

HOMELESS TIMES



A publication of the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless

600-B East Gude Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

www.mcch.net

(301) 217-0314

Fall 2008

Residents Find Home in the CHIPP Program



Apartments, owned by MCCH's affiliate Coalition Homes, are being thoughtfully prepared for new CHIPP residents to move-in.

MCCH launched the Creative Housing Initiative Pilot Project (CHIPP) late last year to provide permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals who have frequently utilized emergency medical systems and/or the local corrections system. Over the past six months, staff have been hired, a social work intern was brought on board (a first for MCCH!), a representative payee program was established to assist CHIPP residents with financial management, and residents have begun to move into their new homes.

Many of our residents have long histories of homelessness and are finding peace and security in their new homes. Carl, who signed the lease for his apartment in June 2008, describes growing up in the foster care system and as a teenager residing in several group homes. As an adult he lived with various friends and sometimes slept on a park bench when he had nowhere else to go. During this time he was still able to work, but was never able to afford a stable place to stay. Over the last year he cycled through the emergency shelter system, hospitals and drop-in centers. Carl eventually formed a trusting relationship with a case manager, who assisted him in managing the issues that had led to instability in his life, and referred him to CHIPP.

Carl states that the best thing about moving into his new place has been "feeling safe at night, going to sleep knowing that I am behind a locked door, that I have a refrigerator with food, heat, air conditioning...it gives me a peaceful feeling." But he also notes that having a safe place to stay is only part of the transition out of homelessness. Adjusting to life in a community and not on the street takes time as well. "I have to adjust to being a part of society again, for so long I was homeless and then you are not a part of society. Its like being hungry for so long and then getting food in your stomach, sometimes you still feel sick." But for now Carl is enjoying creating a new "household" by decorating his apartment, putting in plants and throw rugs, keeping his unit clean and making it his own home.

Want to Help CHIPP Residents this Holiday Season?

Many residents in CHIPP and our other programs do not have family or do not have close relationships with their family members, often making the holiday season a difficult time of year. To help brighten the holidays for our residents we try to fulfill "wish list" items that CHIPP residents both want and need. The most frequent wishes are for very simple items like clothing, CDs or books. If you are interested in helping to fill these wishes, please contact MCCH at 301-217-0314 x16. The staff letter on page 2 describes other ways to help this holiday season.

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Staff Letter



*Teri Brenits, Community
 Outreach Coordinator*

Hi, my name is Teri Brenits and I am the new Community Outreach Coordinator for the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless. For the past three years, my family and a group of neighbors have gathered on a monthly basis to make meals for the Men's Emergency Shelter. This effort has grown in our community to include 15 families who participate on a regular basis and two additional "splinter"

groups. I had no idea of the extent of homelessness in our community before volunteering at MCCH. Learning about the needs in our own backyard only further motivated my family and our neighbors to help.

Fortunately, since coming to work at MCCH, I have learned that many of you share our concern. My days are spent trying to find the best way to make use of the offers to help. One of my first goals is to fill the many holes in our **meal program at the Men's Emergency Shelter** in Rockville. Recently, we have expanded our offerings to three meals a day, 365 days a year. During the colder months of November through March, we serve up to 200 men per meal, three times a day. That is a lot of meals! The shelter staff and I rely on your support to ensure that these meals are provided regularly, are nutritious, and plentiful. We recently updated our guidelines to take the guesswork out of meal preparation and delivery to the shelter, so please contact me for more information if you are interested.

Additionally, we are planning for the holiday season and are thinking about ways to brighten the lives of the people we serve. Specifically, we are looking for groups who would like to make and serve **special meals at the Men's Shelter on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve**, and others who are interested in **holding drives to collect gift cards** so that families can select gifts for their children and purchase supplies for holiday meals, **new unused toys** for the men at the Shelter to "shop" from for their children, and **holiday gifts some of our adult clients have wished for.**

I look forward to working with each of you in the near future. **Please call me at 301-217-0314 x16 or email me at teri@mcch.net** to discuss ways that you can join with us to help end homelessness in Montgomery County!

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

We are faced with a tough upcoming winter. Our country is going through a period of economic and political uncertainty. The State of Maryland is looking at a \$1 billion deficit and Montgomery County a \$250 million deficit. Our country's two mortgage giants (and MCCH's two largest private contributors) have been placed in conservatorship. Families are losing their homes across the country; and our region has one of the fastest-growing foreclosure rates in the nation.

Times like these lead to an increased need for social services, but the financial resources to meet those needs are quickly disappearing. For nonprofits across our region that provide social services, this means preparing for a winter of increased demands with decreased resources.



Despite all these challenges, the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless is hopeful. We are hopeful that our County's new approach to homelessness (see page 4) will yield not only better results for people experiencing homelessness, but be a better use of resources too. We are hopeful that the addition to our Men's Emergency Shelter (see picture below) will finish in time for the mid-winter increase in residents we see year after year. We are hopeful that this addition and the new services it allows us to offer will help to end housing crises more quickly and effectively.

We are hopeful that if we tackle this problem – homelessness – one person at a time, one day soon we will see the end of homelessness as we know it. Homelessness shouldn't exist. In fact, it didn't used to exist like it does today. But if homelessness must persist, it should be both rare and brief.

I hope that you all will join me on Saturday, November 22nd at Fannie Mae's *Help the Homeless Walkathon* (see page 5). This event has been one of MCCH's largest fundraisers over the years and its future fate seems uncertain. Join me on this day to show that despite all the uncertainty we face, we are still certain that every person has the right to a home.

Sincerely yours,

Sharan London



Progress at the new building for MCCH's Adrienne's Safe Havens and offices, and Community Ministries of Rockville's Chase Partnership House.



Progress at the addition to MCCH's Men's Emergency Shelter.

Montgomery County Overhauls Housing Plan

Montgomery County has taken an aggressive approach to ending homelessness in our community by adopting a Housing First strategy, resulting in a shift in how our current homeless system operates. Housing First is an approach that centers on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing support services as needed to maintain housing stability. The primary focus is to help individuals and families quickly access and sustain permanent housing. In contrast, the current system requires people to access services first through an emergency or transitional shelter where they often wait for months or years before they are declared “housing ready”.

“Housing First lets us solve the number one reason that people are homeless - they don’t have anywhere to live. By solving the housing crisis first, we are then able to work with clients to address other issues in order to maintain their housing stability,” explains Sharan London, Executive Director of MCCH.

This system overhaul was several years in the making. First we had to demonstrate the success of the Housing First model. This was accomplished with our own Housing First program and the first in Montgomery County, Partnership for Permanent Housing. Since its inception in 2005, over 150 formerly homeless individuals and families now have a permanent roof over their heads.

Beginning in fall of 2006, we contracted with a technical assistance firm to develop a report on how to shift the current system to a Housing First model and to provide an estimate of the cost of that shift. However, it was the County Council’s recent designation of \$4.5 million from the Housing Initiative Fund that provides the necessary resources to transform the County’s existing model. This new model increases the focus on prevention, intake and assessment so that individuals and families can be rapidly re-housed and connected to services to maintain their housing, effectively ending their homelessness.

The Department of Health and Human Services disseminated a plan this past summer detailing how the shift will evolve, outlining necessary steps to move towards a Housing First model. Additional highlights include converting several emergency shelters into assessment shelters, expanding the amount of rental subsidies and increasing the affordable housing stock. This shift requires an investment from service providers throughout Montgomery County, but as Sharan explains, most are “really excited by the prospect of the County moving towards the inclusion of Housing First. We have seen that it can work.”

2nd Annual H.O.M.E. Conference Builds on Last Year’s Success



MCCH’s 2nd H.O.M.E. Conference, held on October 2, 2008, proved to be a tremendous success. The H.O.M.E. Conference offers a day of education, knowledge-sharing and coalition-building for homeless service providers and other community stakeholders. The conference featured seven workshop tracks, including behavioral health, Housing First, and working with special populations. Speakers included both regional and national leaders such as Tom Albanese from Abt Associates, Ruth White from the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare, Jamey Burden and Sharon McDonald from the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and Christy Respress

from Pathways to Housing DC. The day was kicked off with opening remarks by County Executive Ike Leggett and Council President Mike Knapp. Uma Ahluwalia, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services, delivered the keynote address during lunch. Thanks to a grant from a private foundation and low registration fees (only \$15 for MCCH members!), we were able to provide a range of educational opportunities to more than 200 people from over 40 agencies.

Support MCCH at Fannie Mae's *Help the Homeless* Walkathon

Don't forget to designate MCCH as your beneficiary organization!

WHEN: Saturday, November 22, 2008
 Registration opens - 7 a.m.
 Pre-Walkathon Program - 8:30 a.m.
 Walkathon - 9 a.m.

WHERE: National Mall, Smithsonian Metro Station. Meet MCCH staff, clients and supporters between 8 and 9 AM at the "M" sign.

HOW: 1) Go to www.helpthehomelessdc.org
 2) Click "Register" at the top of the screen
 3) Select "Join a Team"
 4) Type "Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless"
 5) Click "Join"!

Remember, each registered walker counts toward our goal of earning the \$25,000 incentive for having 1,500 walkers.

The *Help the Homeless* Walkathon raises funds and awareness to help prevent and end homelessness in the Washington, D.C. area. Join thousands of MCCH staff, clients, family, friends, supporters and other walkers in the fight against homelessness! If you can't join us on the 22nd, please consider making a donation to MCCH's team at www.helpthehomelessdc.org.



MCCH Receives Generous Stock Donation

An unknown generous donor transferred a large amount of stock into our brokerage account last spring. We offer our profound gratitude to this generous, anonymous donor. This gift is one of the single largest gifts we've ever received from an individual, and will make a world of difference to the people we serve. To help quantify what this gift means, it provides 1400 days of access to the Men's Emergency Shelter (24/7 shelter, food, case management, medical care, vocational counseling, etc.).

Stock donations, of any amount, are an easy and wonderful way to help MCCH's programs and homeless people in our community. All you have to do is call your broker and ask that they transfer the stocks you designate to MCCH.

Gifts of stock and bonds can also be one of the most advantageous ways of giving. By donating appreciated stock to MCCH, you are not only entitled to an income tax deduction, but you can also save on the capital gains tax you would owe if you sold it yourself. If you've taken a loss in the stock market, you can still help MCCH's mission by selling stock at a loss and then making a donation to MCCH of the same amount of money for which the stock was sold. This scenario allows you to not only claim a charitable deduction for the gift, but can also allow you to deduct the stock's decrease in value from your other taxable income, thereby reducing the taxes you pay.

If you do decide to make a gift of stock to MCCH, please remember to let us know! Not only do we want to be able to thank you and provide a letter for your own tax purposes, but it helps us to manage our assets and future cash flow needs better. We will always honor and respect a donor's request to remain anonymous. As always, we suggest that you consult with your independent financial, tax, or legal advisor for specific help with your particular situation, as MCCH does not provide financial, tax, or legal advice. But if you would like more information about making a stock donation to MCCH before year's end, please contact Sarah Mahin at 301-217-0314 x18 or sarah@mcch.net.



National Coalition for the Homeless speaks on homeless voting rights at a member meeting.

MCCH's Annual Membership Drive

Please consider joining or renewing your membership with MCCH as part of our efforts to end homelessness in Montgomery County. Your FY2009 membership dues will support our programs, advocacy efforts, public education, and trainings for homeless service providers. If you are interested in being an MCCH member, please fill out the form below and send it back with your payment. We look forward to your support!

MCCH Membership Record and Invoice

Individual Membership Dues for July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009 \$15.00
 Organization Membership Dues for July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009 \$50.00

- Yes!** I would like to help MCCH in serving our community's most vulnerable neighbors by becoming a member. In addition to becoming a member, I would like to make an additional donation in the amount of \$ _____.

Additional donations could buy:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| \$20 | A safe place to sleep for one man, for one night at the Men's Emergency Shelter |
| \$35 | Bed sheets for one of our Home First clients |
| \$55 | Pots and pans for a new family in the Partnership for Permanent Housing |
| \$110 | One backpack containing a calculator, notebooks, folders, pens and paper for a child's first day of school at Seneca Heights Apartments |

Name of Individual

Organization Name (if applicable)

Address

Phone Number & Fax Number

Website

Email Address

Please charge my: Visa Mastercard for \$ _____

Name on Credit Card

Signature

Card Number _____
Exp. Date

I/We would like to join the following electronic mail groups:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Beginning to End updates</i> - updates on implementation of action steps in MCCH's 10-Year Plan to end homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Information for local homeless service providers</i> - programs, classes, and services available for clients and providers as well as articles about regional homeless issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>General information on homelessness</i> - current articles, research, data, and national legislative updates on topics related to homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>MCCH news and events</i> - information about developments at the Coalition and upcoming public education and fundraising events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advocacy</i> - requests for letter writing and support during legislative session and budget process | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Volunteers</i> - volunteer opportunities with MCCH |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Membership meetings</i> - notice of dates and topics for upcoming member meetings and retreats | |

Please make checks payable to MCCH and mail with this form to:
 600-B East Gude Drive, Rockville, MD 20850
Your membership donation is tax-deductible. Thanks for your support!

MCCH thanks the following donors for their generous contributions.

MCCH is only able to include donations of \$100 or more. This reflects the incredible growth in support from people since our inception. All donors are truly appreciated, and each gift makes a real difference in lives of people experiencing homelessness.

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Bethesda United Church of Christ
Damascus United Methodist Church -
Harwood House
Global Mission Church
New Hope Presbyterian Church
Our Lady of Grace Church
River Road Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
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In Honor of

The birth of Dylan London Atwell by Barbara
Rubin-Hanlen.
Dylan London Atwell's first birthday by Sharan and
Howard London.
2007-2008 6th Grade Class of Congregation
Beth El Religious School by Cheryl Kreiser.
Dr. Allison Bryant by Lawrence and Jody
Rosenblum.
The birth of Morgan Butler by Howard and
Sharan London, and Mark and Marilyn
Kresky-Wolff.
Gail Davidson by Bruce Davidson and Donald Barb.
Helen Fisher by Ann Foster.
Mr. and Mrs. Kohlman by Rolf and Ruth Hayn.
Mickey Korn's special birthday by Jane Josephs.
Sharan London by Stephen and Sharon Friedman.
Jim Russ' Wedding by Sharan and Howard London,
Sarah Mahin, and Julie and Jonathan
Maltzman.
Shirley Ryan by Patrick Ryan.
Julia Schwarz's 95th birthday by Jill and Mike
Keech.
Emily Anne Shepard's Bat Mitzvah by Robert
Shepard and Julie Black.
Westat-Dawn Project by Rebecca Lowe.

In Memory of

Tyrone Boardley by Kelley O'Dell and Matt Payne.
Sam Chapman by Jonathan and Julie Maltzman
and Sharan and Howard London.
Rev. Howard Foard by Monique Jarmon.
Catherine Forman by Alice M. Forman.
Marie-Therese Giordani by Leo and Elizabeth
Scanlon.
Shirley Goldberg by Sharan and Howard London.
Ennio Gressani by Howard and Sharan London.
Beth Kalivas by Ioanni Kalivas.
Stephen Kiley by Karen Kiley.
Ray Salzberg's father by Sharan and Howard
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Jason Siegel's father by Sharan and Howard
London.
Dr. Scott James Thaler by Wendy Finn.
Gregory Allen Valcourt by Lynne Valcourt and
Millard Arbutina, Jr.
Gary Wells by Thomas and Marilyn Sherman.
Evelyn Worthington by Sarah Mahin.
Kenneth K. Yamamoto by Joan Yamamoto.

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