

HOMELESSNESS IN SOUTHEASTERN NEW MEXICO

THE CHALLENGE
AND QUEST TO
DEVELOP A PLAN
THAT WORKS
FOR THE REGION

Jane Batson,
ENMU-Roswell

WHAT ARE THE NUMBERS OF HOMELESS IN CHAVES COUNTY?

- **Homeless Point In Time Count (PIT)**
 - **2011 - 122 counted**
 - **2013 - 151 counted**
 - **Our estimate is 350 in the Chaves and Lincoln County region**

HOW MANY BEDS ARE AVAILABLE IN CHAVES COUNTY?

- **33 beds available from varying sources:**
 - **The Refuge – short term housing for women and children escaping domestic violence**
 - **James Youth Ranch – short term housing for homeless teens**
 - **Rivers of Life – faith based provider housing small number of men and women/children in separate housing with no family housing**
 - **Pastor Joe Diaz – housing men transitioning from prison to society**

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS?

- **People living in shelters are more than twice as likely to have a disability, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. On a given night in 2012, nearly 40 percent of the homeless population had serious mental illness or conditions related to chronic substance abuse. Thousands of people with HIV/AIDS experience homelessness on a given night. Half of veterans in shelters are disabled.**

National Alliance to End Homelessness

WHAT IS ROSWELL DOING TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS?

■ HISTORY

- IN 2010, WE THOUGHT THAT WE HAD THE SOLUTION WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE OVER THE OLD NM REHABILITATION CENTER BUILDING.
- A LARGE COALITION WAS FORMED TO DEVELOP A PLAN
- GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION WAS CONTACTED, AND PLAN DEVELOPED.
- WITH CHANGES IN THE AGENCY IN 2011, THE PLAN DID NOT MOVE FORWARD BASED ON THE RULING THAT FAIR MARKET VALUE PRICE MUST BE PAID FOR USE OF THE BUILDING.
- GSD DID NOT DEVELOP A PLAN FOR OCCUPANCY OF THE BUILDING, AND VANDALISM OCCURRED.
- THAT BUILDING HAS BEEN CONDEMNED BY THE CITY OF ROSWELL, AND WE ARE MOVING FORWARD WITH A PLAN THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE THE BUILDING

WHAT IS ROSWELL DOING TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS?

■ CURRENT STATUS

- A LARGE COALITION OF AGENCIES ARE WORKING TOGETHER IN A NEW PLAN
- USING A HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA) PROCESS, THE GROUP HAS DEVELOPED A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SALVATION ARMY TO CREATE A RED SHIELD PROGRAM IN ROSWELL.
- THE POTENTIAL LOCATION WILL BE IN THE RIAC AREA BASED ON PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES AND ASSESSMENT OF NEED

WHAT IS ROSWELL DOING TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS?

The Roswell Salvation Army Red Shield Family Residence is a safe and welcoming emergency housing shelter offering loving, respectful, compassionate, and non-judgmental services in order to empower residents to strive toward self-sufficiency. All family configurations, including families with teenaged children and single men with children are accepted. In order to achieve the goal of creating a healing therapeutic non-violent community, the program has adopted the Sanctuary Model (Bloom, 1197, 2002). By implementing this model, we work toward the creation of a "trauma sensitive" community helping residents to address unresolved past trauma, allowing necessary healing to occur, and meeting the mission of service. The program includes transitional housing, clean and sober services managed jointly by case managers and the Connections program, and intensive case management for each resident. In addition, after school activities are offered for all youth in the area.

WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED TO DATE AS AN INTERIM PLAN?

- CREATION OF A HOMELESS CLINIC STAFFED BY VOLUNTEER PROVIDERS OPEN EVERY THIRD WEDNESDAY AND EVERY OTHER SATURDAY.
- INITIATION OF A "REAL TIME" RESOURCE DIRECTORY THAT IS SHARED BY FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES.
- APPROVAL OF HOMELESS VOUCHERS THROUGH HUD THAT SHOULD BE OPERATIONAL IN THE NEXT MONTH FOR AT LEAST 8 INDIVIDUALS.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED IN THE PROCESS?

- **THERE IS A NEED TO HAVE CLARITY IN INTERPRETATION OF LAWS IN NEW MEXICO GOVERNING USE OF UNOCCUPIED BUILDINGS OWNED BY THE STATE. Is it cost effective to allow a previously habitable building to deteriorate when the community has a plan?**
- **FUNDING TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IS CHALLENGING TO SECURE IN RURAL AREAS OF NEW MEXICO WITHOUT HAVING AN IDENTIFIED BUILDING LOCATION.**
- **THERE IS POWER IN COLLABORATION WHEN WE ARE ALL WORKING TOWARD THE SAME PURPOSE.**

QUESTIONS?

