

## Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness

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[WWW.CO.ORANGE.NC.US/HOUSING/ENDINGHOMELESSNESS.ASP](http://WWW.CO.ORANGE.NC.US/HOUSING/ENDINGHOMELESSNESS.ASP)

### Continuum of Care Federal Funding Update

The Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) is a committee of the Partnership to End Homelessness. In the 2008 federal application for funding from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), the CoC was successful in securing **\$375,686** to provide permanent supportive housing assistance to homeless individuals and families in our community. Funded agencies include Chrysalis Foundation and the OPC Area Program. The CoC has a proven track record of securing available federal funds, in fact, the CoC has brought more than **\$1,000,000** to Orange County since 2005. Federal HUD Homeless Program Funding by year:

2005 = \$150,000	2007 = \$278,000
2006 = \$275,000	2008 = \$375,686

### UNC Student Initiatives—Leading the Way!



UNC students preparing for Box Out 2008

For several years, student organizations hosted by the Campus Y have been proactive in supporting the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. Over the past two years, **HOPE** has conducted major fundraisers to support **Project Homeless Connect**. Low income and homeless working adults have received **free tax assistance** through student volunteer members of Student Poverty Reduction Outreach (**SPROUT**).

Student efforts bring much needed assistance to implementing the Ten Year Plan—efforts that utilize valuable funding resources in our community.

**Student Initiatives to Combat Homelessness (SITCH)**, formed in the spring of 2008, brings together numerous UNC student led groups to share information, resources, and work together to address their common mission: to end homelessness and poverty throughout the Orange County community. The groups are engaged in a wide variety of activities such as educational forums and events, activism, fundraising, social justice activities, direct service and volunteerism. **The Annual Box-Out Event** during Poverty Awareness Week very visibly raises awareness while raising funds to help the homeless.

Orange County's Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness includes the Towns of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Hillsborough, and Orange County



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#### Homeless Population in Orange County:

- ◆ 2006 = 237
- ◆ 2007 = 224
- ◆ 2008 = 195

In 2008, of the **195** people experiencing homelessness **58** were considered chronically homeless, meaning they suffered from mental illness, substance abuse, or physical disability in addition to long-term or frequent episodes of homelessness.

**Note:** These figures do not include numbers of people who are "doubled up" that is without a legal residence of their own and temporarily staying with another person.

## Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness

### Annual Community Report

# Homecoming

May 2009



### A Message from the Partnership's Executive Team

In March 2007, Orange County's 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness was presented to the community. It outlined five goals and a host of associated strategies.

In March 2008, the Partnership hired a coordinator to facilitate the implementation of its strategies to end homelessness. Today, the Partnership offers its first annual Progress Report. As Chair of the Partnership's Executive Team, I invite you to share my pride in the accomplishments to date. The activities outlined here represent the dedication of hundreds of professionals and volunteers, united in their determination to make a difference.

Our first coordinator, Carson Dean, resigned in August 2008 to pursue a professional opportunity. He left big shoes to fill. As we continue to search for his permanent replacement, we're fortunate to have Jamie Rohe step in as interim coordinator.

Jamie is a community development and housing specialist with the Town of Chapel Hill. Her success in spearheading the county's Project Homeless Connect is the most visible sign of the passion and commitment that she brings to the issues. We are grateful to Chapel Hill for agreeing to contract with the Partnership for her services.

At this beautiful time of year, as the March winds have tossed the limbs of the pines and redbuds out my window this way and that, I have contemplated how my own best-laid plans may be buffeted about by winds of change unprecedented in my lifetime. I'm humbled to remember, though, that I have that crucial window between me and the world outside.

By February the recession had "hit home," ABC News reported: "Across the generations and income brackets, Americans say they are increasingly becoming homebodies." But retreating to the family room is not an option for everyone. With more bad news on the horizon, our work to prevent and end homelessness is daily more challenging.

The Partnership's successes are built on more than the work of the people directly involved in the projects described here: we benefit from the additional support of a most generous Orange County community. Thank you. As we move into the coming year of implementation of our 10-year plan, please stay involved and engaged.

Sally Greene, Chair

#### 2007-2008 REPORT CARD

##### Grading Our Results

- Reduce Chronic Homelessness
- Increase Employment
- Prevent Homelessness
- Increase Access to Services
- Increase Public Participation in Ending Homelessness

##### Legend

- Goal has been implemented
- Goal is on schedule
- Not started or behind schedule

### Goal: Reducing Chronic Homelessness

#### Chronically Homeless

*The Definition*  
—has been homeless for more than one (1) year or has experienced homelessness four (4) or more times in the past three (3) years and has a disability.

#### Permanent Housing

Since 2008, approximately 27 individuals with disabilities have found permanent affordable housing because of the availability of federally subsidized rental vouchers.

#### Homeless Outreach

Since early 2007, Housing for New Hope has provided **Homeless Outreach** in downtown Chapel Hill. This program has engaged over **279** homeless people and enrolled **52** people in the PATH Program that provides ongoing case management to help them gain access to services.

Additionally, **ten (10)** homeless individuals have received housing to date.

#### Housing Support

In July 2008, Housing for New Hope began a **Housing Support Program** to help the chronically homeless obtain and maintain permanent housing.

Thus far, **32** people have been served by this program. They have received assistance with finding and maintaining housing, security and utility deposits and food purchases.



**The Homeless Outreach and Housing Support Team**

*From left to right:  
Solomon Gasana, Ashley Brown  
and Julie Leon*



### Goal: Increasing Employment

When you're homeless, finding a job is more complicated than filling out applications and updating your resume. You need a place to sleep, proper clothing, transportation,... the list goes on.

**The Partnership to End Homelessness Employment Initiatives Work Group** spent roughly six months in 2008 to determine the most effective approaches to helping the homeless obtain and maintain employment and

make implementation recommendations to the Executive Team. To accomplish this they heard from service providers and held two business roundtables.

*Special thanks to Meg McGurk for facilitating this work group.*

### Goal: Preventing Homelessness

The Partnership has endorsed several measures to increase access to needed services. **Discharge Planning** is now underway between the local hospitals and shelters to make sure no one is discharged from an institution to the streets. Sounds simple, right? Unfortunately, it's much more complicated.

Additionally, there are many homeless individuals who are entitled to social security benefits but have not been able to get approved. **SOAR** (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery) is a national best practice that greatly improves outcomes related to disability determinations. Orange County now has **22** SOAR-trained case managers outreaching the homeless and starting the application process for those who are eligible. There are future plans to work with UNC Hospitals to develop a formal case management system that incorporates SOAR techniques.



### Goal: Increasing Access to Services



Source: [www.cvm.org](http://www.cvm.org)

The lack of phone service is a major barrier for homeless persons seeking employment, services, and general information. To address this need, **Community Voice Mail** a national non-profit organization provides voice mail services for homeless persons through partnerships with local social service agencies. Orange County service providers—Housing for New Hope, Inter-Faith Council, and the OPC Mental Health Agency—are providing this service to local homeless individuals in partnership with Wake County Human Services. A total of **50** voicemail boxes are being used in the County.

### Goal: Increasing Public Participation

No Plan to End Homelessness can be effective without public support and participation. Thanks to the generosity of Mark Schultz of **The Chapel Hill News**, the Partnership has been invited to submit monthly guest columns since September 2008 to raise public awareness of homelessness in our community. Monthly topics have included: Project Homeless Connect, Mental Illness and Homelessness; and Partnership activities. Continue to look for the guest columns in the months to come.



**Real Change from Spare Change** has a two part goal: to raise funds to support the Orange County street outreach program administered through Housing for New Hope and to support community education to continue to teach people that there is a better way to help in our community. **Funds Raised since November 2007: \$28,106.92**

Real Change from Spare Change is a program of the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership that works to educate the community on issues of homelessness. Real Change from Spare Change is a sponsor of 'Talking Sidewalks' the literary magazine composed of written work and photographs by local homeless community members. With wide-spread community support, Real Change from Spare Change continues to engage downtown businesses and the community to gain both financial support and understanding of the nature of homelessness. You can contribute to Real Change from Spare Change at [www.realchangefromsparechange.org](http://www.realchangefromsparechange.org). For more information, please contact the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership at 967-9440 or [partnership@downtownchapelhill.com](mailto:partnership@downtownchapelhill.com).



Haircuts were one of many provided services.

### The 2nd Annual Project Homeless Connect Orange County

Bobby decided to drop by **Project Homeless Connect** to get a haircut and lunch. He left with a clean cut, full stomach and much more—a job interview, peace of mind knowing his blood pressure was normal, clothing, and personal care items. On September 25, 2008, this one-day, one-stop event to provide services to people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness was held at the Hargraves Center in Chapel Hill. Here are the results.

- ◆ Fifty (50) Service Providers
- ◆ 202 Individuals Served
- ◆ Nearly 300 Volunteers
- ◆ 400 Lunches of soup and sandwiches served