



## Dream Homes Community Center

To: Mayor Mark Boughton and the City Council  
 From: Amy Arruda, MSW, Homeless & Housing Advocate  
 Re: May 2015 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 **338 people** in the city of Danbury alone since July 1, 2014.

\*Please Note: DHCC is using to a new system to improve the accuracy of data entry and reduce the number of duplicate counts.

### *Point of Entry*

Since July 1, 2014, DHCC has provided services to **500 people** through the Point of Entry at ARC. The following is a breakdown by town:

<b>Town</b>	<b>May 1, 2015– May 31, 2015</b>	<b>July 1, 2014 – May 31, 2015</b>
Danbury	43 ppl (20 households)	338 ppl
Bethel	0	20 ppl
Brookfield	0	12 ppl
New Fairfield	2 ppl (1 household)	8 ppl
New Milford	9 ppl (4 households)	68 ppl
Newtown	0	7 ppl
Redding	0	2 ppl
Ridgefield	0	8 ppl
Sherman	0	0
Other Towns	6 ppl (2 households)	37 ppl
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 ppl (20 households)</b>	<b>500 ppl</b>

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**Outreach Highlights:** Dream Homes Housing Advocates attended the following meetings and trainings:

1. Met with 5 *landlords* & performed inspections for clients' potential homes.
2. Weekly "*Families Ahead*" meetings for the *100 Day Campaign* to collaborate with Fairfield County on creative ways to meet our goal to eliminate shelter waitlists for families.
3. *Continuum of Care (COC)* meeting to discuss prioritization of **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Vouchers** to be used for housing chronically homeless individuals with a disability in Danbury.
4. **Housing First Collaborative** to discuss how clients chronicity of homelessness and VI-SPDAT scores will be used to select individuals for PSH and learn about program model designed to support newly housed clients.
5. *Housing Placement Committee (HPC)* to collaborate with other housing providers in order to determine which clients will receive the PSH Vouchers.
6. *Housing Policy* meeting make necessary modifications to the formalities associated with administering PSH vouchers and managing the *Housing Registry*.
7. The statewide **Coordinated Access** workgroup to collaborate with providers from other counties on service models to best fit client needs.
8. *Housing sub-committee* for the **Danbury Housing Partnership** to address the shortage of housing stock in the area and plans to build and encourage landlords to accept clients.
9. *Diversion Training* to learn creative strategies to divert clients away from shelter and gain quick access to housing stability.

II. 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 & were chronically homeless & 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 & on-going case-management coincide with this program to enable clients to become financially independent.
4. *Homeless Educational Grants*: Pays up to \$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 & financial planning.

III. **Program Highlights**—Story of one individual served by DHCC this month  
A Point of Entry and Coordinated Access Success Story  
(Names changed to maintain confidentiality)

Alice, a mother of a four year old girl, endured a horrific episode of domestic violence. She was married to her daughter's father for two years, but filed for divorce two years ago. She was involved in a relationship shortly after the divorce, in which the couple lived together. To flee from her abuser, she sought the help of a local domestic violence shelter and filed a protective order against him for her and her daughter's safety.

The domestic violence shelter is a 90 day program. From there, she was referred to **Dream Homes Community Center (DHCC)** at ARC and began working with *ARC's Housing Advocate*. She was given resources to assist her with her search, and ARC's Housing Advocate collaborated with her case-worker from the shelter. She was also given clothing, per her request to remain unrecognizable to her abuser.

Unfortunately, her ex-husband failed to pay her Alimony for some time, leaving her with little income to afford a place. Her time at the shelter came to an end, and she was forced to move to another domestic violence shelter nearly an hour away. She reported being a victim of theft and destruction of personal property.

On several occasions, she came into ARC in tears explaining how she was bullied and manipulated to do things for other women in the shelter. She had her wallet & cell phone stolen twice and her car tires slashed. The only good news to her situation, was that she started receiving her Alimony again in order to pay for repairs and replacements. However, this left her unable to save toward a security deposit for a new home for her and her daughter.

Both Alice and *ARC's Housing Advocate* were determined to find her a place. ARC had a relationship with a landlord who had housed previous clients and notified ARC of the new vacancy that became available. *ARC's Housing Advocate* developed Housing Stability Plan with Alice which included assistance with budgeting. *ARC's Housing Advocate* identified her credit score as potential barrier to stabilize housing but was able to advocate on her behalf to the landlord.

*ARC's Housing Advocate* reviewed detailed plans with her to assist her to obtain community resources to enable her to decrease expenses in order to make her monthly rent payments. ARC provided financial assistance toward her security deposit. *ARC's Housing Advocate* also advocated on her behalf to another non-profit organization for additional funds toward the security deposit. She was able have all funds available to move-in at the end of the month.

Alice and her daughter are now stably house. ARC used private donations to provide Alice with a "Welcome Basket". The basket contains supplies for cleaning, laundry, bathroom and kitchen. This donation is valued at \$125.