



## Dream Homes Community Center

To: Mayor Mark Boughton and the City Council

From: Sharice Coleman, Homeless & Housing Advocate

Re: March, 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 553 people in the city of Danbury alone since July 1, 2013.

#### Point of Entry

Since July 1, 2013, DHCC has provided services to 811 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-March 2014
Danbury	592	590	553
Bethel	26	62	48
Brookfield	33	14	13
New Fairfield	34	22	8
New Milford	77	68	70
Newtown	4	16	23
Redding	7	0	0
Ridgefield	8	5	18
Sherman	2	1	4
Other Towns	45	58	74
Total	828	836	811

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

- ARC's Executive Director, Rev. Phyllis J. Leopold, along with Homeless and Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the monthly **Danbury Housing** Partnership meeting which was held at City Hall. Francesca Martin from PCG Human Services was introduced as the new consultant for the study on the "Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness." Francesca led a presentation on her approach on conducting the study.
- Homeless Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the monthly **Shelter Plus Care** meeting at Western Connecticut Mental Health Network to discuss the current 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.
- Homeless and Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman continues to meet once a week at **Dorothy Day** to perform **homeless outreach** for ARC.
- Homeless and Housing Advocate Heather Ely attended the monthly **Continuum of Care** meeting held at City Hall. Committee members discussed ideas on how to implement the new Coordinated Access Plan here in Danbury.
- Homeless and Housing Advocates Sharice Coleman and Heather Ely attended bi-weekly **Case Management** meetings here at ARC. 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.
- ARC's Executive Director Phyllis J. Leopold and Homeless and Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the **Coordinated Access Diversion Training** in Torrington Connecticut. Melissa Mowery from CAMBA conducted the training on how Coordinated Access and Diversion operates in CAMBA. She discussed different idea's to incorporate in our Coordinated System here in Danbury.
- Homeless and Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the "**Driving Toward Zero Forum**" sponsored by The Partnership for Strong Communities. Representatives from U.S. Interagency Council to End Homelessness, Rapid Results Institute and Supportive Service Agencies from Bridgeport spoke on best practices to ending Chronic Homelessness.
- Homeless and Housing Advocate Sharice Coleman attended the **Revolving Door** meeting held at the Danbury City Center. Representatives from Danbury Hospital, The Unit, Jericho Partnership, City Center, Catholic Charities, ARC and Homeless Outreach discussed the ongoing issues of the disturbances along Spring Street and downtown Danbury. Members collaborated on the best approach to help make things better for the community.

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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

Shelia was referred to ARC by one of the community's homeless outreach programs. Sheila was recently evicted from her apartment and was living in her car and the neighborhood shelter. Shelia came into ARC distraught and emotional, seeking assistance with Housing Search and Security Deposit.

Homeless and Housing Advocate met with Shelia for an Intake and Needs Assessment. After reviewing all of Shelia's needs, Homeless and Housing Advocate noticed that Shelia's income was very limited with her Social Security Benefit, and she also had some expenses that took up the majority of her income. Without proper money management, it would be impossible for Shelia to manage rental payments. Shelia had a very large storage unit payment and was making high payments on her car insurance. Together Homeless and Housing Advocate created a budget plan that would allow Shelia to actively pay on some of her expenses and save at the same time in order to be able to afford an apartment.

Shelia had expressed a great desire to work part time to increase her income, however with her mental health disabilities and the fact that she is not currently receiving treatment made it difficult for Shelia to work. Homeless and Housing Advocate advised Shelia to resume her mental health treatment and to get back on her medication in order to be mentally stable enough to gain and sustain employment. With a part time job and with her Social Security Income, Shelia would be able to maintain rental payments. Homeless and Housing Advocate contacted Western Connecticut Mental Health Network and was able to schedule and appointment for Shelia within the next two weeks.

Within two weeks of meeting with Shelia, she had sold her car and was using public transportation. She not only gained extra income by selling her car, she also eliminated the expense of her car insurance. Shelia also kept her appointment with Western Connecticut Mental Health Network and started back on medication. Shelia felt confident enough to begin looking for a part time job.

Within three and a half weeks of Shelia coming into ARC, she was called for a part time position at Staples. With the second source of income, Shelia was ready to begin looking for housing. Homeless and Housing Advocate connected Shelia with Victorian Associates, a well known landlord with whom Shelia would work well. Through the connection with Victorian Associates, Homeless and Housing Advocate was able to locate a perfect one bedroom apartment for Shelia. Homeless and Housing Advocate went and conducted a housing inspection to ensure the apartment met all the CT-Habitability requirements. Homeless and Housing Advocate and Landlord drafted a lease and reviewed the lease and tenants rights with Shelia so that she would have a full understanding of her lease. Once Shelia was in full understanding of her lease and tenant rights, Shelia was ready to move in. ARC was able to supply security deposit for Shelia to move into her new one bedroom apartment. Shelia remains stably housed.