



REstart program bringing families home again

Giving a new start in life through real estate management

By **CHERI WALLACE**

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

In 1998, members of the San Diego Chapter of the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) became concerned that spiraling housing costs combined with welfare reform would put many families on the street. The REstart program was created by real estate management professionals who are using education, training and networking to prepare disadvantaged single parents for a new start in life through real estate.

Cofounders Lauri Greenblatt Hines and Linda Lewis developed the model of a teaching program that would allow these parents to train and intern as apartment managers, thus providing them with free or low-cost housing and a career. The program has expanded to include commercial property management as well.

The program was originally named Home Start to signify the key elements of the program -- a new home and a new start. The program was later renamed REstart to emphasize the new start in life through real estate management. REstart is a program of the Bobby Jo Lewis Foundation, named for Bobby Jo Lewis, who along with her mother Alice lost her life to domestic violence.

REstart works collaboratively with community service organizations committed to the need of our target groups. Once students are accepted into the program, they begin a rigorous 10-week classroom and training program under the supervision of certified IREM instructors. Students are trained with the IREM course on apartment management and in additional areas such as ethics, fair housing, business etiquette, landlord-tenant laws, self-defense and personal finance. Once students have completed classroom training and job shadowing, and passed a written test, they enter a full-time, one-month internship under the supervision of experienced property management staff. During the entire program, students experience two full months of the management cycle. To date, REstart has held 15 classes and graduated 146 students. Approximately 65 percent of students complete the intense 10-week training program and roughly 65 percent of our graduates obtain employment in the real estate management industry while others go into related fields. The program is staffed and run entirely by volunteers and is supported by private donations. Each class takes more than 2,000 volunteer hours and costs approximately \$800 per student.

Through the generous support of the IREM Foundation and IREM members, instructors, coaches, internship host sites and industry partners, REstart is able to bring families home again. To learn more, please visit our website at restartprogram.org.

Wallace is a property manager/Brokerage Associate with Pacific Coast Commercial, and serves as the REstart program's steering committee co-chair.

