New Mexicans Launch Campaign to End Child Homelessness

by Hank Hughes, Executive Director

With the mantra of "Not one child, not one night, not in New Mexico," over 100 advocates gathered on March 25 and 26 in Albuquerque at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center to launch the New Mexico Campaign to End Child Homelessness. The two day Summit combined practical workshops on how to serve homeless children with strategic planning sessions for the ongoing campaign. The highlight of the Summit was a press conference on the second day to officially launch the campaign. Speakers at the press conference were flanked by children holding the banners that declared the groups collective commitment to ending child homelessness.

The campaign brings together a number of advocacy and service organizations including NMCEH, the National Center on Family Homelessness, Cuidando Los Ninos and many others. Since the Summit, smaller groups have been meeting to work on the next steps for the campaign. A big focus of the campaign over the next few months will be to draft a strategic plan for the campaign and to present this draft to the Interim Health and Human Services Committee of the State Legislature. House Memorial 7, which passed the Legislature in early 2010 calls for such a plan to be developed. The National Center on Family Homelessness is planning to have a New Mexico based staff member to coordinate the campaign as early as this fall.

The campaign has generated a lot of energy and excitement, but no one thinks the task will be easy. Ending child homelessness in New Mexico will require a large increase in the supply of supportive housing and other affordable housing for families with children and for independent youth, and it will require an increase in the availability of services for low-income children.
Our Sincere Gratitude Goes Out to These Organizations & Individuals

Special Thanks to:

The National Center on Family Homelessness for choosing to support the New Mexico Campaign to End Child Homelessness.
The Santa Fe Community Housing Trust for breaking ground on a 60 unit mixed income apartment building that will house 15 homeless families.
The Daniels Fund, The McCune Charitable Foundation and the Frost Foundation for generous grants this year.
Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless, HUD, McCune Foundation, and St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral for free meeting space.
Sherry Sandlin for continuing to provide two apartments for supportive housing for homeless people.
Pinion Fast Print for discount printing services.
Dick Wagner for discount webmaster services.
Families and Youth Inc. in Las Cruces for providing administrative support and office space for the HMIS Project Manager.
Patty Ferguson, for her work organizing another reception at the Governor’s Mansion coming this fall.

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTERS:

Daniels Fund
Kathryn Avenue Fund at the Santa Fe Community Foundation
New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund
New Mexico Community Foundation Richard and Rachel Fund
New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church
The Cities of Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces
The Frost Foundation
The McCune Foundation
The US Department of Housing and Urban Development
United Church of Santa Fe

MEEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

Adelante Development Center, Inc
Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless
Archdiocese of Santa Fe
Barrett Foundation
Battered Families Services, Inc.
Border Area Mental Health Services CARE 66
Casas de Vida Nuevo
Catholic Charities
Community Against Violence
Church of the One God
Crossroads for Women
Cuidando Los Niños
Desert View
Dream Tree Project
Eastern Plains Housing Development Corporation
El Refugio
Esperanza Shelter for Battered Families
Families and Youth, Inc.
Family Crises Center
Foundation for New Life Homes
God’s Perfect Love Ministries, Inc
Good Shepherd Center
Haven House
Jill Dougherty Associates
La Casa, Inc.
La Familia Medical Center - Healthcare for the Homeless Life Link
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - NM
Lutheran Office of Government Ministry
Mesilla Valley Community of Hope
Metropolitan Homelessness Project
Navajo United Methodist Center
New Mexico Conference of Churches
New Mexico Mortgage Finance
New Mexico Veterans Integration Center
PATH
S.A.F.E. House
San Juan County Partnerships, Inc
Santa Fe Habitat for Humanity
Santa Fe Community Housing Trust
Santa Fe Community Services
Santa Fe Public Schools, Adelante Program
St. Elizabeth Shelter
St. Martin’s Hospitality Center
Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico
Youth Shelters & Family Services

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Albuquerque Metropolitan Outreach Collaborative Now Up & Running

by Lisa Huval, Policy & Advocacy Director

In early 2009, several Albuquerque outreach providers asked the NMCEH to help develop and coordinate a new outreach collaborative. These outreach providers recognized that while there were many excellent outreach programs throughout the City, there was not a lot of strategic coordination among them. Thus, the Albuquerque Metropolitan Outreach Collaborative (AMOC) was born. The mission of AMOC is to foster strategic collaboration among outreach programs in order to help homeless individuals and families access the services that will help them out of homelessness. AMOC’s goals are to do this by addressing gaps in outreach services, facilitating effective referrals, involving the community in addressing homelessness and serving as a resource on outreach services.

AMOC meets the first Tuesday of each month from 9am – 10:30am at the Albuquerque NMCEH office and has over 20 active members representing 16 different organizations. One of AMOC’s first accomplishments was to create a schedule of all outreach services in Albuquerque, which is updated monthly and posted on the NMCEH’s website.

AMOC has also addressed gaps in outreach services, including limited outreach services near Tramway and Central and limited outreach services to homeless youth. The opportunity to network monthly has also fostered many new collaborative outreaches between different agencies.

McKinney-Vento Act Reinstated

by Lisa Huval, Policy & Advocacy Director

In May 2009, Congress passed the HEARTH Act, which reauthorized the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Programs. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Programs include the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) and Continuum of Care (CoC) programs, and the HEARTH Act made many important changes to both programs. These changes will go into effect by summer 2010 (so they do not impact the 2010 CoC application process).

One of the major changes under the HEARTH Act is an expanded definition of homelessness, which while not perfect does represent an improvement over the old definition. Under the HEARTH Act, CoC programs can now serve people who have but at risk of losing their housing, which made include a motel or doubled up situation, within 14 days, families and youth who have moved frequently and are likely to continue to do so, and people exiting an institution where they resided for up to 90 days (it was previously 30 days). CoCs can also use up to 10 percent of CoC funds to serve people who are living doubled up or in motels.

The ESG program will be called the Emergency Solutions Grant program and will have new emphasis on prevention and re-housing activities. Majors changes to the CoC program include a uniform 25% match (except for leasing projects), allowing applicants to use 10% of their grant for administrative costs, and a new, separate rural CoC process that might be helpful for the NM Balance of State. The NMCEH will be working closely with our members agencies over the next year to help them understand these changes.
Vista Gallinas Supportive Housing Holds Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in Las Vegas

by Lorraine Kahneratokwas Gray

Alfonso E. Ortiz, Jr., Mayor of Las Vegas, cuts the ribbon on the new supportive housing complex. Photo by Lorraine Gray

The Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico and the Vista Gallinas Community Partnership celebrated the completion of their supportive housing project in Las Vegas with a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 4th. Representatives from the New Mexico Congressional Delegation, Gregory Hettrick, from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas, Jay Czar from New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, Gloria Garcia, from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Alfonso E. Ortiz, Jr., Mayor of Las Vegas were all present to offer their support for the completed project.

The Vista Gallinas project represents a culmination of experience both locally and nationally that supports the concept of providing affordable housing in a supportive service environ-