



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
 Friday, Aug. 26, 2016

CONTACT:  
 Nicole Darling at (619) 533-4505 or [ndarling@sanidiego.gov](mailto:ndarling@sanidiego.gov)

# **Adult Students Earn High School Diplomas through Innovative Online Program**

**CEREMONY HELD AT CENTRAL LIBRARY HONORS CITY'S THIRD GRADUATING CLASS OF CAREER ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL**

SAN DIEGO – As part of the San Diego Public Library's mission to promote life-long learning, 12 San Diego residents were honored during a graduation ceremony on Friday, Aug. 26, for Career Online High School (COHS), an accredited online high school diploma and career certificate program. All of the 12 graduates have either completed the program or are nearly finished. The number of students in this graduating class has more than tripled since Mayor Kevin Faulconer launched COHS in 2015.

**"What these students have achieved is incredible and I am so proud of their accomplishment, and we are proud that the San Diego Public Library could be part of it through the Career Online High School program," said Library Director Misty Jones. "We strive to provide opportunities for everyone and these students are a testament to what can be achieved when an opportunity arises."**

Among the graduates is City employee Cindy Juarez, who dropped out of high school in 10<sup>th</sup> grade to work in construction. Now, she plans to enroll in community college and work to advance her career in the City's Public Utilities Department.

**"It was always in the back of my mind, for years," said Cindy Juarez. "I wish that I had done it sooner."**

Currently, 54 students are actively enrolled in the COHS program. Participants have the flexibility to take classes and access schoolwork online - at their own pace - and receive free support and educational resources from the library. While earning an accredited high school diploma as part of the program, COHS students are also preparing for a career in one of eight high-demand, high-growth fields, including child care and education, Homeland Security, and transportation services.

**“Public libraries are the backbone of a neighborhood,” said Councilmember Chris Cate. “At our libraries, new parents connect at infant story-times, school-based youth have a safe place to study, adults receive a second chance to earn a high school diploma, and our seniors attend classes to interact with one another. When we invest in our libraries, we invigorate our communities.”**

In San Diego, there are more than 205,000 people, approximately 15 percent of the population, over the age of 25 who did not have a high school diploma. The unemployment rate for this group is double that for high school graduates. COHS is a nationally accredited school built on an educational model designed to help high school dropouts overcome the reasons they didn’t finish.

**“Today’s graduation shows how libraries truly change lives, and Gale is proud to work with San Diego Public Library to empower residents,” said Chuck Leachman, Executive Director for Strategic Accounts at Gale.**

Many students are able to complete the program in as few as six months. COHS is offered in partnership with the San Diego Public Library Foundation and Gale, a leading provider of library resources and part of Cengage Learning. The program is open to San Diego City residents, and provides scholarships to qualified adults who are looking to advance their careers or continue their education.

**“We are proud to work with donors who fund academic scholarships that provide opportunities for San Diegans to achieve their academic and career goals,” said Jay Hill, CEO of the San Diego Public Library Foundation.**

For information on supporting scholarships for Career Online High School students, visit <https://give.supportmylibrary.org/career-online-high-school>. To learn more about the program and other services available through the San Diego Public Library, visit [www.SanDiegoLibrary.org](http://www.SanDiegoLibrary.org).

#### **About the San Diego Public Library**

San Diego Public Library, which is the largest library system in the region, serves a population of more than 1.3 million people. Its mission is to inspire lifelong learning through connections to knowledge and each other. Learn about other events at the San Diego Central Library @ Joan A Irwin Jacobs Common and 35 community branch libraries, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library’s online catalog at [www.sandiegolibrary.org](http://www.sandiegolibrary.org).

#### **About Cengage Learning and Gale**

Cengage Learning is a leading educational content, technology, and services company for the higher education and K-12, professional, library and workforce training markets worldwide. Gale, a part of Cengage Learning, has been a global provider of research resources for libraries and businesses for more than 60 years. Gale is passionate about supporting the continued innovation and evolution of libraries by providing the content, tools, and services libraries need to promote information discovery, enable learning, and support economic, cultural, and intellectual growth in their communities. For more information, visit [www.cengage.com](http://www.cengage.com) or [www.gale.cengage.com](http://www.gale.cengage.com).

###