



# HOUSING FOR ALL!!!

NEWS FROM THE NEW MEXICO COALITION  
TO END HOMELESSNESS

Volume 20, Number 3

October 2020

## Client Turns her Life Around to Inspire Others

by Liz Glantz, Coordinated Entry Housing Navigator

Darlene wants to share her story about how she went from living on the streets to living in an apartment in four months so she could be an inspiration to others. During this transition from the streets to stable housing, COVID hit the United States. There were only a few agencies in the city of Santa Fe with emergency funding to provide hotel rooms to vulnerable individuals who were living on the street and unable to safely self-quarantine. NMCEH was one of these agencies who acquired hotel funding. Because of this, NMCEH was able to pay for Darlene's hotel room for 10 weeks while she worked through the process of obtaining permanent housing. Darlene was able to achieve her housing goal with the help of her out-reach worker, Analyn Schwaegel ("Bagel"), through The Life Link's Permanent Supportive Housing program. This is Darlene's story.

Darlene's journey began in El Paso, Texas; she was in prison and was granted probation in mid-2019. From prison, Darlene became homeless and subsequently relapsed after being clean from substances. Shortly thereafter, she requested the court to transfer her probation to New Mexico since that was where her family and support system was located; that was home to her. Initially the judge declined her request. While on probation, Darlene sought treatment for her substance abuse issues. Eventually a new judge dropped the last 10 months of Darlene's probation and granted her the permission to go home to NM.

Darlene arrived in New Mexico in November 2019. She had relapsed again and was still not ready to clean up. Darlene was accepted into the Casa Familia and again she relapsed. Around February 2020, she went to Interfaith Community Shelter and after roughly two months, she connected with the outreach worker, Bagel, from The Life Link. After her last relapse, Darlene explained that she was finally able to humble herself in order to have a fresh start in life. She determined that she deserved better and she no longer wanted to live that kind of lifestyle anymore.

While reflecting back on her journey to rebuilding her life, Darlene acknowledged that in order to make life changes, a person has to want to make that change and they have to do it at their own pace. She also explained that while help is available, people have to be willing to put in the work. Darlene explained that she has learned how mental illness and drug addiction can be

related and understands that was a significant reason for her drug use. She understands that it is not possible to "fix" only one of them, they both have to be addressed at the same time. Darlene says that in the last four months she has faced her fears that she was trying to numb with drug use. She understands that until someone works through those mental issues, until they recognize and acknowledge them, nothing will change.

Darlene says that since she connected with Bagel, she has changed a lot and that nothing will stop her now. Darlene said that some people that she used to visit with have given her flak for the positive changes she has made. However, she went on to explain "I don't think I'm better than anyone, I just choose not to go back to that life". Darlene passes her time by reading self-help books and stays actively engaged with her mental and physical health providers. At this time, Darlene said she plans to stay single and does not want anything or anyone distracting her from moving forward or working on herself. She is grateful for her sobriety and is looking forward to when support meetings start again. For now, Darlene plans to continue improving her coping skills, staying in counseling, rebuilding relationships with her family and will be able to get an emotional support dog in a couple months which she is looking forward to.



*Darlene, standing front of her new home, enjoying the Santa Fe fall.*

## 2021 Legislative Priorities to Address Homelessness

by Brie Sillery, Communications Strategist

This year's advocacy is as important as ever, as we face the harsh reality of the times that we are in. New Mexico faces a deficit in the state budget of close to \$1 billion, and reports that the state looks to cut 5% across all departments to address this shortage. The top priority for the NM Coalition to End Homelessness is to advocate that there are no cuts to the housing programs, and in fact advocate for additional assistance as it is available. As policy makers and advocates plan for the 2021 60-day legislative session, we must look at the intricacies of the housing system to ensure that there is adequate investment in the measures taken to keep people in their homes and best serve people living without shelter and provide streamlined access to housing for everyone in an equitable manner.

According to the "Analysis of Resources Needed to End Homelessness" by Hank Hughes (Executive Director at NM Coalition to End Homelessness) it was estimated that each year between 15,000 and 20,000 people experienced homelessness in NM, with an average of 6,500 of these not receiving sufficient assistance to help them exit homelessness. Prior to the COVID-19 response, many community members were experiencing housing insecurity, had depleted or non-existent savings accounts, and were severely cost burdened with rent. During the pandemic the number of people at risk of becoming homeless has increased to an unprecedented level. According to Stout Rislus Ross, LLC., as many as 105,000 households are presumed to be on an immediate path to homelessness without intervention. Currently, most of these households are protected under the federal and state moratoria; but it is critical to ensure that legislators pursue a cohesive approach to keeping people in their homes as these moratoria expire.

One of the ongoing exacerbations to homelessness is the severe shortage of affordable housing. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition's GAP Report for 2020, in New Mexico we have a shortage of 41,113 housing units for renters with extremely low income (paying more than 50% of their income on rent), and 43,756 housing units short for people with low income (paying more than 30% on housing, but less than 50% of their income). This points vividly to the need for investment of the state, county, city, town and every

funder possible to invest immediately in the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing units, or else we will end the health crisis only to be followed by a housing crisis. We are supporting the addition of \$12 million to the New Mexico Housing Trust Fund to help spur new affordable housing development.

A more immediate impact that policy makers can have to increase access to affordable housing, is to support legislation that prevents source of discrimination from landlords and property managers. This legislation would prevent the discrimination of renters who have Section 8 or other housing vouchers from being told that they cannot rent because of their voucher. Many people that receive housing vouchers through our housing partners are unable to find housing outside of concentrated areas of poverty because of the high number of management companies and landlords that refuse to accept a housing voucher.

We want to thank you for your continued devotion to supporting this cause and goal to end homelessness. As we move closer to the session, stay tuned for updates and developments that will be presented through our email list for advocacy opportunities (email [brie-s@nmceh.org](mailto:brie-s@nmceh.org) for more information and to sign up). Be sure to reach out to your legislators and urge them to invest in interventions to prevent and cure homelessness; and especially investing in affordable housing.



*The New Mexico State Capitol, where NMCEH has its legislative campaign every year.*

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

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

Rebecca Braz  
Ann Chavez  
Erin Crooks  
Janet Peacock  
Bob and Carrol Pearson  
Lee Reynis  
Bertha DeVries  
Bob and Carrol Pearson  
Mary Wiger Graves  
Aletta Wilson



### Special Thanks to:

The consortium of foundations supporting the work to provide immediate shelter to homeless people as well as longer term solutions in Santa Fe: **Anchorum, Thornburg, Santa Fe Community Foundation** and the **McCune Charitable Foundation**.

**David Selvage** and **Margaret Cunningham** from the New Mexico Department of Health for their work protecting homeless people from COVID-19 and their weekly updates for homeless service providers.

**Employees at Local and State Government** in many parts of New Mexico for making special efforts to protect homeless people from COVID-19 with hotel rooms and other low density shelter options.

**Advisory Board:** Peter Chapin, Gordie Holloway, Peter Glankoff, Alan Jones, Abigail Adler.

### Board of Directors:

**Meryl Lieberman**, *Co-Chair, Retired-Casa Milagro*  
**Henry Brutus**, *Co-Chair, La Casa Inc.*  
**George Lyon**, *Treasurer, Samaritan House*  
**Edward Archuleta**, *Secretary, St. Elizabeth Shelter*  
**Bobby Ehrig**, *Director, Veteran Integration Center*  
**Lynn K. Valdez**, *Director, Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless*  
**Linda Stone**, *Director, First Nations Community Healthsource*  
**Mary Ann Chavez Lopez**, *Director, El Camino Real Housing Authority*  
**Trina Lopez**, *Director, Western Sky*  
**Henrietta Correa**, *Director, Homelessness Advocate*  
**David Sisneros**, *Director, Albuquerque Heading Home*  
**Rachel Sierra**, *Director, El Refugio*  
**Ann Shaw**, *Director, Homelessness Advocate*  
**Nicole Martinez**, *Director, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope*  
**Jonna Sharpe**, *Director, People Assisting the Homeless*  
**Lacie Yoxall**, *Mesilla Valley Community of Hope*

### NMCEH Staff:

**Kevin Arthun**, *Coordinated Entry Navigator*  
**Kate Cleaver**, *Coordinated Entry Team Leader*  
**Victoria Cruz**, *Data Analyst*  
**Johnna Ervay**, *Coordinated Entry Navigator*  
**Lee-Ann Foster**, *Domestic Violence Navigator*  
**Nathan Fuhr**, *Albuquerque CoC Program Manager*  
**Raquel Garcia**, *Financial Specialist*  
**Liz Glantz**, *Coordinated Entry Navigator*  
**Hana Gossett**, *Albuquerque CoC Program Director*  
**Fred Hernandez**, *AmeriCorps VISTA*  
**Hank Hughes**, *Executive Director*  
**Julie Jacques**, *HMIS Project Manager*  
**AJ Johnson**, *Coordinated Entry Connection Specialist*  
**Stephanie Lefebvre**, *Office Manager*  
**Sarah Leyba**, *Balance of State CoC Project Manager*  
**Michael Nitsch**, *HMIS Program Director*  
**Mark Oldknow**, *Associate Director*  
**Tara Ortega**, *YHDP Program Manager*  
**Lauren Sauvageot**, *Youth Navigator*  
**Roman Seaburgh**, *Director of Strategic Initiatives*  
**Brie Sillery**, *Communications Strategist*

Member Organizations and Individuals: For a list of our 80 members, please go to [www.nmceh.org](http://www.nmceh.org)

## *The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness*



PO Box 865  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Phone: 505.982.9000  
Fax: 1.888.527.6480  
[www.nmceh.org](http://www.nmceh.org)

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
SANTA FE, NM  
PERMIT NO. 140

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

### *The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness*

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

## **NMCEH and Partners Protect Homeless People from COVID-19**

*by Hank Hughes, Executive Director*

The pandemic has forced NMCEH to expand its role in the work of housing homeless people. Fortunately, all the efforts have been largely successful so far since there has not been an outbreak of COVID-19 among homeless people except in the northwestern part of the state. Here are some of the things that we are doing in cooperation with our member agencies.

In August NMCEH worked with the City of Santa Fe to set up Consuelo's Place a new organization to run the temporary shelter at the old Santa Fe University of Art and Design Campus. This shelter uses one building for people who are recovering from COVID-19 who are either homeless or can't return home until they are no longer infectious. Other buildings are used to house people experiencing homelessness to keep them safe from the virus. Housing is provided in separate rooms or apartments.

Earlier in the summer we used various funding sources including many generous private donations to place some of the most vulnerable homeless people in hotels. We partnered with agencies around the state for this motel program. We are continuing this through the winter, primarily in Santa Fe. Realizing that there would not be a place inside for everyone, we also started purchasing and giving out tents and sleeping bags in Santa Fe to the younger healthier homeless people. So far, we have given out 144 sleeping bags, 113 tents and 64 backpacks or duffle bags. We will continue this through the pandemic as long as funding lasts.



Our Albuquerque Coordinated Entry office has been working as a clearing house for all types of housing assistance calls in Albuquerque. We extended our hours to accommodate the increase in calls and redesigned our assessment process to do everything over the phone.

Although successful, these efforts are putting a great strain on all the agencies that serve homeless people. Many agencies lost volunteers who were themselves vulnerable to the virus. We are also hearing of problems filling staff positions and keeping staff. Your support of any of the groups helping homeless people is much appreciated and very important.