

# HOUSING FOR ALL!!!

NEWS FROM THE NEW MEXICO COALITION  
TO END HOMELESSNESS



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## Patty Thompson Rebuilds Her Life at Stage Coach Apartments

By Kriselda Yazzie, VISTA Volunteer



Patty Thompson, originally from southern Illinois, was homeless for three years living in her car or living with friends. Not only was she homeless, Patty was also suffering from a life threatening medical condition, which went untreated for seven years due to her lack of health insurance to pay for the medication she needed.

Patty now lives in a small one bedroom at Stage Coach Apartments with her dog Bella Marie. Stage Coach is a mixed income apartment community in Santa Fe developed by the Housing Trust with help from the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness. It is home to 15 formerly homeless households. "This is where homelessness ends and a better life begins," says Hank Hughes, Executive Director of NMCEH, "at Stage Coach and at similar supportive housing programs around New Mexico."

The Stage Coach Apartments is in a very convenient location and Patty exclaims, "The bus stops right where I step out of my apartment every 15 minutes. When I see the bus go by I know I have 15 minutes to get ready, get my stuff and I'm out the door!!"

Patty waited three months to get into Stage Coach while living in her car. When applying for an apartment she was asked what she was looking for in a home. She had only one request: "That my apartment comes with a bathtub. I have gone days, even weeks, without a proper shower and the number one thing I really want is a tub. It helps me overcome any stress that I face." With help from three different agencies - Health Care for the Homeless, Life Link and Santa Fe Need and Deed - she has been approved for SSDI, Medicaid and SNAP benefits. Since Patty was approved for Medicaid she now has her medication delivered to her apartment and has a nurse administer the medication every two weeks. Medicaid also provides her with the other medical attention she needs. "Since I've gotten Medicaid and the stress relieving tub, I went from seeing my doctor every month to every six months. I'm very happy. I'm alive, living in a safe and stress free environment. That's all that matters to me, oh and my baby Bella," she says while kissing her white dog. Patty also helps other recently homeless tenants adjust to living in the apartments. She helps them get food and learn how to get along with their neighbors.

Debra Lighthouse, a case manager with The Housing Trust, speaks proudly of Patty, stating that "Patty is the Rock Star of the program." Patty loves helping people and wishes she could do more.

## Our Sincere Gratitude Goes Out to These Individuals & Organizations

### Special Thanks to:

**Kriselda Yazzie** for serving as our **VISTA Volunteer** this past year and sharing her talents and perspectives on life with us this past year.

**The Frost Foundation** for their recent very generous grant.

**Santa Fe City Councilor Rebecca Wurzburger** for introducing a resolution asking the City Council to endorse our United for Homes Campaign that would fund the National Housing Trust Fund with enough money to end homelessness.

**State Representatives Doreen Gallegos, Stephanie Garcia Richard, Christine Trujillo, Tomás Salazar, and Liz Thomson** for sponsoring an increase in state homeless funding in 2014.

**Nat Owings** for hosting our Veterans Helping Homeless Veterans gathering at the Owings Gallery.

**Abigail Adler** for hosting our holiday party this year on December 13.

**Dick Wagner** for discount webmaster services.

**Piñon Fast Print** for discount printing services.

### THANKS TO OUR

#### MAJOR SUPPORTERS:

New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority  
The City of Albuquerque  
The Frost Foundation  
The McCune Foundation  
The US Department of Housing and Urban Development

*The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness is on Facebook! "Like Us" on Facebook and follow our progress in ending homelessness!*

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(Since October 2013)

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For a list of our 77 members, please go to [www.nmceh.org](http://www.nmceh.org)

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## A Donation to NMCEH Has a Direct Impact on Homelessness

By Hank Hughes, Executive Director

A donation to NMCEH helps end homelessness throughout New Mexico, and because we evaluate the homeless programs we fund, your donations go to proven agencies that are effective at ending homelessness. There are three ways you can designate your donation and here is what happens with each.

**Veterans Fund:** Our Veterans Helping Homeless Veterans Committee (VHHV) decides how to distribute these funds to groups that assist homeless veterans. In addition, about a third of the funds are used to help NMCEH advocate for better government policies for homeless veterans. This past year funds from this program went to nine agencies that are doing a good job of helping homeless veterans with emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent housing. In July representatives from the VHHV group visited three of the agencies to see first-hand what they are doing and came away favorably impressed.

**Individuals and Families Fund:** Our Advisory Board decides how to distribute these funds to groups that help people exit homelessness. In addition, about a third of the funds are used to help NMCEH advocate for better government policies for all homeless people. Last year 14 groups that are doing good work helping people out of homelessness received mini-grants from the Advisory Board.

**Where Needed Most:** In addition to the above, your undesignated donations also support NMCEH in offering networking opportunities, trainings and an annual conference to help our 60 members provide strong programs based on best practices.

We spend 9% of our budget on fundraising and administration, and all of the funding for fundraising and administration comes from our government grants and membership dues. We are fortunate to be able to spend all of our individual donations on programs as described above.

## Native American Homelessness on Reservations

By Kriselda Yazzie, Americorp VISTA (member of the Navajo Tribe)

Native Americans who live on reservations experience homelessness in a different way than most other people in the United States. Native Americans are known to take care of one another. They may be without a house but they always have a place to call home, so many have been doubling up in houses to keep their relatives from going literally homeless.

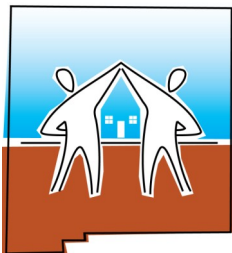
A few have been living in shacks and traditional homes. Although living in traditional homes can be very beautiful, it isn't always suitable for certain individuals, especially those who have a physical disability. Living in a traditional home requires a wood burning stove to keep warm in the winter, which means that the person has to purchase or haul firewood. Being a traditional home also means that it is not well insulated and has no running water or indoor plumbing, meaning more work for that particular family or individual.

It is not easy for families that live doubled-up either. Two or three families crammed in one house causes problems around issues such as paying bills or buying food.

There have been attempts made to build more houses for Navajo families by the chapter houses (which are like town councils). One might think it would be very easy to just start building houses for families in need of a home of their own. Unfortunately, however, several chapter houses face a challenge with their locals regarding land. Even if they do come across a piece of land with absolutely no land disputes, there are other matters that prevent building houses such as flash flood areas or grazing sites for livestock.

How does one end homelessness on the reservation where no one sees being without a house as homeless, just houseless?





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## Study Shows You Can Actually Save Money When You House People

By Megan McCormick, Director of Development, Albuquerque Heading Home



*A new study in Albuquerque shows that housing homeless people who are medically vulnerable is cheaper than leaving them on the streets. At the press conference releasing the results are: Jodie Jepson, Albuquerque Heading Home, Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry, Dennis Plummer, Albuquerque Heading Home.*

frequently, they also require more acute care for preventable conditions which are exacerbated by the circumstances of homelessness. Jails are also frequented by this population. Expense and over-crowding are key issues in Albuquerque. The UNM study reports a 64% decrease in jail costs.

ABQ Heading Home, launched in 2011, seeks to house the most medically vulnerable experiencing chronic homelessness in Albuquerque. Findings of the local study show that this population, once housed, averages an individual savings of \$12,831 annually. According to the research, the more than 200 people already housed through ABQ Heading Home could be saving the community millions of dollars a year.

“This data proves that housing, with supportive services, continues to be the solution to homelessness,” said Heading Home CEO, Dennis Plummer. “It validates the ‘Community Response to Homelessness’ that we share with our many partners,” he said. Albuquerque Heading Home is part of the implementation of a plan crafted by non-profits throughout the community to end homelessness. Copies, along with research released are available at [www.abqheadinghome.org](http://www.abqheadinghome.org).

Earlier this year, Albuquerque Heading Home officially released the results of a cost-benefit study conducted by researchers at the University of New Mexico. The study, designed to measure savings resulting from the permanent housing initiative, revealed a 31.6% savings in overall costs.

Current national data shows that the most vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness tend to be the highest users of community and social services such as emergency rooms, and in/outpatient treatment services. While these individuals use the services more