St. Elizabeth Shelter Increases Housing Success Rate

by Stephanie Lefebvre, Office Manager

St. Elizabeth Shelter Corporation opened its doors in 1986 in Santa Fe. Today, the Corporation operates two emergency shelters - one, St. Elizabeth Shelter, for men and the other, Casa Familia, for women and families with children - and three supportive housing programs for seniors, families and adults with disabilities.

At St. Elizabeth Shelter, every night of the year, 27 men find shelter. Edward Archuleta, who has worked at the shelter for the past five years (and has been contributing and volunteering there on and off since 1986) knows all these men. Edward helps them find employment and/or obtain social security benefits, improve physical and/or mental health issues, and secure permanent housing.

Until two years ago, less than 20% of the men staying at St. Elizabeth Shelter were reported moving into permanent housing. Then, St. Elizabeth Shelter Board of Directors and executive director Deborah Tang decided making it a priority to help their clients achieve housing success. The first step St. Elizabeth took was to increase the maximum length of stay permitted at the shelter from 30 days to up to 4 months. The new extended length of stay proved to offer clients, who often have multiple problems to solve, a more realistic opportunity to succeed.

Having a few extra months to secure financial stability through work or social security benefits, clients are also able to save up for rent. Through the process, Edward Archuleta, or other supportive staff members, meet with the guests on weekly basis to assess their progress and offer support where needed.

Today, on average, 60% of the clients staying at the shelter take advantage of the extended stay. 50% of them achieve housing stability.

Edward has witnessed many housing success stories. One of them is about a 18 year old Navajo man who after years living in the streets, came stay at the shelter. Having a place to stay for the next coming months, the young man was able to find a job. After two months he was offered an apartment at the Youth Shelter, where he currently lives. He continues to volunteer at the shelter on regular basis.

Another success story comes to Edward’s mind. This one, about a 52 year old man, with a history of chronic homelessness and severe alcohol addiction. During the four months he was able to stay at the shelter, he managed to overcome his addiction, find a job at a downtown hotel and eventually move into an apartment of his liking.
Our Sincere Gratitude Goes Out to These Individuals & Organizations

**Thank you to Our Individual Supporters (Since December 2014) Continued:**
- Kristine Carlson
- Revell Carr
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- Barry & Miriam Weinstock
- in memory of Frank Karsh
- Sharron Welsh
- Dave & Susan Weymouth
- Ralph Williams
- David & Ann Wray
- Sally Yost
- John & Beverly Young
- Robert & Margaret Zone

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All the workshop presenters at our Housing for All Conference: Jean Block, Dennis Culhane, Quinn Donnay, Michelle DuVal, Dede Feldman, Sandi Gilley, Linda Kaufman, Adrian Lawyer, Nicole Martinez, Angela Merkert, Barbara Nolan, Teddi Rivera, Roman Seaburgh, Linda Siegle and Brooke Tafoya.

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- Abigail Adler
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- J. Amber Archer
- Janice Baker
- Daphne Banks
- Jon Barr
- Raphiel Benjamin
- Nancy Bennett
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For a list of our 77 members, please go to www.nmceh.org

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Mike Peters, Mike Barr, Revell Carr, Tom Aageson, Chris Calvert, Mark French, Raphiel Benjamin, Allan Chaloupka.
New Mexico is on track to house all of the homeless veterans we know about by the end of 2015. From our count of homeless people in January, and an extrapolation to include those we missed or who will become homeless during the course of the year, we estimate that we need to house 753 homeless veterans in 2015. As of the end of March we have already housed 245 homeless veterans this year and so we are well on our way to housing all 753 by the end of the year. The goal for 2016 and beyond is that we will be able to house any homeless veteran that asks for housing within 30 days.

We got this far because housing homeless veterans is one thing everyone can agree on, and importantly it is one of the few things that Congress and the Obama Administration can agree on. This broad agreement that no veteran should be homeless, and the federal funding that has come with it, has set the stage for places like New Mexico to be able to house all of their homeless veterans by the end of the year.

New Mexico is one of five states where homeless advocates have signed on to be part of the Zero: 2016 initiative to house all homeless veterans in 2015 and all chronically homeless people in 2016. NMCEH is coordinating the effort to house every veteran, and we are using our Homeless Management Information System to track each homeless veteran as they are placed in housing. We are partnering with the Mayors of Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Las Cruces who have also signed up for this goal. The Veterans Administration in New Mexico is working hard along with our member nonprofit organizations to house every homeless veteran we can find.

We do not plan to stop with homeless veterans, of course, and are already tracking out progress at housing all of the homeless people with disabilities who have been homeless for a year or more so that we can house all of these chronically homeless people that we know of by the end of 2016. From there we will tackle homeless youth, families with children and all homeless people. Eventually we want to arrive at a place where no one stays homeless for more than a month.

New Money to House Homeless People from State Legislature
By Lisa Huval, Policy and Advocacy Director

The 2015 Legislative Session closed on Saturday, March 21st. The good news coming out of the session is that the Legislature allocated $650,000 in new funding for the NM Human Services Department's supportive housing programs, including Linkages. Linkages provides housing vouchers to people with mental health disabilities who are experiencing homelessness. This is a very exciting development, and we will be working with the Human Services Department's Housing Leadership Group to help develop a strategy for allocating these new resources.

The Legislature also allocated an additional $50,000 in state funds to be used for rapid rehousing and to support housing services. These funds will be allocated through the Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) to non-profits across New Mexico, as part of their Rental Assistance Program and Continuum of Care match program.

Unfortunately, Senate Bill 119 did not pass. SB 119, which was sponsored by Senator Bill O'Neil, would have amended the state's Hate Crimes Statute to include people experiencing homelessness as a protected class. The bill passed the Senate and the House Judiciary Committee, but was not brought up for a vote on the House floor before the end of the session.

Many thanks to our legislative champions, particularly Representative Tomas Salazar, Senator Sander Rue, Senator Jerry Ortiz Y Pino, Senator Nancy Rodriguez and Senator Bill O'Neil for their efforts during this session to end homelessness in New Mexico. Many thanks also to our members and allies who attended our Lobby Day and/or contacted their legislators during the session.
Inspiration at the 4th Housing for All Annual Conference
by Kristin Fleming, Planning Assistant

On Thursday, April 9th, the Coalition hosted its fourth annual Housing for All Conference in Albuquerque. Senator Dede Feldman welcomed over 225 attendees from across the region in the morning, followed by Dr. Dennis Culhane from the University of Pennsylvania who shared his research findings that help with strategies to end homelessness.

Those in attendance then went on to learn more about “New Directions in Ending Homelessness” from workshop presenters covering topics from tenant and landlord rights and relations to creating more sustainable organizations. Those is direct service had the opportunity to learn best practices in trauma informed care as well as some self-care via mindfulness based stress reduction. Other workshop topics included “Demystifying the Disability Process,” “Lobbying 101,” and “Understanding and Working with Transgender Clients.”

Linda Kaufman, this year’s keynote speaker from Community Solutions, was a definite highlight in the day, keeping everyone in stitches during her lunchtime speech. More importantly, she reminded us of the importance of creating excellent teams, utilizing data-driven strategies, and of dreaming big as we work together to end veteran and chronic homelessness by the end of next year.

Having grown significantly over the years, our Conference found a new home this year at the Hotel Cascada, a beautiful urban resort located in midtown Albuquerque. They provided excellent food and beautiful space to keep everyone nourished and inspired throughout the day.

All the success of this year’s conference is thanks to everyone who attended, whether to learn or to present—we couldn’t have done it without you! And now, time to plan for next year.

New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness is proud to recognize the following people for their outstanding service to New Mexicans who are homeless

Volunteer of the Year 2015
Dr. Ronald L. Friederich, Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless
Honorable Mention:
Karen Meizner, TenderLove Community Center

Direct Service Employee of the Year 2015
John Sotherden, VA Healthcare System
Honorable Mention:
Emily Folks, Youth Shelters and Family Services, Connie Elshberry, Valencia Shelter Services, Christina Wolford, Silver City Gospel Mission, Trina Lopez, Supportive Housing Coalition of NM

Non-Profit Leader of the Year 2015
Elinor Reiners, Veterans Integration Center
Honorable Mention:
Ilyssa Bozza, Catholic Charities, Brooke Tafoya, New Day Youth & Family Services, Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, El Camino Real Housing Authority

Innovative Idea of the Year 2015
TenderLove Community Center
Honorable Mention:
Gift Givers Anonymous, St. Elizabeth Shelter, Hooghan Hozho - CARE 66

Data Counts Award 2015
Catholic Charities of Central New Mexico
Mesilla Valley Community of Hope

Elected Official of the Year 2015
Representative Tomás Salazar, NM House of Representatives
Lifetime of Service
Carol Luna-Anderson, The Life Link