

The Blueprint in Action

Office to End Homelessness
Quarterly Newsletter

Striving to ensure every
Norfolk resident finds
a way home.

Inside This Issue:

Mayor Fraim Receives
National Recognition
Page 1

Nations 1st Regional SRO
Opens its Doors
Page 2

Norfolk Launches the Hotline
for Homeless Families
Page 2

Finding Their Way Home
Page 2

Project Homeless Connect
Page 3

Come Check Us Out
Page 4

A Note From Our Director
Page 4



Mayor Fraim Receives National Recognition



"...For nearly the first 10 years, our policy in Norfolk was not to have a policy about homelessness..."

At the Second Annual National Summit on Innovation For Jurisdictional Leaders, held by the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, Mayor Fraim was recognized with the "Home For Every American" award. Fraim is only the second Mayor to ever receive the award, with Denver Mayor Hicklooper being the first recipient in 2006.

Mayor Fraim was awarded the honor for his dedicated leadership in Norfolk and regionally to end homelessness, the innovative approaches taking place in the City such as Gosnold Apartments and Harbor House, and the successful adaptation of Project Homeless Connect. In presenting the Mayor with his award, Philip Mangano heralded Norfolk's progress. "[Mayor Fraim] has executed every best practice being proven around the country to achieve results."

Mayor Fraim stated that, "... I've been the mayor in Norfolk for 13 years. For nearly the first 10 years, our policy in Norfolk was not to have a policy about homelessness. It was someone else's issue... Now we've become re-energized, "re-moralized" as Council Director Mangano calls it, to the notion that

you have to do something for your poorest neighbors. So not only are we saving money but what drives us now and our passion for it is that we are doing the right thing and are having an impact on the lives of so many of our citizens."

The USICH invited ten year plan leaders from around the country to share their experiences and best practices at the March meeting in Washington, DC.

"[Fraim] has executed every best practice being proven around the country to achieve results."

Governor Jennifer Granholm of Michigan received the State leadership award, and the true life hero and inspiration for the movie "The Pursuit of Happiness," Chris Gardner, also received an award. Cities across the country reported dramatic decreases in homelessness at the meeting, including a 70% decrease in chronic homelessness in Portland, OR and a 41% decrease in San Francisco.



Mayor Fraim receives his award from Philip Mangano, Executive Director of USICH.

The Blueprint in Action

Nations 1st Regional SRO Opens its Doors

January 16, 2007 marked the official opening of Gosnold Apartments, the nation's first regionally financed efficiency housing project for the homeless. The project, was initially conceived of and championed by Councilmember Daun Hester, Claudia Gooch of the Planning Council, and Alice Tousignant and Candice Streett of Virginia Supportive Housing and took three

"60 homeless persons throughout the region to call Gosnold Apartments their new home."

years of planning and development. Of the 60 efficiency apartments at Gosnold, 42 serve homeless persons from Norfolk, 12 from Virginia Beach, and 6 from Portsmouth. The City of Norfolk provided \$800,000 in local funding for the capital costs of the project and additional funding for two case managers who work on site with the residents.

The apartments at Gosnold are fully furnished efficiencies with full bathrooms and kitchens. Residents have on-site laundry facilities, a community room and an exercise room. It has beautiful landscaping and a courtyard.

The facility is staffed 24 hours a day. Staff of Gosnold provide residents with support and structure to assist them with the transition into permanent housing. The majority of residents had been chronically homeless prior to moving in. The average stay at Virginia Supportive Housing's similar facilities in Rich-

mond is four years and project developers anticipate the same length of stay at Gosnold.



Residents must pay a minimum of \$50 per month or one-third of their income. Most residents receive Social Security disability income of around \$600/month. Many will begin to return to the workforce, reestablish relationships with family members, and simply start to improve their health once moving in off the street.

One new resident, who had been homeless for at least twelve years, has returned to work as a landscaper — a job he was unable to hold regularly when he lived on the street. He is now back in contact with his nine children and takes great pride in his apartment. He loves to cook and keeps his dining room table set for guests at all times.

While Gosnold is first regional SRO in the nation it will not be the last. A site has already been secured in Virginia Beach with construction scheduled for later this year. The Norfolk Office to End Homelessness received more than 300 applications for the 42 apartments at Gosnold.

Finding Their Way Home

"Thomas" is a chronically homeless man with Severe Mental Illness who frequents various emergency rooms throughout the Tidewater area. The Norfolk's Community Services Board PATH team connected with "Thomas" and tried to help him with services through many of the traditional programs, but nothing seemed to help. While on the streets battling with his mental illness, "Thomas" became a heavy alcohol user and refused to take his psychiatric medications regularly.

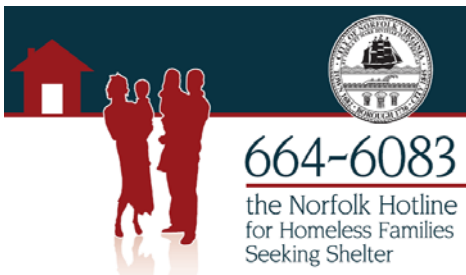
When the "My Own Place" program, a Housing First, permanent supportive housing project, started at NCSB, "Thomas" was immediately identified as a candidate. "My Own Place" targets individuals with serious mental illness, long histories of street homelessness, and those who have failed in or refused other treatment programs. After another trip to the hospital, PATH workers made "Thomas" the first My Own Place resident. With help from the Second Chance movers, Thomas was moved into his own apartment and received the key.

While "Thomas" has had some ups and downs in the transition, overall his progress has been amazing. He is now taking his medications regularly, and seeing a psychiatrist. He has since stopped drinking and has only made one visit to the hospital in four months. Pleasantly shocked, his insurance company called the PATH worker to say "Thanks for housing Thomas."

Norfolk Launches the Hotline for Homeless Families

On January 16, 2007, the city of Norfolk moved to a central intake for homeless families, known as the Norfolk Hotline for Homeless Families Seeking Shelter. Now families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness only have to call one number in order to access an array of services. For too long, families in a crisis situation had to call several shelters daily in order to find a safe place for their children to sleep. The Norfolk Department of Human Services Homeless Action and Response Team (HART) serves as the lead agency in this effort, but the Hotline is a collaborative effort that would not had been possible without the commitment of several Norfolk Homeless Consortium member agencies, The Dwelling Place, ForKids Inc., and the YWCA..

Homelessness is not a situation that happens between 8am and 5pm; therefore the Hotline operates 24 hours a day as well as holidays and weekends. DHS staffs the hotline from 7am-7pm and the family shelter providers cover evenings, weekends and holidays. Additionally, some wonderful community members have stepped forward to volunteer and provide additional coverage of Hotline calls. Training for Hotline staff occurs monthly and we are actively seeking additional volunteers.



664-6083
the Norfolk Hotline
for Homeless Families
Seeking Shelter

Norfolk is the second city in the state to move to a centralized intake process. This system will not only bring convenience to the families experiencing homelessness, but it will also help form a more efficient system in which families move more rapidly out of homelessness and back into permanent housing situations. This system will also allow us to collect better data on the families we serve. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for the Homeless Family Hotline, please visit our website at www.norfolk.gov/homelessness or call the Volunteer Office at 622-6400



NATIONAL PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT



"Hailed as a tremendous success, this event served over 560 homeless individuals."

Norfolk's Project Homeless Connect

On February 15, 2007 The Office to End Homelessness hosted its third Project Homeless Connect event. Hailed as a tremendous success, this event served over 560 homeless individual. By bringing together 60+ local, state, federal and community organizations, we once again turned the Scope into a one-stop service hub for homeless individuals.

Over 600 volunteers came out to provide assistance to homeless persons in Norfolk. Volunteers offered clients support by: conducting intake interviews to determine the services that would best suit the clients' needs; providing guidance to clients as they worked through the various service areas; serving clients with food and donated goods; and recruiting clients off the street to participate in the event. The volunteer support for this event was double the first PHC event held in December, 2005.

The event has grown tremendously, and included several new enhancements, such as, a full VETS section to address the needs of homeless veterans. An ID area which distributed human services picture ID cards. Cox provided a communications area that offered free local and long distance phone services to clients, and a Barber Shop that featured barbers from Kuttin Edges.

This one day event resulted in 36 individuals approved for permanent housing; 120 individuals registered with Virginia's Employment Commission; 290 individuals received medical screenings; 16 persons received dental services; 30 individuals tested for HIV/AIDS; 93 individuals received

haircuts; 47 individuals received ID cards; 321 individuals received hygiene and care packages (which included t-shirts, socks underclothes and food); and 143 individuals received food stamps or information about their eligibility.

The event proved encouraging even for those who started the day with little reason for optimism. One of our volunteers shared the following: "towards the end of the day, there was a man sitting in the waiting area for housing services. I had been the "traffic cop" for people in that area all day, so I asked him if he was waiting to see someone about housing. He told



Mayor Fraim demonstrates leadership at PHC by serving lunch to attendees of the event

me that he was all done, and was just waiting for his girlfriend to finish up. I asked him if it had been a good day for him. His face lit up, and he said "Yes, it's been a very good day!". He then told me that he had gotten leads on housing and employment, had gotten an ID, and had found out that his disability application had been approved, and was retroactive for a year so he would be getting all his back payments soon and would be fine. He was really happy, and very --grateful!" -- Pat

Special Thanks to all of our sponsors, without their support this event would not had been possible.

The Norfolk Foundation, Downtown Norfolk Council, Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, Norfolk Sheriff's Department, Sentara Foundation, Sun Trust, Tabernacle Church of Norfolk, United Way of South Hampton Roads, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Wachovia Foundation.

Many Thanks to All of Our Partnering Agencies!!

A Touch of Patience
AARP Senior Employment Services
Awakened Mind Center
Basilica of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception
Child and Family Services of EVA
Cox Connect
Downtown Norfolk Council
Eggleston Inc
EVMS Faculty/Students

EVMS/HIV Resource Center
Farm Fresh
Fleet/Facilities Maintenance
Full Circle/CANDII
Heart to Heart Family Life
Hospitality for the Homeless
IBWC
Kelly Temp Services
Kuttin' Edge

Labor Ready Temp Services
Legal Aid Society of E VA
Narcotics Anonymous
NDHS HART/Rapid Exit
Norfolk CSB
Norfolk Dept of Human Services
Norfolk Public Defenders
Norfolk Dept. of Public Health
Norfolk Public Schools - Adult Ed
Norfolk Redevelopment/Housing
Norfolk Sunrise Rotary Club
Operation Blessing
Opportunity Inc/One Stop
Optima Family Care
Oxford House
Second Chances
Senior Services of SE VA
Sentara Health Care
Social Security Administration
St. Columba/Next Step

Starbucks
STEP-Up
The Foodbank of SE VA
The Planning Council 2-1-1
The Planning Council HIP
The STOP Organization
Union Mission
United Way of SHR
VA Beach Health Dept
VA Dept of Rehabilitative Services
VA Dept of Veterans Affairs
VA Employment Commission
VA Hearts in Action
VEC/DVOPS/LVERS
VET Center
Veterans Affairs Med Center
Vets House Inc
YWCA Women in Crisis

Our 600+ Volunteers who did an Awesome Job!



CITY OF NORFOLK BLUEPRINT OF THE PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS



Come Check us Out

**Want more information about The Office to End Homelessness?
Come Check Out our Website at:**

www.norfolk.gov/homelessness

This site provides more information about the Blueprint implementation status as well as community resources for Homeless Services.

Office to End Homelessness
810 Union Street, Suite 306
Norfolk, VA 23510

757-664-4488—office
757-664-4424—fax
www.norfolk.gov/homeless

A Note From Our Director: Celebrating the Unsung Heroes

The Norfolk Homeless Consortium recently held the annual candlelight vigil to honor the memories of those who died on the street. This year, they also honored some important unsung heroes — the ones who left the street for permanent housing. There were more than **700 people** who moved into permanent housing in Norfolk last year. This incredible statistic lends credence to our finding of a 19% decrease in homelessness captured by the Point In Time Count and also points out the scope of our next challenge — supporting these hundreds of people to make sure they never experience homelessness again.

Research has shown that as many as 50% of people who leave homelessness for permanent housing will have difficulty keeping that housing. For some, housing is a dramatic lifestyle change for which they may be unprepared. For others, the same stressors that caused them to become homeless inevitably return (consumer debt, a lack of social supports, a struggle with addiction). Too often, we view the placement into permanent housing as a victory and completion of a task. However, this should be the point at which we ramp up our efforts; a time when interventions and case management are most likely to be successful. Permanent supportive housing programs operated by ACCESS, Virginia Supportive Housing, ForKids, Second Chances, and the Community Services Board do tremendous work to make sure formerly

homeless people are successful. While much credit is owed the excellent staff who dedicate themselves to these individuals, we must also honor the victories of the people leaving homelessness themselves. You can't help but be inspired by the people you meet at Gosnold Apartments, or the housing first participants most of whom have spent over ten years on the street. Every day, they wake up to face a struggle most of us will never know. The demons that have haunted them remain nearby — the temptation of a local bar, the old "friend" who drops by, the restrictive budget that puts that TV out of reach, deciding whether or not to take the medication today and deal with its unpleasant side effects.

To all the hundreds of people in Norfolk who are making each of those little decisions today that have big consequences for tomorrow, I salute you. May we always remember to recognize your struggle and to celebrate your achievements. And may we also translate the compassion that motivates us to feed you a meal while you're on the street into support for you while you may face that same struggle with a roof over your head.

