



## Dream Homes Community Center

To: Mayor Mark Boughton and the City Council  
 From: Amy Arruda, MSW, Homeless & Housing Advocate  
 Re: March 2015 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.

#### *Program Updates*

Dream Homes Community Center continues to persevere in the efforts to assist Danbury’s “Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness”. Through our Coordinated Access Services, Dream Homes Community Center has served **789 people (386 households)** in the city of Danbury alone since July 1, 2014.

#### *Point of Entry*

Since July 1, 2014, DHCC has provided services to **1231 people (545 households)** through the Point of Entry at ARC. The following is a breakdown by town:

Town	February 1, 2015– February 31, 2015	July 1, 2014 – February 31, 2015
Danbury	37 ppl (18 households)	789 ppl (386 households)
Bethel	0	44 ppl (17 households)
Brookfield	3 ppl (1 household)	16 ppl (9 households)
New Fairfield	3 ppl (2 household)	18 ppl (9 households)
New Milford	3 ppl (1 households)	119 ppl (43 households)
Newtown	1 ppl (1 household)	18 ppl (9 households)
Redding	0	9 ppl (5 households)
Ridgefield	0	9 ppl (5 households)
Sherman	0	0
Other Towns	13 ppl (4 household)	209 ppl (62 households)
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 ppl (27 households)</b>	<b>1231 people (545 households)</b>

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II. **Outreach Highlights:** Dream Homes Housing Advocates attended the following meetings and trainings:

1. Met with *landlords* & performed inspections for clients' potential homes.
2. *100 Day Campaign* to kick off a statewide challenge for housing providers statewide to work collaboratively in an effort to house as many individuals and families possible in 100 days.
3. *Continuum of Care (COC)* meeting to discuss prioritization of **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Vouchers** to be used for housing chronically homeless individuals with a disability in Danbury.
4. **Housing First Collaborative** to discuss how clients chronicity of homelessness and VI-SPDAT scores will be used to select individuals for PSH and learn about program model designed to support newly housed clients.
5. *Housing Placement Committee (HPC)* to collaborate with other housing providers in order to determine which clients will receive the PSH Vouchers.
6. **Secure Jobs** at the United Way of Waterbury with *New Opportunities Inc.* to develop a pilot program for individuals and families participating in the RRH program. This pilot program will assist households to increase income for housing stabilization.
7. The statewide **Coordinated Access** workgroup to collaborate with providers from other counties on service models to best fit client needs.

III. Because of the *City Grant*, the Point of Entry was able to leverage and renew additional funds to help end and prevent homelessness, including:

1. *Vouchers 1:* 100% of rent for two unique households who were chronically homeless, one of which has one member of the household with a disability.
2. *Vouchers 2:* 100% of rent for three individuals who are veterans & were chronically homeless & one of which the majority of rent is paid for a family with a veteran who was chronically homeless per DMHAS contract.
3. *Rapid Re-Housing (RRH):* Up to 12 months of housing support toward rent, moving costs, utilities, financial crisis, etc. Monthly home visits & on-going case-management coincide with this program to enable clients to become financially independent.
4. *Homeless Educational Grants:* Pays up to \$1,000 of costs toward tuition, child care, school supplies, transportation, and/or uniforms while participants are attending school. Clients must meet HUDs definition of homelessness or have proof of homelessness within the last 18 months. Case management is provided for 3 months to implement budgeting & financial planning.

IV. **Program Highlights**—Story of one individual served by DHCC this month  
A Point of Entry and Coordinated Access Success Story  
(Names changed to maintain confidentiality)

In the spirit of the *100 Day Campaign* (See II.2.), **ARC** has partnered up with the **Housing Authority of the City of Danbury** to take on the responsibility of housing families. Meanwhile, staff from the **City Shelter** and **Catholic Charities** partnered up to oversee the housing needs of individuals. Just a few days into this exciting challenge, a mother of four, Melissa, heard about the **Dream Homes Community Center (DHCC)** program at **ARC** through her employer.

Melissa is employed as a caregiver for the elderly. She has held this position for years because the job has allowed her flexibility to care for her daughter who has been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (M.S.). Unfortunately, Melissa's hours were reduced for quite some time and she fell behind on her rent and was evicted from her home. Since then, she had been doubled-up with her fiancé's mother with her four kids. Melissa and her fiancé both worked as many hours as their jobs and parental obligations allowed in order to save up money to put toward a new home. The temporary living arrangement did last long before Melissa's fiancé's mother asked her to leave. She then spent time living in the house of a family she had previously worked for.

Once Melissa met with the Housing Advocate at ARC they developed a Housing Stability Plan, which included assistance with budgeting. During this process, ARC's Housing Advocate noticed that Melissa needed to increase the household income in order to sustain monthly rental payments for a place suitable for her size family. Together, it was decided her fiancé could pick up another job and ARC's Housing Advocate supplied her with information of recent job openings in the area. Her fiancé quickly jumped at an opportunity he found from he was given and Melissa was able to return paystubs for verification of increased income in order to be approved for the apartment she had set her sights on. She was also referred to other community resources to help the family decrease expenses.

ARC provided assistance toward the Security Deposit. Melissa and her fiancé had money saved to contribute toward the expensive costs to move in, but still fell short on the deposit. ARC's Housing Advocate advocated on the family's behalf to another non-profit organization for additional funds and they were able to receive exactly the amount needed to move-in before having to leave the house Melissa was staying at. The family is now stably housed in an apartment fit to accommodate her family.

ARC used private donations to provide Melissa with a "Welcome Basket". The basket contains supplies for cleaning, laundry, bathroom and kitchen. This donation is valued at \$125.