

# Clackamas County



Everyone Deserves a Safe Place to Call Home

## 1st Annual Progress Report - 2008

*My name is Sarah Hembree. I live in Clackamas County and on two different occasions I have found myself and my two children homeless.*



"The first time I found myself homeless was in 2003. Along with the 'homelessness' a very difficult battle with a mental illness became prevalent. This of course made even everyday life challenging. Thankfully there have been resources available to me throughout Clackamas County. These services have given me the tools I needed in order to create stability for my children as well as myself.

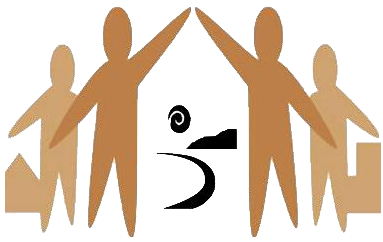
One of the programs offered to me through Clackamas County Public Health was the "Shelter Plus Care Program". With this program I have been able to receive a housing subsidy along with mental health care and treatment.

On a second occasion I became ill and found myself and my boys homeless once again. This was in the summer of 2006. At this time things seemed very bleak. I was faced with an eviction and was unable to find anyone willing to work with my situation and allow me to rent from them. Thank God for the "Ready to Rent Program". Without it I don't know where I would be today. It not only gave me the tools I needed to overcome my rental barriers, it also inspired me to continue moving forward in many aspects of my life.

As a resident of Clackamas County I am truly grateful for the opportunities that have been offered me during this challenging journey. As the journey continues it is my goal to complete a degree in social work so that I can offer assistance to others. I also hope to volunteer for projects that help people who are homeless."

**We Thank Sarah for Sharing Her Story**

*In 2007 Clackamas County began the implementation phase of our "Ten Year Plan to Address Homelessness". This report gives a summary of accomplishments during the first year of the Ten Year Plan.*



## **We Have a Plan to Address Homelessness Because**

8,272 people are estimated to be homeless in Clackamas County.  
(Based on 2007 Point in Time Homeless Count)

To learn about homelessness in our county visit:

<http://www.co.clackamas.or.us/cd/homeless.htm> - 2007 Homeless Count Report

<http://www.co.clackamas.or.us/docs/ss/execsummary.pdf> - Ten Year Plan to Address Homelessness

## **How Are We Doing So Far? -- 2007 Accomplishments**

### **GOAL I - Prevent Homelessness**

- “Mobile Park Ordinance” was adopted by Board of County Commissioners, expanding tenant protections in the event of mobile home park closures.
- All programs of HUD funded homeless housing services are providing case management.
- County library network was trained to access “Resource and Referral System”.
- Service providers were trained to access food stamps and Medicaid resources.
- Partially offsetting the loss of the HOPE program DHS and SSI liaisons created processes to assist families with SSI eligibility.
- 59 people were served in Mental Health Court.
- One third of the 36 people served in Community Court were homeless.

### **GOAL II - Reduce Educational Impacts of Homelessness on Children**

- Clackamas County Information and Referral provided resources available to homeless individuals through the County web site and monthly networking meetings.
- Canby Center provided social, physical, emotional & spiritual support to homeless students.
- Outside-In provided medical outreach services to people without homes two times a week at the Clackamas Service Center.
- School District Homeless Liaisons served 898 homeless children during the 07/08 school year.
- School District Homeless Liaisons served as the referral point for potential Bridges to Housing clients.
- Youth tutoring occurred at the Annie Ross Shelter.

### **GOAL III - Transition from Homelessness**

- Ready to Rent served more than 200 clients.
- Thirty Oxford Houses operated in the county.
- Nine programs in the HUD “Continuum of Care” were fully funded at \$1,181,114.
- Board of County Commissioners supported Housing Alliance resource agenda for 2007.
- All HUD funded service providers reported to Homeless Council and HMIS system.

### **GOAL IV - Create/Expand Permanent Supportive Housing, Affordable Housing and Services**

- 51 new affordable housing units opened:
  - 24 units of farm worker housing at Plaza Los Robles in Molalla;
  - 21 units of affordable housing for persons with severe mental illness at Renaissance Court;
  - Six units of alcohol and drug free permanent supportive housing for homeless women and their children at Avalon House.
- 11 homeless families were provided permanently affordable housing and case management through Bridges to Housing.
- Fieldstone and Charleston affordable apartments are funded for construction to begin in 2008.

### **GOAL V - Reduce Impacts of Homelessness on Local Communities**

- A grant has been received to help with a “Project Homeless Connect” event to be conducted in 2009. Additional grant requests are pending.
- A program describing the Homeless Plan and 2007 Homeless Count was broadcast on County Cable TV.

## **Thank You**

Due to financial support of community service providers and municipalities who recognize that homelessness belongs to everyone, we have completed the first year in a ten year plan to address homelessness. Many thanks to the following financial supporters:

City of Molalla  
City of Wilsonville  
Clackamas County Community Development  
Clackamas County Social Services  
Clackamas County Sheriff's Office  
Clackamas Woman's Services  
Housing Authority of Clackamas County  
Northwest Housing Alternatives  
Office for Children and Families



Homeless Families Are Grateful  
For Our Efforts to Address  
Homelessness

# Some 2007 Highlights



*"You work all your life, and you lose it. I see the worry on people's faces. We really don't know what we're going to do"*

(Words of a Mobile Home Park Resident)

## Affordable Housing Disappears

Across the nation mobile home parks are increasingly being closed and sold by property owners to developers in favor of higher revenue generating projects. One of the 126 mobile home parks in Clackamas County closed in 2007. While that number may seem small at first glance, it represents more than 250 lower cost housing units. Individuals and families were displaced, with little or no option of where to go. Some people who live in mobile home parks have homes that are too old to move and park closures dramatically increase their risk of homelessness due to the high cost of alternative housing.

In February of 2007, tenants of Thunderbird Mobile Home Park were given notice that they would have to leave the park by March 1, 2008. Concerned for their welfare, the City of Wilsonville, Clackamas County, and the State of Oregon launched a collaborative effort including a Relocation Fair which offered services and resources for residents. The well-attended fair has become a model for addressing other mobile home park closures. In addition, the City of Wilsonville's Senior Support Liaison provided ongoing support to the tenants. Just prior to the park's closure Oregon Housing and Community Services, County DHS and the City of Wilsonville worked together to assist the final nine families from the park in their relocation.

## Bridges to Housing Impacts Lives

Bridges to Housing is a powerful initiative committed to finding permanent housing solutions for high-need homeless families. Strategic alliances have been developed between four counties to coordinate efforts to reduce family homelessness in the region with a commitment to best practices.

A strength-based three-part approach meets the needs of homeless families by providing:

1. Permanent affordable housing available to families for as long as needed.
2. Intensive case management, designed to focus on the strengths of family members and maximize success.
3. Services to meet specific needs for children.

Launched in the fall of 2007, Bridges to Housing has funding for eleven families. A case manager is assisting these families. Currently, there is a significant waiting list for the services provided in this program. The program will expand in the coming year to serve even more families.

## Ready to Rent Prepares More Than 200 To Find Housing

The poor face countless obstacles when it comes to securing housing. That's where Ready to Rent comes in. This housing readiness training program helps clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness because of criminal history, eviction or bad credit. In addition to teaching the rights and responsibilities of being a renter, the program assists participants with transportation and child care costs associated with attending classes, as well as move-in funds for some participants.

From June 2007 through June 2008, Ready to Rent served more than 200 clients, 72 percent of whom graduated from the program. This is a significant achievement because half of those enrolled in the program were originally homeless.

## Monthly Meetings Assist School Homeless Liaisons

During the 2006-07 school year Oregon was hit hard when the federal funding that school districts receive to assist homeless students was cut by 10%. Nevertheless, each school district is required to have a Homeless Liaison to coordinate outreach efforts and services for homeless students.

In Clackamas County, monthly networking meetings occur that assisted Homeless Liaisons from ten school districts address the challenge of doing a difficult job with limited resources. Opportunities were provided for Homeless Liaisons to share insights, resources and successes in their school districts. These networking meetings established a forum for communication between Homeless Liaisons and other services providers that addressed important system barriers in serving the 898 Clackamas County students who are homeless.

*"I never want to be homeless again. It is the most terrible thing. I lost everything, just everything. It was terrible."*

(Words of a woman who slept in her van for five months)



*"I feel that communication at these meetings not only increases our ability to help our students be successful, but also gives us the support we need in a very emotional occupation to help get us through the tough ones."*

*"I feel these meetings are vital to our jobs."*

(Words of a School Homeless Liaison)

## Faith Community Unites To End Homelessness

Several faith communities have come together to address homelessness in Clackamas County.

**Canby Center** ([www.thecanbycenter.org](http://www.thecanbycenter.org)) is a non-profit, faith-based organization formed as a result of a collaboration between churches in the Canby area. Functioning as an independently administered organization, the center serves all people in need in the community and envisions a time where homelessness and hunger no longer exists.

**Love, INC.** ([www.clackamasloveinc.org](http://www.clackamasloveinc.org)) serves those who have fallen through the cracks of the traditional service system by providing many items including clothes, toiletries, furniture, linens as well as personal support.

**The Father's Heart Street Ministry** ([www.tfstreetministry.com](http://www.tfstreetministry.com)) assists homeless and low-income families by providing clothing, lunches, food boxes, personal hygiene items, prayer, and occasional financial help. The ministry also operates a drop-in center where people can escape the outside elements and discover a job board to aid in finding employment.



The Faith Community Provides Meals and Much More

*"Every Saturday morning Riverside Church brought a hot breakfast to all of us living in Baldock Park. This provided not only a warm meal, but also contacts that began my journey out of homelessness. I am so grateful."*

*"Much has improved in my life since my connection with the Canby Center. These people helped me find a job and an apartment."*

(Words of people who are no longer homeless because of a caring faith community)

## Two Homeless Women's Wellness Fairs Hosted in 2007

In collaboration with public service providers and a private business, Outside-In conducted two Homeless Women's Wellness Fairs in 2007 to serve the population residing along the Springwater Corridor and 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Clackamas County. By bringing together medical care, social advocacy and referral as well as other health and wellness resources, over 110 individuals had access to services including housing referrals, food stamp information, hair styling, chiropractic care, crisis resources, massage therapy, and legal aid.



Mobile Medical Van at Wellness Fair

*"Thank you for the Wellness Fair. It helps us a lot – a friendly place where we were not treated like 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens."*

## Everyone Deserves a Safe Place To Call Home

Clackamas County believes in the principle that every person should have decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing and an opportunity to live in a community in peace and dignity.

We understand that housing fulfills:

Physical needs by providing security and shelter

Psychological needs by providing a sense of personal space and privacy

Social needs by providing a gathering area and communal space for the family, the basic unit of society,

Societal needs by providing a supportive base from which children can gain access to education and all family members can best fulfill their individual potential, including employment and personal development.

*"I got a job, but how do you get ready for work when you live in your van in Baldock Park and have nowhere to shower and nothing good to wear."*

(Words of a person who camped for three months at Baldock Safety Rest Area near Wilsonville on I-5)

## Challenges As We Move Into Year Two of Our Ten Year Plan to Address Homelessness

- Educating the public about the reality and needs of homeless people in our county.
- Adding more units of affordable housing.
- Increasing outreach efforts for job training, drug and alcohol treatment.
- Establishing an eviction assistance program.
- Implementing the first county "Project Homeless Connect Event".
- Conducting a "Point in Time" Homeless Count in 2009.
- Securing funding for expanded programs that serve the homeless population.

Looking forward we will continue to work together so that in nine years we will have created a community where

***"Everyone Will Have a Safe Place To Call Home"***