LETTER FROM THE POLICY BOARD CO-CHAIRS

As co-chairs of the Homeless Solutions Policy Board, we are pleased to report significant progress on meeting the goals of the Homeless Solutions Community 10-Year Plan eighteen months after it was adopted. Because of the Homeless Solutions Plan there is new housing for homeless adults at River Commons, our gateway shelters provide better coordinated services, there is an increased focus on employment for homeless adults, and new prevention programs are helping people at risk of homelessness.

But the accomplishments of the last eighteen months are not enough for the families and individuals who have no home – who are sleeping in a shelter or on the street. We know that housing and supportive services can end homelessness for most people. We are learning how to prevent homelessness for people in a housing crisis. The Homeless Solutions Policy Board is working to implement the ambitious goals of the Homeless Solutions Plan to increase housing, provide more effective prevention programs, and reduce poverty by increasing self-sufficiency.

We want to thank the members of the Homeless Solutions Policy Board, and the dozens of volunteers who work on our committees, for their commitment to implementing the Homeless Solutions Plan. We also want to recognize the generosity of the entire community in donating to River Commons to make it a home for homeless men and women. And we want to acknowledge the leadership of the organizations in the community around River Commons that have welcomed the project and the residents.

Sincerely,

Walter Hibner
Charles Meadows

Co-Chairs, Homeless Solutions Policy Board

GENEROUS COMMUNITY DONATIONS MAKE RIVER COMMONS A HOME

In the summer we appealed to the community for basic furniture and household goods to make the 59 units at River Commons homes for the homeless men and women who were moving in. The generosity of the community was amazing. Not only did we receive more than $8,000 in cash to buy mattresses, alarm clocks, and other essential items but also thousands of items – brooms, towels, lamps, dressers, microwaves, sheets, chairs, pillows, coffee pots, food, the list goes on and on. Thank you for all the donations; without it the first day in their new home would have been very hard for the new residents.
PREVENTION

Preventing homelessness is far less expensive than providing shelter and new housing, and is less disruptive to people’s lives, particularly children’s lives. Those who are “at-risk” of losing their housing need help to stay housed. In 2007, these prevention activities were put in place:

- Program to prevent eviction from public housing funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and administered by the Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area.
- Program to prevent homelessness of ex-offenders returning to the community, funded by the Ohio Department of Corrections and operated by Miami Valley Housing Opportunities.
- The YWCA of Dayton is waiting on notification from the Ohio Department of Development for a Family Homelessness Prevention Pilot Project.

MULTI-SYSTEM RESPONSE

Homelessness can not be solved by the homeless system alone. The resources in the mainstream human services systems such as behavioral health, public assistance, child welfare, education, housing and criminal justice need to be involved in the solution. Access to mainstream resources has increased through the following activities:

- Placing a CrisisCare staff person at the Samaritan Healthcare Clinic to conduct Behavioral Health Assessments for mental health and substance abuse issues. These assessments are coordinated with PATH outreach workers who help ensure that homeless people keep their appointments.
- Placing a Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services case worker at the St. Vincent Hotel to determine eligibility for public assistance, Food Stamps and Medicaid for homeless families as soon as they enter the Hotel.

POVERTY REDUCTION

Homelessness and poverty are inextricably connected. Improving access to benefits and increasing employment for homeless persons are essential to getting them out of poverty and stabilized in housing. Since the Plan was adopted, these new programs have been established:

- The SOAR program to assist homeless in applying for and receiving Social Security benefits for which they are eligible. Thirteen persons have been helped through this program.
- The LifeReady Transitional Jobs Program operated by the Dayton Urban League and funded by the City of Dayton will provide 25-30 transitional jobs for homeless adults. The program combines structure, skill development, supportive services, and assistance to find and retain unsubsidized employment following the transitional job experience.
- Connection to employment services at River Commons through Goodwill employment counselors and placement. In the first 60 days, 33 of the 61 new River Commons residents have secured employment.

In addition, the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services is exploring the development of a conveniently located One-Stop Employment Center using proven best practices for employing homeless people.

GOVERNANCE

The new Homeless Solutions Policy Board, made up of 28 community leaders from education, health care, government, foundations, faith institutions and other organizations, oversees implementation of the Plan’s policy and program recommendations. The Policy Board has been meeting regularly since November 2006.

Aligning the financial resources in the homeless assistance system with the Plan’s policy and programs recommendations is essential to successful implementation. The Funders Collaborative oversees the prioritization, release, or review of resources including federal, state and local public funds.

Montgomery County responded to the alignment recommendation by combining Community Development Block Grant, Emergency Shelter Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships and Human Services Levy funds totaling over $2 million into a joint Request for Proposals for 2008. This approach encouraged program innovation and operating efficiencies for providers and Montgomery County.

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HOMELESS SOLUTIONS POLICY BOARD

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Charles Meadows.....................................Co-Chair
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HOUSING

“Keeping people housed and rapidly rehousing those who become homeless is the primary answer to the problem of homelessness.” This is the chief finding of the Homeless Solutions Plan.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The Plan calls for the creation of 750 units of supportive housing, which includes services to those who live there, to be created over 10 years. The units shown in the chart below include rental subsidy and new housing opened for homeless people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ten Year Goal</th>
<th>Units Added</th>
<th>Units Underway</th>
<th>Units Need to Reach Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Adults</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18-24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Adults</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>139*</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>409</td>
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</table>

* Of these 59 are at River Commons; as more homeless persons move in, the total will eventually rise to 100.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Plan also calls for the addition of 1,800 units of affordable housing through new construction, rehabilitation of vacant units, and rental subsidies. This housing is intended to provide housing to homeless people and families who do not need on-site services and to help people who are at risk of homelessness because their current housing costs are unaffordable. Little progress has been made on this recommendation since the Plan was adopted and units have been lost because of their poor condition. There are limited programs for funding affordable housing and finding sites outside areas of low-income concentration is a constant challenge. The Policy Board and the Affordable Housing Options Committee recognize the importance of addressing these issues and creating new ways to provide this needed housing resource.

RIVER COMMONS PROVIDES A PERMANENT HOME FOR HOMELESS ADULTS

Immediately providing more supportive housing for the homeless men and women at the community’s gateway shelters is a priority for the Homeless Solutions Policy Board. The Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority had a building with smaller units and a high vacancy rate that they offered to make supportive public housing. The building, Helena Hi-Rise which was renamed River Commons, needed work. Montgomery County, the City of Dayton and the Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority contributed over $800,000 to make essential health and safety repairs as well as cosmetic common area improvements. Additional money was provided by the partners for security and on-site social services provided by The Other Place.

In the first week of September, 61 formerly homeless men and women, many with no income, moved into River Commons. The new residents had been homeless an average of three times with their most recent episode lasting an average of five months.
The extent of homelessness in a community can be measured in two ways – over time and on a single night. 7,913 persons had contact with the homeless assistance system in Montgomery County at some point during 2006, compared to 6,337 persons in 2004. A point-in-time count on January 27, 2007 identified 605 persons living on the street or in an emergency shelter, compared to 581 persons during the 2005 point-in-time count.

Of the 7,913 people who had contact with the homeless assistance system in 2006:

- 4,664 were in outreach programs, emergency shelters, or transitional housing;
- 907 were in permanent supportive housing; and
- 2,342 were on waiting lists or received services but were not sheltered.

There are multiple reasons for the increase in numbers from 2004 to 2006, including: an increase in people experiencing homelessness, increased capacity in the homeless system, and more agencies entering client data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in 2006. In order to better understand the shelter and housing needs in the community, the Homeless Solutions Policy Board is focusing its attention on the 4,664 persons who were on the street or in a shelter or transitional housing.

### OUTREACH, EMERGENCY SHELTER OR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More likely to be:</th>
<th>More likely to headed by:</th>
<th>More likely to be:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Adults (2,514)</td>
<td>Male (72%)</td>
<td>Female (92%)</td>
<td>Female (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority (54%)</td>
<td>Minority (70%)</td>
<td>Minority (67%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Between the ages of 25-50 (66%)</td>
<td>Between the ages 25-50 (71%)</td>
<td>Between the ages of 15-17 (67%)</td>
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<td>High school graduate (67%)</td>
<td>High school graduate (69%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16% are veterans</td>
<td>Average family size is 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21% of men, 2% of women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53% were new to homelessness in 2006</td>
<td>52% were new to homelessness in 2006</td>
<td>74% were new to homelessness in 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dayton-Montgomery County HMIS