



## Dream Homes Community Center

To: Mayor Mark Boughton and the City Council  
 From: Elke Sweeney, LMSW, Homeless & Housing Advocate  
 Re: September 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 **55 people** in the city of Danbury alone since July 1, 2015.

**\*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, 2015, DHCC has provided services to **87 people** through the Point of Entry at ARC. The following is a breakdown by town:

Town	August 1, 2015–August 31, 2015	July 1, 2015 – August 31, 2015
Danbury	23 ppl (12 households)	55 ppl
Bethel	2 ppl (1 household)	6 ppl
Brookfield	0	0 ppl
New Fairfield	0	0 ppl
New Milford	11 ppl (3 households)	15 ppl
Newtown	0	0 ppl
Redding	0	0 ppl
Ridgefield	2 ppl (1 household)	2 ppl
Sherman	0	0
Other Towns	0	9 ppl
<b>Total</b>	<b>38 ppl (17 households)</b>	<b>87 ppl</b>

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

1. Met with *landlords* & performed inspections for clients' potential homes.
2. *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.
3. **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.
4. *Housing Placement Committee (HPC)* to collaborate with other housing providers in order to determine which clients will receive the PSH Vouchers.
5. *Housing Policy* meeting make necessary modifications to the formalities associated with administering PSH vouchers and managing the *Housing Registry*.
6. The statewide **Coordinated Access** workgroup to collaborate with providers from other counties on service models to best fit client needs.
7. *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.
8. *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. *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)

Carissa, is an elder disabled woman taking care of her adult disabled son. Carissa has experienced numerous health issues which attributed to job loss, and loss of housing. Carissa encountered one of the most difficult moments in her life; she lost her home and became homeless, with her disabled adult son. As a result of this, Carissa and her son lived in their car and at times, motels. She developed anxiety and constantly feared for her safety as well as her son, Eric's safety.

With encouragement from a clergyman, Carissa applied for housing and a year and a half later, received a Section 8 voucher however, due to anxiety and other medical issues, Carissa did not know what steps to take in order to find safe housing.

Carissa came into ARC to seek assistance in Housing Advocacy in order to receive housing and support services for herself and her disabled adult son. Carissa and her son were living in motels and their car. Carissa expressed the need for assistance in seeking immediate housing as she was scheduled to have triple bypass heart surgery in August. ARC's housing advocate served as a guide and support system in finding safe, secure, and sanitary housing for client and her son. ARC's housing advocate provide case-management by engaging in a monthly budgeting program with client, and developing a housing stability plan.

Eventually, Carissa, with the assistance of ARC's housing advocate, found an apartment to suit her and Eric's needs. Once housed, Carissa and ARC advocate set-up a care plan for her medical needs, working with her medical team and VNA for after-care support. ARC's housing advocate also served as a referral source by connecting Carissa and Eric to local programs such as CAAWC for energy assistance, and VNA for supportive medical assistance. ARC assisted with \$300 toward the Security Deposit.

Carissa and Eric are grateful for the support, assistance, and advocacy ARC was able to provide. In addition, ARC provided Carissa and Eric with a welcome basket which consisted of household supplies to make the move and easier transition for them. ARC continues to contact Carissa on a weekly basis to see how the family is doing. Their weekly reply "We are doing great, Thank you ARC!"