



## **Dream Homes Community Center**

To: Mayor Mark Boughton and the City Council

From: Sharice Coleman, Homeless & Housing Advocate

Re: November, 2013 Monthly Report

cc: ARC Executive Director & ARC Board of Directors

### I. Program Synopsis

Per the proposal endorsed by Mayor Boughton and the City Council, Dream Homes Community Center (DHCC) was established at ARC to serve as the Point of Entry for people who are homeless or low-income renters and to facilitate first-time home ownership for people with hard-to-serve backgrounds.

### II. Program Updates

Dream Homes Community Center continues to put the “Boots on the Ground” in the efforts to end homelessness. The numbers of people served throughout the city Danbury continue to increase. Through our Coordinated Access Services, Dream Homes Community Center has served 309 people in the city of Danbury alone since July 1, 2013.

#### Point of Entry

Since July 1, 2013, DHCC has provided services to 457 people (62 individuals and 121 couples and families) through the Point of Entry at ARC. The following is a breakdown of people served:

Town	July 2011 – June 2012	July 2012- June 2013	July 2013-October 2013
Danbury	592	590	309
Bethel	26	62	27
Brookfield	33	14	7
New Fairfield	34	22	4
New Milford	77	68	23
Newtown	4	16	16
Redding	7	0	0
Ridgefield	8	5	8
Sherman	2	1	4
Other Towns	45	58	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>457</b>

III. Outreach Highlights: Dream Homes Staff attended the following meetings and trainings:

- Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman (for Individuals) and Heather Ely (for Families) attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Danbury Housing Partnership Breakfast. The community and the members of the Danbury Housing Partnership Committee came together to raise money for low income housing to help end homelessness.
- Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman and Heather Ely attended the monthly Continuum of Care meeting. Andrea Gartner and Tom Divine were the guest speakers. Meeting was centered on issues the City Center has with addressing the homeless population and how the CoC committee can collaborate to address those issues.
- Housing Advocate Heather Ely attended the monthly Danbury Housing Partnership meeting. Committee members discussed updates on the RFP which was posted earlier this month. No submissions for the RFP have been received.
- Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman attended the Project Homeless Connect meeting. Committee members continued to prepare for the upcoming event which will be held on December 14, 2013. Members continued to update the committee on the status of their assignments. Members discussed and agreed to have next meeting at WCSU for a walk through of the gym to discuss the set up of the event.
- Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman and Heather Ely continue to meet once a week at Dorothy Day to perform outreach and to do CT-HMIS data intake on people who spent the night at Dorothy Day Shelter.
- Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman and Heather Ely attended bi-weekly Case Management meetings at Catholic Charities. Case Managers from different organizations in the community came together to discuss client issues, referral issues and process and different ways to continue the efforts of ending homelessness.
- Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman and Heather Ely attended the Shelter Plus Care Meeting. Members of the committee met and provided updates on the current waiting list and the progress made. Member also provided updates on the individuals and families who are currently receiving Shelter Plus Care services.

#### IV. Program Highlights—Story of one family we worked with this month (names changed)

##### A Point of Entry and Coordinated Access Success Story

Sarah is a single mother with two small children who came to ARC seeking assistance with finding an apartment and funds toward a Security Deposit. Sarah had been doubled up with various family members for close to a year, but had recently been approved for and awarded a Section 8 voucher. Despite her best efforts she had been unable to obtain a lease due to her poor credit history, lack of income, and landlord's his lack of knowledge regarding Section 8 vouchers. By the time Sarah came to ARC she had only 5 days left on her voucher to find an apartment, and her last prospect had just fallen through. Sarah did not believe that she would be granted an extension because she had already been granted two previous extensions.

ARC's Housing Advocate contacted the Danbury Housing Authority and advocated on the family's behalf for an extension on the current voucher. An extension was granted allowing Sarah more time to find an appropriate home for her family. Once the voucher was again secure, Sarah was provided with information on local landlords who would accept Section 8 vouchers. When a suitable apartment was found, the landlord had no previous experience with the Housing Authority. ARC reached out to the landlord to explain how the Voucher would work and also how the Dream Homes Community Center would be providing support to their potential tenant. The landlord was agreeable to working with ARC and Sarah was able to move forward with the apartment.

ARC conducted an apartment inspection and provided financial assistance toward the Security Deposit. At a home visit ARC was able to work with Sarah to determine what furnishings she would need. Through Coordinated Access, housing advocate referred Sarah to Make a Home Foundation and assisted her with filling out an application. ARC also provided a Welcome Basket to the family valued at \$100.