



## Dream Homes Community Center

**To:** Mayor Mark Boughton and the Common Council  
**From:** M. Carolyn Sistrunk, on behalf of the Dream Homes Community Center collaborative  
**Re:** October 27, 2006 monthly report

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### I. Program Synopsis

Per the proposal endorsed by Mayor Boughton and the Common Council, the Dream Homes Community Center (DHCC) is a collaborative effort of 4 non-profits: Housing Authority of the City of Danbury, The Association of Religious Communities, WeCAHR and People First of CT. The collaborative has financial and in-kind partners, to date: The City of Danbury, Mc Cue Mortgage, Prestima Latino, an Anonymous Donor, Housing Authority, ARC & WeCAHR.

Dream Homes works with 3 populations:

- 1) Point of Entry for persons who are homeless
- 2) Rentals
- 3) First-time Home ownership

All three of the above components are a part of Dream Homes. The Point of Entry is not a separate program; rather, it is 1 of the 3 components of Dream Homes ~ per the proposal passed by Mayor Boughton and the Common Council.

The collaborative Leadership Team shares responsibilities for leadership, decision-making, risk-taking, and fundraising. This report is submitted by Rev. Phyllis J. Leopold on behalf of the collaborative Leadership Team which also includes: M. Carolyn Sistrunk, Pat Tomka, and Jean Bowen.

In addition to the Leadership Team, salaried professionals implement the program:

Program Director (full-time): Karl Myers at ARC (792-9450) or [karl-arc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:karl-arc@sbcglobal.net).

Homeless Coordinator (part-time): Rev. Elizabeth Braddon at ARC (792-9450)  
Or [elizabeth-arc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:elizabeth-arc@sbcglobal.net).

Housing Advocate for Persons with Disabilities (part-time): Jeanne Braude-Maji at WeCAHR (792-3540) or [jmbraude@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jmbraude@sbcglobal.net)

## **II. Operations**

- The volunteer that was interested in setting up a DHCC website is not available until early 2007. DHCC is now looking into other options to have this task accomplished.

## **III. Outreach & Education**

### **A) Ribbon Cutting**

- The Ribbon Cutting event was held October 4, 2006 from 3:30 to 5:00pm. The event was well attended with over thirty people from various not for profit agencies, city employees and several Social Service Directors from the surrounding towns on hand (New Milford, Brookfield, Bethel). Mayor Boughton performed the ribbon cutting and officially welcomed Dream Homes Community Center. A Power Point presentation was given explaining the services and goals for DHCC and the need for support from the other agencies on HMIS.

### **B) Regional Introductions**

- DHCC met with First Selectman Rudy Marconi of the Town of Ridgefield on Wednesday, October 11, 2006. We reviewed the three components of Dream Homes and discussed how we may be able to aid the Town of Ridgefield. Mr. Marconi stated that they did not have a homeless issue but recognized that there was both an affordable housing crisis and homeless concern in the Greater Danbury Region. Based on this fact we discussed the possibility of the Town of Ridgefield financially supporting DHCC. Mr. Marconi did not believe he had enough information to pursue making such a request at the present time. He did however request a copy of our Ribbon cutting Power Point be sent to him for his review and consideration for a possible presentation to HVCEO since DHCC is a regional effort. He further was willing to meet with Mayor Boughton to discuss a presentation and to offer suggestions on changing the existing Power Point.
- On October 18, 2006, DHCC met with First Selectman Natalie Ketcham of the Town of Redding. We introduced DHCC to First Selectman Ketcham and she was very interested in the programs. We explained that we are taking a regional approach and asked for financial aid from the Town of Redding. Ms. Ketcham explained that Redding has a very small budget for outside agencies but invited DHCC to submit a letter requesting funding. She also suggested the we meet with the Director of Human Services and review our programs with her because that would be the town agency that would most interested in DHCC(meeting is

set for Monday November 6) and stated that Redding has more eviction issues than they would like to see.

### **C) Community Involvement**

- The Program Director received an invitation from the Mayor's office and attended the National Recovery Month Coffee, held at Alumni Hall on the WCSU Mid-Town Campus on September 29, 2006.
- On October 5, 2006, both the Program Director and Homeless Coordinator met with The Shelter of the Cross. DHCC learned about their program, eligibility requirements, and success rates and had a tour of the facility. Shelter of the cross indicated that they receive 25-35 referrals of homeless persons each year. If they are not able to meet the persons needs will refer them over to DHCC so that they can begin to referred to other agencies that may be able to meet their needs. Also discussed was the HMIS system and what steps would be needed for DHCC to be able to enter the data from Shelter of the Cross into HMIS. The DHCC Program Director prior to the meeting had discussed this with the HMIS System Administrator and reviewed the results of this discussion with Shelter of the Cross. DHCC needs to verify if Shelter of the Cross has an operational license. If they do not one will need to be obtained. If they do have a license then the two agencies will need to enter into an agreement where Shelter of the Cross gives DHCC permission to both enter the data on their behalf and have access to the data after it has been entered.
- On October 10, 2006, both the Program Director and Homeless Coordinator met with Claudette Fogarty at the City Shelter of Danbury. Also in attendance was Dawn Wilson of MCCA. It was decided that DHCC would send a "Referral Form" to the Shelter whenever we come in contact with a homeless individual and we refer them to the Shelter. Claudette also shared with DHCC a copy of their intake form and client contract. Claudette reviewed the services the Shelter provides, eligibility requirements and length of stay and provided a tour of the facility.
- The Homeless Coordinator for DHCC met with Denise Ozane of the GDMHA to discuss the Shelter Plus Care Program on October 12, 2006. There are currently 51-53 Section 8 Vouchers in the program. There is a year to a year and a half waiting period. According to HUD regulations, a person must be homeless when they make the application and must remain homeless (with a few exceptions for medical reasons or in transitional housing) until they receive the voucher. Denise described the supportive work done with the clients – an education component as they receive the voucher and a twice a year recertification meeting using a process of evaluation of self-identified goals.
- October 17, 2006, DHCC attended the monthly Continuum of Care meeting and offered to chair a Work Group on HMIS. A discussion followed into client security and data sharing. It was decided that a vote on data sharing will occur in November after a presentation on HMIS from the CT Coalition to End Homelessness is done and the CoC members has more information on this subject.

#### IV. Point of Entry

##### A) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

- a. Both the Program Director and Homeless Coordinator were trained on HMIS on September 27 & 28<sup>th</sup>.
- b. DHCC has been issued its license, user ids and passwords from the CT Coalition to End Homelessness. Effective October 16, 2006 DHCC is active on the system. Initial security access has been granted, this access will be modified once other agencies have granted access to their data.
- c. The next steps are to have the agencies that are already using HMIS to grant DHCC access to their data so that consolidated reports can be run. Then meetings with those agencies that are not using HMIS need to occur to get their data into the system by obtaining a license and beginning to use the system or other means.
- d. An access agreement was signed by Shelter of the Cross. DHCC will send this agreement to CCEH and then will be able to begin entering data for this agency.
- e. An Access Agreement was given to the Department of Health, Housing and Welfare for their review and approval.

##### B) Point of Entry – Data

Total number of new clients served by the collaborative **this month:** 12

##### Race/Ethnicity

White 11 Black 1 Native American      Asian      Hispanic/Latino      Other     

##### Family Information

Total Families:      Female 4 Male      Minors/ Parents (under 18)       
Total Singles: 3 Female 3 Male 4 Minor (under 18) 2

##### Age

0-5 2 6-12 2 13-17 2 18-20      21-25 1 26-34 1  
35-49 6 50-64 2 65+     

##### Education Level

No High School      Some High School 2 High School Diploma/GED 2  
Some College/Degree      Graduate School 1 Unknown 8

##### Income Information

Employed 6 SAGA      Child Support 2  
SSI 2 SSD      Unemploy. Comp 1

Veteran \_\_\_\_\_ None 1 \_\_\_\_\_ TFA 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Other 1 \_\_\_\_\_

**Housing Issues**

Disaster Victim \_\_\_\_\_ Deinstitutionalized \_\_\_\_\_ Lockout \_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Eviction 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Out of Jail/Prison \_\_\_\_\_ Left Voluntarily 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fmly/Friend Eviction 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Other 1 \_\_\_\_\_

**Contributing Factors**

Substance Abuse \_\_\_\_\_ Expenses Exceed Income 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Unemployed 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Physical Illness 5 \_\_\_\_\_ New to Area \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced/Separated 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Family Abuse \_\_\_\_\_ Mental Illness 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**IV. Rental**

- DHCC is continually receiving calls concerning rental/eviction issues. To date over 40 people have contacted DHCC for assistance. One client issue dealt with a foreclosure. After evaluation of the clients needs referrals were made to sources that would best be able to meet their needs.

**V. First-time Home Ownership**

- People First of CT will be arranging a meeting with McCue Mortgage for the three individuals that are interested in the first time home ownership program. They will begin counseling sessions in November.
- Discussion as to the best form of communication to Section 8 Voucher holders about this program is underway.