



Dream Homes Community Center

To: Mayor Mark Boughton and the City Council
 From: Elke Sweeney, LCSW, Housing Advocate
 Re: March 2016 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 **252 people** in the city of Danbury alone since July 1, 2015.

Point of Entry

Since July 1, 2015, DHCC has provided services to **353 people** through the Point of Entry at ARC. The following is a breakdown by town:

| Town | This Month (January 1-January 31, 2016) | Year to Date (July 1, 2015 – January 31, 2016) |
|---------------|--|---|
| Danbury | 46 (18 households) | 252 |
| Bethel | 11 (2 households) | 24 |
| Brookfield | 3 (2 households) | 3 |
| New Fairfield | 4 (1 household) | 6 |
| New Milford | 5 (1 household) | 55 |
| Newtown | 0 | 0 |
| Redding | 0 | 0 |
| Ridgefield | 0 | 0 |
| Sherman | 0 | 0 |
| Other Towns | 0 | 13 |
| Total | 69 (24 households) | 353 ppl |

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March

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

1. Met with *landlords* & performed inspections for clients' potential homes.
 2. *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.
 3. *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.
 4. *Housing Placement Committee (HPC)* to collaborate with other housing providers in order to determine which clients will receive the PSH Vouchers.
 5. Statewide *Coordinated Access Network* to collaborate with providers from other counties on service models to best fit client needs.
 6. *Housing sub-committee* for the **Danbury Housing Partnership** assisting with planning Landlord Coalition breakfast.
 7. *Landlord Breakfast* was conducted this month to provide education for Danbury area Landlords about advocacy, assistance, and support given to individuals and families with housing needs. This educational breakfast was sponsored by the **Danbury Housing Partnership**.
 8. *Winter Cold Weather Protocol* became in effect on December 15th 2015. ARC's **Housing Advocate** provides immediate care and relief for individuals and families in need of shelter by accessing and coordinating individuals and families to local shelters or emergency motels. 100% of the Cold Weather Protocol grant goes to pay for motel and transportation services if needed, and 0% goes to ARC.
- II. 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. *Homeless Educational Grants*: Provides 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.
 2. *Vouchers 1*: Provides rent for chronically homeless, one of which has one member of the household with a disability.
 3. *Vouchers 2*: Provides rent for veterans who 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.

III. ***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)

Roger and his family of three, wife, and two children were connected to ARC through the Community Health Center. Roger and his family had recently been evicted due to Landlord's home going into foreclosure. Roger and his family were at imminent risk of homeless and were preparing to separate and stay at the shelter. Roger reached out to ARC's *Housing Advocate* to request assistance in seeking assistance with housing, and to prevention entry into the shelter system.

With limited knowledge on housing and renting issues, Roger reached out to ARC to seek assistance in support services. ARC's *Housing Advocate* provided case-management and engaged in a budgeting program, and developing a housing stability plan. Both Roger and his wife had steady income and employment therefore they were able to afford rent along with their monthly bills. Roger and his family had limited resources in finding an apartment, and they also needed assistance with security deposit.

ARC's Housing Advocate worked diligently with Roger and local landlords in seek housing. Eventually, housing was secured for Roger and his family. Roger and ARC's *Housing Advocate* met with the Landlord. ARC's *Housing Advocate* assured the Landlord that ARC provided and continues to provide support in budgeting and finance management. The apartment met all requirements for *safe, secure, and sanitary housing*. ARC's *Housing Advocate* completed *habitability inspection*, and the apartment was within the *rent-reasonable* amount determined.

ARC's *Housing Advocate* was present during move-in day, and provided Roger and his family with a "Welcome-Basket" complete with cleaning products and household supplies. "Welcome-Baskets" are provided by donation to ARC and given to individuals and families newly housed.

ARC's *Housing Advocate* set-up a care plan for Roger's housing and case-management needs. ARC's *Housing Advocate* also served as a referral source by connecting Roger to programs such as DSS for increased SNAP assistance, and CAAWC for energy assistance. ARC assisted with Security Deposit.

Roger and his family are grateful for the support, assistance, and advocacy ARC was able to provide. ARC continues to contact Roger on a weekly basis to see how he is doing.