

# Press Release

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Dutchess County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness Completes First Year of Implementation**

### **Government and community stakeholders join together to end homelessness**

Last June, Dutchess County homeless service providers joined with State and Local Officials, members of the Faith Community, Business Leaders and other Key Stakeholders to celebrate the release of the Dutchess County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. June 2011 marked the end of the first year of implementation, which has seen action on a number of the Plan's key goals.

- The Dutchess County Legislature adopted the *Dutchess County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness* signifying the Legislature's agreement with the goals and strategies documented within the Plan.
- Homelessness Prevention: Dutchess County Agencies continued implementation of the stimulus-funded Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program. Between June 2010 and July 2011, the program served 196 households at risk of becoming homeless and assisted 40 homeless families and individuals in securing permanent housing. Ninety-two percent of households served successfully obtained or maintained Permanent Housing.
- Emergency Shelter: A partnership with the City of Poughkeepsie has enabled Hudson River Housing to move the screening location for their Emergency Shelter to the Family Resource Partnership. The new location opens earlier (7:00 PM), eliminating the crowd of nearly 60 homeless individuals that used to congregate outside the former location until it opened at 8:15 PM). In addition, HRH has relocated their River Haven Youth Shelter to a new location, where capacity has been increased to accommodate a teen parent with up to 2 children.

- **Transitional Housing:** Hudson River Housing has received State funding to operate 5 units of Transitional Housing for parolees; staff work with the individuals to assist them in securing the income needed to maintain Permanent Housing, greatly reducing the risk of recidivism.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing:** In September, 2010, Hudson River Housing completed the renovation of a 16-unit Rooming House in Poughkeepsie. All of the residents are low-income adult males, many of whom were homeless before entering the facility. Four of the units are dedicated to individuals who have been homeless for a year or more, or who have had repeated episodes of homelessness in the past three years.
- **Affordable Housing:** Hudson River Housing has been awarded Federal funds through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, which they are using to redevelop 10 foreclosed properties into 17 units of affordable housing. The agency has also completed construction of 2 affordable 3-bedroom apartments in Poughkeepsie.

“The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness is not just a document”, Gail Webster, Executive Director of Hudson River Housing commented, “but rather a tool which brings the community together to sit down and work collectively to put a system in place to prevent households from becoming homeless and to quickly rehouse those who find themselves homeless. These prevention and proactive efforts protect the quality of life for all families and at the same time save the County money.”

The above projects represent just a portion of the noteworthy efforts underway in Dutchess County. While significant progress has been made, there is much work to be done before the goal of Ending Homelessness in Dutchess County is achieved.

The economic recession has had a devastating impact on households in Dutchess County, most significantly for households living in poverty. “The good work being done by our community’s homeless housing and service providers is making a difference to reduce the number of homeless families and individuals”, says Jacki Brownstein, Executive Director of Mental Health America of Dutchess County, “but we cannot do it alone. It takes the commitment of the entire community to help end homelessness.”

Under the leadership of Sandra Goldberg (D-14) and Barbara Jeter-Jackson (D-10) the County Legislature has taken an active role within the process participating on the Executive Committee. “Preventing and ending homelessness takes real coordination and a constant exchange of ideas. Dutchess County has taken the first step in this process by adopting the Dutchess County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness,” said Ms. Goldberg. “We now have a clear, deliberate, and comprehensive strategy to begin to end homelessness for all households within Dutchess County. Sandra and I are committed to making this a reality for our community,” shared Ms. Jeter-Jackson.

For more information on how you can help end homelessness in Dutchess County, please contact Mental Health America of Dutchess County (845) 473-2500 or Hudson River Housing (845) 454-5176.