



HOUSING FOR ALL!!!

NEWS FROM THE NEW MEXICO COALITION
TO END HOMELESSNESS

Volume 18, Number 1

April 2018

Success at Legislature and a Lawsuit over ID Regulations

by Lisa Huval, Associate Director

Imagine this: You are in a car accident and are hospitalized for several weeks. While in the hospital, you are evicted from your apartment and lose all of your belongings, including your state identification (ID) card. You are unable to obtain a new ID because your birth certificate and social security card also have been lost. You have applied for new copies of these, but they will take a long time to arrive. You have disability benefits that are deposited directly into your bank account, but, without an ID, you cannot access the funds in your account or find a landlord who will rent an apartment to you. As a result, you are living in an emergency shelter.

Unfortunately, this nightmare scenario – and ones very similar to it – are playing out across New Mexico for many people experiencing homelessness. This is because the NM Department of Motor Vehicles (MVD) has created overly restrictive rules for obtaining a state ID.

The Coalition has partnered with several other advocacy organizations, including Somos Un Pueblo Unido, the NM Center on Law and Poverty, and the ACLU to do something about it. In January 2018, these three organizations filed a lawsuit against MVD, and the Coalition joined the lawsuit as an organizational plaintiff. We are grateful that the lawyers for the Coalition are working pro bono.

Our hope is that the lawsuit will force MVD to issue updated regulations that are consistent with the law and give people due process when they are denied a driver's license or state ID.

In other news, Coalition staff and member organizations have been busy lobbying the Legislature for increased funding for housing programs that help end homelessness. Over 80 people from across NM joined us on January 25th for our annual Lobby Day, giving legislators an opportunity to hear directly from people experiencing homelessness and those who serve them. Thanks to our advocacy, the budget included a \$100,000 increase for the Linkages Permanent Supportive Housing program.



Over 80 people from across NM joined us on January 25th for our annual Lobby Day, including folks from *Heading Home* (shown above) and *St. Elizabeth's Shelter* (below). Thanks to all who came and helped us get an increase in housing funding!



Let's Address Youth Homelessness

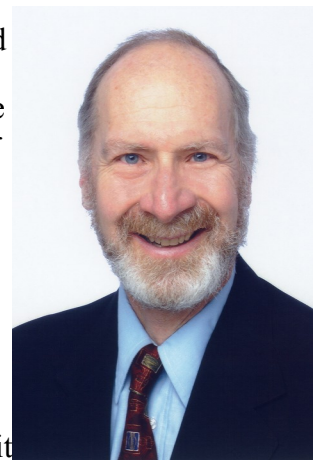
A Message from the Executive Director

We want to take what we have learned about housing homeless veterans quickly and figure out how to rehouse homeless youth, quickly and efficiently. Homelessness among children and youth is not as obvious as some adult homelessness, and, so, we tend to forget about it. In fact, most homeless adults once were homeless children or youth. The problems that lead to long-term homelessness start early in one's life. Addressing youth homelessness gives us the opportunity to change someone's life for the better early on, before they suffer years on the streets.

At the Coalition, we are starting to focus more on ending youth homelessness. The Coalition and some of our member agencies are applying to be part of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project, a new opportunity from the federal government. This would be a big step forward if we are successful. In addition, a committed group of volunteers in Albuquerque is organizing an art auction to benefit homeless youth and children, and our Santa Fe Advisory Board is also focusing its fundraising on helping homeless children and youth.

As in the past, we use a small portion (25%) of our fundraising to support our governmental advocacy work and distribute most of the funds to our member organizations that are doing the best work in this area.

We are building on the success we have had in creating a system that can rehouse homeless veterans quickly to build a more efficient system that rehuses homeless children and youth. We appreciate your continued support.



*Hank Hughes,
Executive Director
NMCEH*



Home is Where the Art Is

by Rebecca Poe, AmeriCorps VISTA Leader

Please plan to attend the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness' "Home is Where the Art Is" silent art auction and raffle! This fun, art-filled event will feature local handmade arts and crafts that explore the question, "What makes the place we live in feel like home?"

This is the perfect time to pick up new items for your home, purchase gifts for Mother's Day, and win some incredible raffle prizes, including items donated by Albuquerque Magazine, Zendo Coffee, the ABQ Isotopes, the International Balloon Fiesta, and many more!

The proceeds from this event will benefit area homeless youth and families.

***Home is Where the Art Is
3:00—5:00 pm
Sunday, April 29, 2018
St Michael and All Angels Church
601 Montañó Road NW, Albuquerque***

For more information on this event, including how to donate art, please contact Lisa or Rebecca at lisa-h@nmceh.org or Rebecca-p@nmceh.org.

Our Sincere Gratitude Goes Out to These Individuals & Organizations

Thank You to Our Individual and Business Supporters (since previous newsletter)

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Second Anonymous Fund
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Special Thanks to:

B2B Bistronomy for hosting our fundraiser and to **Dan O'Connor, Kevin Arthun, and Andrew Rochelle** for volunteering for this event.

Our "Home Is Where the Art Is" Planning Committee members and volunteers: **Andrew Rochelle, Judith Shaw, Marsh McMurray Avila, Trina Wheeler, Genevieve Buskirk, Aubrey Harris, Sarah McCord, Dan O'Connor, and Lyn Jones.**

St. Michael and All Angels Church and to **Kathryn Ravenwood** for donating the space for our "Home is Where the Art is Action" event.

The **McCune Charitable Foundation, the Frost Foundation, and the Lineberry Foundation** for their generous support.

The **New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty, the ACLU, Somos Un Pueblo Unido, and Freedman Boyd Hollander Goldberg Urias & Ward P.A.** for contributing legal services to our effort to fix the ID regulations in New Mexico.

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Member Organizations and Individuals: For a list of our 77 members, please go to www.nmceh.org

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The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness

- *Creating more housing for homeless people*
- *Quickly connecting homeless people to housing*
- *Holding governments accountable*



In his new home, Jim is able to focus on improving his health.

The Keys to a New Life

by Rebecca Poe, AmeriCorps VISTA Leader

It is safe, warm, and cozy in Jim's Albuquerque apartment — a far cry from his former life. In addition to suffering from numerous medical conditions, Jim had been beaten on multiple occasions while he was living on the streets. His hand still shows the scar from a stabbing he endured. The latest attack left him with severe facial injuries from being kicked in the face and head. Jim is quick to point out that being off the streets and in a safe apartment has protected him and enabled him to focus on his health. Prior to being housed, Jim was in and out of hospital emergency rooms. Now, his health has greatly improved, and he is able to make and keep needed medical appointments, both for preventative care and for a dental appointment to fix the teeth that were broken when he was assaulted.

As soon as I sat down to interview Jim, he praised the efforts of Bee Chavez, Coordinated Entry Specialist for the New Mexico Coalition to End

Homelessness. "I owe it all to her," he said. Jim noted that, while others had given up on him, Bee had been with him through "thick and thin." He smiled, pointed to Bee, and quietly said, "She's my angel," a phrase he would repeat again at the end of our interview. Jim also was grateful to his caseworker, Andy, to his care coordination team at Molina, as well as to everyone involved at Catholic Charities for finding him housing.

Candid about his former life in a gang and the effects of living for ten years on the streets, Jim explicitly stated that he knows that he has an opportunity now for a better life. Sober and thinking of his future, Jim mentioned wanting to find a volunteer position to give back to his community. He also plans to take classes at UNM or CNM, hoping to major in business administration. Jim spoke a lot about his children, and it was clear that he felt he could be a role model for them if he went to college. He knew his family was proud of him for making all of these changes in his life. In a very poignant moment, Jim described how his daughter would watch the news, and, when a story about a stabbing or murder of a homeless person would come on, her heart would sink, worried that it might have been her father. Jim pointed out that being housed had changed his life in so many ways. For one thing, he was sleeping a lot more, and he was able to sleep soundly. Jim knew that he no longer would be asked to move on at night or have to sleep lightly for fear of an altercation. Clutching the apartments keys that were hanging around his neck, Jim looked up and stated that if someone bothers him now, he simply can "go home."