



Dream Homes Community Center

To: Mayor Mark Boughton and the City Council

From: Sharice Coleman, Homeless & Housing Advocate

Re: February, 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 number` of people served throughout Danbury continues to increase. Through our Coordinated Access Services, Dream Homes Community Center has served 506people in the city of Danbury alone since July 1, 2013.

Point of Entry

Since July 1, 2013, DHCC has provided services to 736 people 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-February 2014
Danbury	592	590	506
Bethel	26	62	42
Brookfield	33	14	13
New Fairfield	34	22	7
New Milford	77	68	56
Newtown	4	16	23
Redding	7	0	0
Ridgefield	8	5	12
Sherman	2	1	4
Other Towns	45	58	73
Total	828	836	736

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

- Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the **Social and Supportive Services Committee field trip to Waterbury's Day Center**. Committee members got a chance to experience how a Day Center for the homeless population is run in the Waterbury region, the service that provided and how those services are provided.
- ARC's Executive Director, Rev. Phyllis J. Leopold, along with Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the CDBG Application Workshop, which was held at City Hall. Grant holder Larry Wagner conducted the workshop and educated applicants on the process of applying for CDBG Funding.
- Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the Shelter Plus Care meeting at Western Connecticut Mental Health Network to discuss current the waiting list for housing vouchers. Representatives from DHMAS, WCMTN and CHD discussed and provided updates on people currently enrolled in the Shelter Plus Care Program. Members discussed possible veterans for the vouchers II Program.
- Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman continues to meet once a week at **Dorothy Day** to perform **homeless outreach** for ARC.
- Both Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman and Heather Ely attended the monthly Continuum of Care Meeting. Jered Bruzas and Ron Agard from the Work Place, representative for Veterans, were the guest speakers. The meetings main focus was on how to attract Veterans to Danbury to utilize the services available.
- 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.
- Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman and Heather Ely attended the Regional Rapid Rehousing Meeting in Meridian CT. Providers from each region met to discuss updates from their program. Guest speakers from the **Health Care For Homeless Veterans Program** came to talk about services that are now available for veterans in the state of Connecticut. Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness also updated each region on new updates that need to be implemented as of the start of the new year.

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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

Sara, a single mother of a fourteen-year-old boy and recently was a victim of domestic violence, was going through an awful divorce. Her ex-husband was ordered by court to continue paying the mortgage on the house that Sara and her son was living in until the divorce was final. Unfortunately Sara's ex-husband did not keep up with the payments on the mortgage and Sara's home was being foreclosed on. Sara attempted several times to arrange payment agreements with the mortgage company to try to save her home. However she was unsuccessful due to the payment becoming too strenuous on her finance. Sara came into ARC on January 20, 2014 afraid and distraught that her and her son would be homeless and on the street. She had already received a letter from the bank reporting she had to be out of the home by the end of February.

Housing Advocate met with Sara to discuss her income and expenses. In reviewing her expenses, Housing Advocate quickly noted Sara has been paying a lot of money in repairs to her home that she can no longer stay in and also had a extremely high electricity bill. Theses expenses were making it extremely difficult for Sara to build her savings. Housing Advocate advised Sara to start saving and spend less money on fixing the home that she will not be staying in anymore. Sara made a decent amount of money and could afford a decent two bedroom apartment. Housing Advocate worked with Sara and created a housing stability plan, a budget plan, and came up with an affordable rent for her.

Housing Advocate continued to meet with Sara and assist her with her housing search. Although she would have liked and preferred to stay in Danbury, Sara was open to broadening her search. Housing Advocate connected Sara to several well known realtors that ARC works closely with. Within two weeks of Sara's connections with these realtors, she was able to find two apartments within her price range. One apartment was a little more than what she wanted to spend however was bigger, and the other was just around what she wanted to spend however the apartment was very small. Housing Advocate re-visited Sara's budget with her and discussed both apartments with Sara. Although the bigger apartment was a little more money, it included everything, it was still within her budget and it was bigger.

Housing Advocate met with the landlord and Sara to view apartment. Housing Advocate was able to conduct a housing inspection as a requirement prior to moving into the apartment. By the time the apartment was ready to move into Sara was able to save up half the money to put toward the security deposit. ARC was able to supply partial payment to assist Sara with some of the Security Deposit and was able to negotiate an agreement with the landlord for the remaining balance to be

paid over time. Sara and her son were able to move into her apartment by the second week of February. They remain stably housed.