



Dream Homes Community Center

To: Mayor Mark Boughton and the City Council

From: Sharice Coleman, Homeless & Housing Advocate

Re: January, 2014 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.

II. Program Updates

Dream Homes Community Center continues to put the “Boots on the Ground” in the efforts to end homelessness. The numbers of people served throughout Danbury continues to increase. Through our Coordinated Access Services, Dream Homes Community Center has served 447 people in the city of Danbury alone since July 1, 2013.

Point of Entry

Since July 1, 2013, DHCC has provided services to 658 people (80 individuals and 157 couples and families) through the Point of Entry at ARC. The following is a breakdown by town:

Town	July 2011 – June 2012	July 2012- June 2013	July 2013-January 2014
Danbury	592	590	447
Bethel	26	62	40
Brookfield	33	14	10
New Fairfield	34	22	4
New Milford	77	68	45
Newtown	4	16	23
Redding	7	0	0
Ridgefield	8	5	12
Sherman	2	1	4
Other Towns	45	58	73
Total	828	836	658

III. Outreach Highlights: Dream Homes Staff attended the following meetings and trainings:

- Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the **Social and Supportive Services Committee meeting**. Committee members met to discuss different ways the supportive services in the community can better assist the homeless population in Danbury.
- ARC's Executive Director, Rev. Phyllis J. Leopold, attended the monthly **Danbury Housing Partnership** meeting. DHP reviewed and voted on a consultant to lead a study on chronic homelessness. Guest speakers from Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness and The Partnership of Strong Communities attended the meeting to discuss the best model to help end homelessness.
- Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the Shelter Plus Care meeting at Western Connecticut Mental Health Network to discuss current waiting list for housing vouchers. Representatives from DHMAS, WCMTN and CHD discussed and provided updates on current people enrolled in the Shelter Plus Care Program and discussed reopening the waiting list to Veterans.
- Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman continues to meet once a week at **Dorothy Day** to perform **homeless outreach** for ARC.
- Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman and Heather Ely attended bi-weekly **Case Management** meetings at Catholic Charities. Case Managers from different organizations in the community came together to discuss client issues, referral issues and process, and different ways to continue the efforts of ending homelessness.
- Both Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman and Heather Ely planned to attend the monthly **Continuum of Care Meeting**, however due weather conditions, meeting was canceled.

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IV. Program Highlights—Story of one family served by DHCC this month (names changed)

A Point of Entry and Coordinated Access Success Story

Jennifer, a young mother of two children, came into ARC distraught and upset because she received a notice to quit on her door. Jennifer and her boyfriend had been living together and equally sharing the responsibilities of all the bills in the apartment including the rent, but they recently split up due to a domestic violence dispute. Her boyfriend had stopped paying his portion of the rent and Jennifer couldn't afford the rental payments on her own. She and her two children had to be out of the apartment by January 31, 2014.

Jennifer previously worked with ARC in the past and knew of the services ARC provided. Jennifer came into ARC and met with one of the Housing Advocates to **asses her current needs**. Housing Advocate reviewed and discussed Jennifer's **Income** and **Expenses**. Jennifer was working full time; however she would benefit from an extra income. Housing Advocate suggested Jennifer file for child support from her ex-boyfriend for her youngest child in order to increase her income in order to be able to afford a decent apartment for herself and her two young children. ARC's Housing Advocate connected Jennifer with **Legal Aid** to get further assistance in filing for child support. After reviewing Jennifer's expenses and income, Jennifer and ARC's Housing Advocate were able to determine a suitable rent amount that Jennifer could afford. Jennifer and ARC's Housing Advocate created a **Budget** and a **Housing Stability Plan** that would help Jennifer save some money and keep up with her other monthly expenses. Once her budget was in place and an affordable rent amount was established, Jennifer was ready to start her housing search.

For two weeks ARC's Housing Advocate and Jennifer worked together in **search for an apartment** that Jennifer could afford and would be suitable for her and her two children. ARC's Housing Advocate reached out to several **Landlord's** in the community to inquire about any available apartments within Jennifer's price range.

ARC's Housing Advocate was able to find the perfect apartment for Jennifer and her two kids that was affordable. ARC's Housing Advocate met with the landlord and conducted a **Housing Inspection** to ensure the apartment met all **Connecticut's Inhabitability Standard Requirements**. ARC was able to supply a **Security Deposit** to the landlord on the behalf of Jennifer and her family.

Jennifer had to leave her apartment by January 31, 2014 due to pending eviction. She and her two kids were able to move into apartment before January 31, 2014.