



HOUSING FOR ALL!!!

NEWS FROM THE NEW MEXICO COALITION
TO END HOMELESSNESS

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Cornerstone Apartments to House the Hard to House *by Hank Hughes, Executive Director*



Cornerstone Apartments is a soon to be housing project put together by a partnership of agency and government leaders who are working together to provide housing for the hardest to house homeless people in southwestern New Mexico.

The idea of Cornerstone Apartments grew out of the Supportive Housing Toolkit workshop series that NMCEH sponsored in 2017. Christina Wolford, the Executive Director of Supporting People in Need (SPIN) in Silver City, attended the workshops and has pushed the idea forward since then. It finally looks like the project will happen.

"There is a population of people who need extra support in their living environment," Christina noted in conversation about the housing project. "Currently these people sleep outside in our emergency shelter or are couch surfing."

Hidalgo County will donate land in Lordsburg for the 30 unit apartment building that will serve homeless people from the three county area of Grant, Hidalgo and Luna Counties. The operation of the project will be supported by housing vouchers through the Western Regional Housing Authority based in Silver City. SPIN and other agencies will provide the supportive services needed.

BlueLine Development is lined up to construct the project and are applying for the construction funds from the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, which has several funding sources that could be appropriate. With more funding going into housing at this time from federal and state coffers, we are hopeful that this project will be funded to meet the needs of homeless people in an underserved part of our state.

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New Funding for Housing is Being Put to Good Use

By Hank Hughes, Executive Director

There is increased interest in building housing for those experiencing homelessness at all levels of government, and we are starting to see some results. In Albuquerque, HopeWorks opened Hope Village this spring with about 40 apartments for people experiencing homelessness with disabilities. In Santa Fe an alliance of local governments, nonprofits and foundations are about to renovate the Lamplighter motel to create 58 units of affordable housing that will include people who have been homeless. In the southwest corner of the state another coalition of local governments and nonprofits are working to develop 30 units of supportive housing for their homeless population.



These efforts are being made possible by an influx of federal funding for housing that will soon be followed by an influx of state funds through the New Mexico Housing Trust Fund. The federal funds are through the stimulus funding done to counteract the pandemic and are not necessarily going to continue in future years. Fortunately the state funding will be recurring each year due to exciting legislation that past in our most recent 2022 legislative session.

Community groups in Taos, Gallup, Albuquerque and Santa Fe are all planning for new supportive housing projects in the upcoming year that are now more likely to happen with this new funding. It is very nice to see that, after years of advocacy for more housing funding, we are starting to make progress.

Source of Income Discrimination Ordinance Passes in Albuquerque!

Last week, Albuquerque city councilors met to discuss a proposed city ordinance that makes it illegal to decline a tenant based purely off of type of income. The ordinance passed! The decision means that landlords cannot decline a tenant who plans to pay rent through supplemental income; like housing vouchers or social security based only upon their type of income.

For low-income families who rely on housing vouchers this is an important step to securing a permanent rented home. One point about the ordinance is important to note, as misunderstandings about the ordinance are coming out. First, this ordinance does not require a landlord to accept someone as a tenant if other factors would disqualify them (like past eviction records for example). Rather, the ordinance is to ensure that tenants who would qualify for a rental property if they had traditional forms of payment, cannot be turned away purely because of their form of payment.

This is an exciting step for Albuquerque and we hope to advocate for similar legislative changes at the state level this upcoming session!

HOUSING FOR ALL!!!

Our Sincere Gratitude Goes Out to These Individuals and Business Supporters *(since previous newsletter)*

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Special Thanks to:

100 Women Who Care for their generous contribution of \$10,000 for our sleeping bag and tent fund!



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Rochelle Madrid's Story, The Early Intervention Program

*Interview by Georgia Evans,
Development Associate*

Rochelle, a Santa Fe resident, had been renting securely until she was priced out of her place of residence. Looking for new rental options, she could not find one in her price range and found herself sleeping in short term hotels, cars, on friends couches, and out on the streets. She noted that, when looking for housing, there were long waiting lists because of COVID-19 and, because she was looking during the Spanish Market, many other rentals had either increased their prices or became short-term, making the search nearly impossible. She was in this situation for five months until she was put in contact with a Coalition staff member who applied for her to get into Consuelo's Place Shelter, a non-congregate shelter in Santa Fe.

Three months later, upon entering Consuelo's Place, Rochelle mentioned the relief she felt having her own room and the privacy to have her own space. She went on to say that the case management she received from her case worker, Skye, was excellent and the staff assisted her in applying for rental units. After a month or two of applying, she received a call that she had been accepted for one in the later part of January 2022. In February, Rochelle moved into her new unit with financial support from the Coalition to pay her first two months rent. Rochelle mentioned that she paid for the deposit and, with the support financially to cover her rent, she was able to buy some small household items that she needed as well as a used car.

The Coalition's Early Intervention Program is set up to assist people like Rochelle move into housing in situations where they have sustainable income but cannot pay for all the move in costs because of an unaffordable housing market. The Early Intervention Program was able to assist Rochelle with \$1,4080 for her move in, an amount which, Rochelle mentioned, was the difference between being able to move into her rental unit or stay at Consuelo's Place Shelter.

Rochelle noted that it has been so nice to have her own place again. She went on to express how scary and confusing it was to not have a place to live and that the insecurity of finding a place took over everything else. She then noted that she has several difficult physical health issues and that having her own place has allowed her to relax and not be afraid to be in public shelter settings where she could get more sick.

She ended the conversation by saying how wonderful it is to have a secure home to go back to and wants to thank the Consuelo's Place staff for their care package upon her move in of bowls, plates, a bath rug and small household items for her new home.



Staff at Consuelo's Place Shelter