LETTER FROM THE POLICY BOARD CO-CHAIRS

With four years left in the Homeless Solutions Community 10 Year Plan, it is a good time to assess the progress we have made and the challenges that we still face. The Plan recommended the development of 750 units of supportive housing. With 541 units open or in development at the end of 2012 we are on track to achieve this goal. These new units are making a difference to the men, women and families who have a disability and a significant history of homelessness. In the past year we have increased our efforts to house people who are living on the street, in their cars or other places not meant for people to live in. As the Housing Unsheltered People article on this page indicates, these efforts are succeeding, with a third of the people referred for housing since last summer already housed.

Over the last few years the implementation of the Plan has been supported by local and federal funding increases. These resources have helped create new permanent supportive housing units and increased shelter capacity. But recent budget challenges may reverse this funding and jeopardize the progress we have made. The Homeless Solutions Policy Board remains committed to the efficient use of resources. The 2012 RFP for Housing and Homeless Programs contained funding from three sources, and the coordination of providers into a system through the Front Door Assessment demonstrates the Policy Board’s efforts in this area.

Every December the Emergency Housing Coalition organizes a Homeless Vigil to remember the people who died while they were homeless in the past year. On December 21, 2012 there were 36 people who were remembered, the highest number since the Plan was adopted. More than any other event in the year the Vigil reminds us how important our work is.

Sincerely,

Walt Hibner   Charles Meadows
Co-Chairs Homeless Solutions Policy Board

HOUSING UNSHELTERED SINGLE ADULTS

Every year HUD requires that all Continuums of Care conduct a Point in Time Count on one night in late January to determine how many people were homeless on a single night. For 2013, the Dayton-Montgomery County count was conducted on January 22nd. Volunteers conducting the street count early that morning found that there were 56 individuals sleeping outside, including two men who slept in the tent in the picture. The weather on the day of the 2012 Point in Time County was much warmer than the weather in 2013, when the temperature was in the single digits. The 2012 unsheltered count number was much higher, with 67 people found sleeping outside or in abandoned buildings that night.

Since August 2012 the PATH program outreach workers, who are the main point of contact with people living on the street or other places not meant for human habitation, have been focusing on conducting Front Door Assessments with every person who will agree to the assessment. In that time more than 50 assessments have been conducted. As a result 17 people have been housed, 11 more are in the process for housing, and 28 are on waiting lists for housing.

Mike, a veteran, lived in homelessness in Dayton since 2009 after facing job losses, unemployment and the emotional issues of losing several family members. A truck driver, he lived in sleeping rooms several winters after the driving season ended, but once the economy worsened and the contractors he drove for left the area or closed, he ended up on the streets for longer periods of time. “I have my CDL still and I worked as a driver while I was homeless, at first,” Mike said. He believed that he was tough enough to live outdoors until his situation changed. He was not ready to “surrender everything to shelter. Liberty means everything to me; I’m a military Veteran.”

Mike was very busy, often hauling water to his sleeping site from fountains or public facilities. Just to eat every day, do laundry, get haircuts, and walk from place to place is what Mike calls “an all day job every day.” Helping others was important to him, “I have brothers who can make it out there and I want to help them.” If someone asked him for something he gave it to them, “I gave away my last clean shirt.”

Now Mike is receiving a housing subsidy and celebrates that “I have the opportunity to go out and do positive things for myself and others now.” Mike is grateful to be alive. He said “I love life, I love people; this is a blessing that I have a place, that someone finally heard me asking and hoping for years; I don’t give up!” For him, stability means having walls and a roof, feeling like a human being. “More than people know, having a home again gave me stability. I feel rested up now and I can get out and look for employment. He added, “Without stability, you can do nothing.”
HOMELESS SOLUTIONS COMMUNITY 10 YEAR PLAN: THE FIRST SIX YEARS

The recommendations in the Homeless Solutions Plan were designed to create changes in the homeless assistance system and in the community that would lead to fewer households experiencing homelessness, a shorter episode of homelessness for those who do enter shelter, and to increased housing stability (measured by increases in income that can be spent on housing and decreases in return to shelter rates). Six years after the Plan was adopted significant changes have been implemented that have resulted in a more cohesive, intentional system of services and housing compared to the more informal network of providers that existed previously. However, broader trends impacting the root causes of homelessness – primarily poverty and the lack of affordable housing – have worsened in the last six years. As a result, the overall number of people experiencing homelessness has not declined as the Plan envisioned.

As the homeless system prepares for implementation of the final four years of the Homeless Solutions Plan, it is appropriate to reflect on the challenges and accomplishments of the last six years as well as the opportunities that lie ahead.

CHALLENGES

• The economic downturn was just starting to impact the Dayton area when the Plan was approved in June 2006. With unemployment as high as 12.6%, every person in Montgomery County has been affected by the Great Recession. For poor households who were already struggling to maintain their housing with fewer financial and personal resources to withstand financial setbacks such as unemployment and illness, the recession resulted in increased homelessness. High rates of unemployment also made it harder for households to exit homelessness as more experienced workers were willing to take entry-level type jobs.

• Another result of the Recession has been that, as the need for assistance grows, public and private funding has been reduced for homeless and housing programs.

• The lack of affordable housing was identified as a critical issue in the development of the Plan. To make housing affordable to households with no or very low income requires monthly rent subsidies which quickly becomes very expensive. Affordable housing funding has not increased in the last six years. The Plan goal of 1,800 units of affordable housing will not be achieved.

• For non-disabled households, the majority of households who enter shelter, the homeless system can only provide temporary assistance. To permanently end their homelessness, adequate employment and benefits must be available.

OPPORTUNITIES

• Federal homeless funding for shelters and housing has been reorganized with a focus on effectively and efficiently moving households experiencing homeless to housing. The HEARTH Act will provide new funding, new requirements for systems and programs and increased outcome expectations, especially for system measures like length of time homeless and recidivism.

• Access to health care will improve with the proposed expansion of the Medicaid program to single adults. Many people who are homeless focus on meeting their basic needs for food and shelter and ignore their physical health problems. Others access health care through the emergency room. With Medicaid enrollment, these individuals can receive care from a primary care provider. Research has shown that health and housing outcomes improve with case management; Medicaid funds may be able to expand these services in the homeless system.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

• Shelter capacity was significantly expanded by the opening of the Gettysburg Gateway for Men in November 2009. The new shelter is part of a larger strategy to improve shelter services & case management.

• Implementation of the Front Door Assessment process, which ensures that all households receive a uniform approach to assessing their strengths and barriers and determining the intervention that will best end their homelessness.

• Coordination of public and private funding for homeless and housing programs to ensure that resources are used as efficiently and effectively as possible and that funding decisions look at the whole picture and are based on data. The 2012 Housing and Homeless RFP combined funding from Montgomery County, the City of Dayton and the United Way.

• Development of 541 units of supportive housing, 72% of the 750 unit goal.

• Implementing prevention and diversion programs to reduce the number of households becoming homeless, including a new prevention program with Dayton Public Schools.
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The Homeless Solutions Plan recommends the development of 750 units of permanent supportive housing (PSH) which combines permanent, affordable housing with supportive services to help the household maintain their housing. PSH is an evidence-based practice for ending homelessness for single adults or families with a disability who are homeless. At the end of 2012, 541 new PSH units, or 72% of the 750 unit goal, have opened or are in development.

Because PSH is an expensive solution for homelessness it must be targeted to households who would not be able to end their homelessness without the level of services available in PSH. With the implementation of the Front Door Assessment process, staff at all the gateway shelters and at the street outreach program use a consistent process to assess the need for PSH or other types of housing programs to help a household end their homelessness.

ENDING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Chronic homelessness is a concept developed to help identify the people with the most difficult barriers to leaving homelessness. To qualify as chronically homeless, a member of the household must have a disability and have been homeless for a year continuously or four different times over the last three years. PSH is an evidence-based practice for ending chronic homelessness.

The Homeless Solutions Plan was adopted in 2006. That year the Point in Time Count found that there were 127 people who were chronically homeless. Over the last few years this number fell significantly, down to 48 in the 2012 Point in Time Count. One reason for the decline is the targeting of long-stayers (people who have 200+ nights of shelter in a 12 month period) through the Front Door Assessment process. The number increased in the 2013 Point in Time Count to 64 households with 69 people (the first time chronically homeless families were counted; there were three families in shelter) who were chronically homeless.
COUNTING HOMELESSNESS

There are different ways to quantify or describe homelessness in a community, just as there are different ways to measure the effectiveness of the homeless assistance system in solving homelessness. The number of households who spend at least one night in an emergency gateway shelter – who have no other safe place to sleep - is one indicator of the extent of homelessness or lack of housing stability in a community.

In 2012, 4,091 people stayed at least one night in one of the community’s gateway shelters – Daybreak, Gettysburg Gateway for Men or St. Vincent Gateway for Women & Children. There were 667 families (1,725 people), 2,270 single adults, and 96 unaccompanied minors. Just under one-third (30%) of the households sheltered at the two adult shelters stayed in shelter for 7 nights or less. The gateway numbers in this report do not include households who were sheltered by the YWCA as the YWCA is prohibited by federal statute from entering data about victims of domestic violence into the HMIS.

There were 5% more households sheltered in 2012 compared to 2011, with increases for all type of households but single men. The largest increase was for unaccompanied minors, which increased 23%. Family households increased by 21%, single women increased by 10%, and single men decreased by less than one percent. The total number of people homeless is lower in 2012 than 2010 but within that number the proportions have shifted with fewer families homeless in 2010 and more single adults. The accompanying table provides a demographic breakdown of the adults who stayed at a gateway shelter in 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1,608 Single Men</th>
<th>662 Single Women</th>
<th>667 Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Adults (18-24)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>49% black, 48% white, 3% other</td>
<td>49% black, 46% white, 5% other</td>
<td>60% black, 37% white, 3% other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Income</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education High School/GED or higher</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Nights or less at St. Vincent Nights</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dayton-Montgomery County HMIS

HOMELESS SOLUTIONS REPORT

For more information, please contact:

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF FAMILY & CHILDREN FIRST

451 W. Third Street, 9th Floor • Dayton, Ohio 45422-3100 937.225.4695 • Fax: 937.496-7714

www.mcohio.org