



Dream Homes Community Center

To: Mayor Mark Boughton and the City Council
 From: Amy Arruda, MSW, Homeless & Housing Advocate
 Re: August 2014 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.

Program Updates

Dream Homes Community Center continues to persevere in the efforts to assist Danbury’s “Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness”. Through our Coordinated Access Services, Dream Homes Community Center has served 193 people (90 households) in the city of Danbury alone since July 1, 2014.

Point of Entry

Since July 1, 2014, DHCC has provided services to 292 people (128 households) through the Point of Entry at ARC. The following is a breakdown by town:

Town	July 1, 2014 – July 31, 2014	August 1, 2014 – August 31, 2014
Danbury	78 ppl (35 households)	115 ppl (55 households)
Bethel	2 ppl (2 households)	9 ppl (4 households)
Brookfield	6 ppl (4 households)	2 ppl (1 household)
New Fairfield	3 ppl (1 household)	2 ppl (1 household)
New Milford	14 ppl (5 households)	11 ppl (5 households)
Newtown	0	3 ppl (2 households)
Redding	2 pl (1 household)	0
Ridgefield	0	3 ppl (1 household)
Sherman	0	0
Other Towns	6 ppl (3 households)	36 ppl (8 households)
Total	111 ppl (51 households)	181 ppl (77 households)

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II. ***Outreach Highlights:*** Dream Homes Housing Advocate, Amy Arruda, MSW attended the following meetings and trainings:

1. **CACD** meeting with housing coordinators to review client eligibility & program guidelines to better assist clients in the referral process.
2. **Shelter Plus Care** meeting at **Western Connecticut Mental Health Network (WCMHN)** to meet with clients & landlords regarding Vouchers 2.
3. Appropriate trainings and monthly webinar for **HMIS** data coordinators to review the program and learn system updates.
4. Met with **landlords** and performed inspections for clients to assess potential homes for clients.
5. Used private grant funds to purchase items for “**Welcome Baskets**” & delivered to clients who had their homelessness ended as a result of our work.
6. **Connect Inc.** meeting to discuss different supportive services in the community to increase impact on the homeless population in Danbury.

III. Because of the ***City Grant***, the Point of Entry was able to leverage and renew additional funds to help end and prevent homelessness, including:

1. *Vouchers 1*: 100% of rent for two unique households who were chronically homeless, one of which has one member of the household with a disability.
2. *Vouchers 2*: 100% of rent for three individuals who are veterans and were chronically homeless and one of which the majority of rent is paid for a family with a veteran who was chronically homeless per DMHAS contract.
3. *Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)*: Up to 12 months of housing support toward rent, moving costs, utilities, financial crisis, etc. Monthly home visits and on-going case-management coincide with this program to enable clients to become financially independent.
4. *Homeless Educational Grants*: Pays \$1,000 of costs toward tuition, child care, school supplies, transportation, and/or uniforms while participants are attending school. Clients must meet HUDs definition of homelessness or have proof of homelessness within the last 18 months. Case management is provided for 3 months to implement budgeting and financial planning.

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IV. *Program Highlights*—Story of one individual served by DHCC this month

A Point of Entry and Coordinated Access Success Story (Client's name changed to maintain confidentiality)

Roger, a 61 year old male, has been in and out of the hospital due to chronic flare ups of an inflammatory bowel disease. This disease jeopardized Roger's employment, subsequently, hindering his ability to meet his basic needs. Roger stayed in family member's home for an extended period of time but, due to unforeseen circumstances, the house was foreclosed. Roger was left with no other option but to sleep in his car. He became severely depressed and turned to alcohol and drug abuse. It was not long before he found himself back in the hospital, and was referred to the *Discipleship House* through *Christian Community Outreach Ministries*. This was his first step in the right direction and he continued to follow through with other community resources that he had been linked to.

Roger was able to maintain sobriety, however continued to endure living in his car while the obtainability of housing was limited. He had been denied access to every housing opportunity he applied to within the community due to eligibility requirements in which he fell short. Fortunately, Roger found his way to ARC where the Housing Advocate was able to help him locate appropriate services. He began attending outpatient rehab at *Western Connecticut Mental Health Network (WCMHN)* for recovery support. He was also referred to a local attorney to assist him with his eligibility to benefits for his disability.

With several support services in place, Roger still struggled with his health and access to housing. ARC's Housing Advocate, Amy Arruda, MSW **explored several housing stability plans** with Roger. Unfortunately, even the option of a room-share would not fit his needs due to his debilitating disease which requires access to a bathroom at all times. Housing Advocate, had Roger's name on a waiting list for *Rapid Re-housing*, and was pleased to inform Roger when an opening became available. She provided him with a **list of area landlords** who are familiar with the housing programs at ARC. Roger located an apartment. Housing Advocate, **advocated** on Roger's behalf to the landlord, indicating how he would be an ideal candidate for the apartment.

A **housing inspection** was performed by ARC's Housing Advocate, Amy Arruda, MSW to ensure the apartment was safe and clean per **Connecticut's Habitability Standard Requirements**. The required paperwork and documentation was completed and submitted accordingly to approve funding for occupancy. A one year leased was signed and ARC is excited to report that Roger has become **stably housed** in a location close to his support network.

An ARC "**Welcome Basket**" was given to Roger soon after he settled into his new home. The basket includes supplies for cleaning, laundry, bathroom and kitchen. This donation is valued at \$125. Roger expressed his debt of gratitude and offered ARC his time to volunteer.

Roger will receive monthly **home-visits** and on-going **case-management** with ARC's housing advocates to continue discussion on **budgeting** and address any new **housing needs**.