

DATE/TIME OF EVENT:

April 25, 2014, 6:30 P.M.

EVENT LOCATION:

Hs Lordships Restaurant
199 Seawall Drive
Berkeley, CA 94710

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Low Income Taxpayers Celebrate Financial Windfall

More Money, More Returns, and More Services

Berkeley, CA.— The Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA) and United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) invite members of the press to join 100 IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers – and some taxpayers they have served – to mark the end of a successful 2013-2014 season for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

This year's results shattered all previous records in the program's 13-year history. Volunteer tax preparers processed over 2,100 returns—31 percent more than last year—and returned to Alameda County's economy \$3.2 million in refunds, which is 33 percent higher than last year's total.

"Each year, I am amazed by the ever-increasing volume of tax returns processed and the expertise of the volunteers," said Lori A. Cox, SSA's Director.

Oakland resident Jose Sanchez will be in attendance to thank the tax preparer who assisted him in landing the single largest tax refund in program history. "I had no idea that my refund would be \$26,218," he recalled. "The tax preparer is the person who told me that I could file an amended return for all those other years (before he received his Social Security number) ... That's money I can use to help my family." **Note: Mr. Sanchez and other low income taxpayers will be available to speak with the media.**

This year's program, which began January 22, 2014 and closed April 14, 2014, included additional services: more hours of operation; on-site health care and CalFresh enrollment; direct deposit, banking and credit union services; information on other financial and asset building products; and Virtual VITA Tax Preparation (drop-off and pick-up service for returning filers).

SSA's VITA program began 13 years ago after Alameda County officials and staff recognized that low to moderate income taxpayers, who could not afford professional tax preparers, were paying large sums of money to have their taxes prepared. Those who attempted to prepare their own taxes were often leaving the EITC and other tax credits "[on the table](#)," costing the State of California's economy over \$1 billion annually. Volunteers complete required IRS training and at least 30 hours of evening and weekend service.

For more information, see our [Facebook](#) page or visit our [website](#).