, EHC LifeBuilders, Family Supportive Housing, Goodwill Industries, Next Door Solutions, NOVA, Project Hired, Sacred Heart Community Service, Sunnyvale Community Services, St. Joseph’s Family Center, The Salvation Army, and West Valley Community Services. Seed funding for this pilot project was provided by Cisco Systems.

Each agency has committed to moving a certain number of people out of poverty by 2014 using a common measurement system. For the first time ever, local service providers will be able to measure how effective their combined services are in helping families and individuals move from poverty to self-sufficiency.

“The fact that 16 organizations are willing to work together to lift 1,000 people out of poverty in itself is a wonderful message of collaboration and cooperation for the greater good of the community,” said Almaz Negash, managing director of Step Up Silicon Valley. Negash works for Catholic Charities, a founding member of the Step Up network. “We see this collaboration not as an end, but rather as a means to learn from the process, understand barriers, and improve systems to better serve those who are working to overcome poverty.”

Santa Clara County Supervisor Dave Cortese agreed, “People need a range of services to overcome some of the barriers to self-sufficiency. No one government agency or nonprofit organization can do it alone. It needs to be a public-private collaboration. Government certainly plays a role, but so do local nonprofits that serve those in need in neighborhoods across Santa Clara County.”

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The project will use the federal Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) to define poverty. The SPM factors in cost of living and considers all income and support, including government benefits. Based on that measure, an estimated 214,000 people in Santa Clara County are living in poverty.

At the start of the pilot project, participants will measure how well they are doing in five key areas – food, housing, health, education, and income – using objective measures on a five-point scale. This self-sufficiency assessment will occur four times throughout the course of the year.

This data will be tracked through the Help Management Information System, a common database already used by many of the service providers, to determine how many participants are able to become self-sufficient. The Community Technology Alliance will help with tracking and analyzing the data while the University of Notre Dame Lab for Economic Opportunities will evaluate the process.

The 16 organizations will use their existing strategies for helping the populations they serve move out of poverty, which might include employment services, housing assistance, asset development, immigration legal services, and case management. These agencies also agree to assist each other with services needed by each other's clients.

The interventions used to help people become self-sufficient will also be tracked and analyzed. The process, cost, and results will be measured to determine what is most efficient, effective, scalable, or replicable, as well as the barriers faced by the agencies and their clients, and any net savings to the system.

"What is extraordinary about Step Up Silicon Valley is that many disparate organizations serving people in need are combining forces to achieve a common goal: alleviating poverty," said Don Watters, American Leadership Forum - Silicon Valley Senior Fellow and McKinsey Director Emeritus. "With its participation in Step Up, ALF is bringing its collaborative leadership model to bear against any challenges that this major community-change effort faces."

Step Up Silicon Valley is a network of nearly 90 organizations focused on reducing poverty in Santa Clara County through creating awareness, advocating for policy changes, and incubating innovative solutions. It was officially launched in 2009.

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