



SUPPORTERS

United Way of Central Massachusetts
 Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging
 Worcester City Manager's Executive
 Office of Neighborhood Services
 Greater Worcester Community
 Foundation
 Executive Office of Elder Affairs
 Mass. Department of Transitional
 Assistance
 Elder Services of Worcester
 Allmerica Financial
 LaVigne Inc.
 The Palmgren Road Race
 Diocese of Worcester

Rotmans Furniture and Carpets
 Will Sherwood & Blaine Bershad
 Morgan Stanley Foundation
 MLS/Property Information Network
 Webster Five
 Palley Advertising
 Unum Provident
 Bay State Savings Bank
 Mass. Department of Housing &
 Community Development
 U.S. Department of Housing & Urban
 Development
 Price Chopper, The Golub Foundation



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING ALLIANCE

2004 Annual Report



C
M
H
A



STAFF

Executive Director
 Grace Carmark

Assistant Executive Director
 Ann Gibbons-Smith

Donations Clearinghouse
 Luis Cotto, Director
 Edgardo Jimenez
 Clare O'Connell

Elder Home Maintenance & Repair
 Michael Cahill
 Sam Niford

Housing Assistance Program
 Kelly Filock, Director
 Leticia Anaya
 Maria Charles
 Rolando Cruz
 Maritza Dela Cruz
 Nancy Gravelle

Housing Counseling
 Noemi Martinez

*NeighborWorks® HomeOwnership Center
 of Worcester*
 Deidra Vayo

Public Education & Advocacy
 Anthony Colon

Special Events
 Erika Weimann

The Village on Cambridge Street
 Deb Folsom, Family Services Director
 Sandra Blackwood, Assistant Director
 Barbara Duda
 Jessica Cox
 Johanna Diaz
 Maria Fuentes
 Itzaida Gonzalez
 Sisouvanh Phommasinh
 Bethzaida Rodriguez
 Maria E. Trepanier

The Affordable Housing Connection
 Patricia Gittes

CMHA

7-11 Bellevue Street, Worcester, MA 01609
 Phone: 508-791-7265 • Fax: 508-791-0639
 cmha.org@verizon.net • www.cmhaonline.org



MISSION

The Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance is committed to a leadership role in helping the communities of Greater Worcester and Worcester County respond to the needs of the homeless and near homeless by supporting prevention programs; ensuring the availability of high quality and appropriate sheltering and support services; encouraging the availability and access to decent affordable housing; and empowering people through education.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This is a year of significant anniversaries as we celebrate a decade since merging the Worcester Committee on Homelessness and the Housing Information Center to form CMHA. We also mark the 15th annual Donations Clearinghouse Holiday Concert and the 20th Annual WALK for the Homeless. Ten years ago a staff of nine and a twelve member Board of Directors undertook the daunting task of combining the missions of a direct service agency with that of a strong advocacy organization to address homelessness and affordable housing needs and to expand those efforts from a City of Worcester based program to one serving Worcester County. Today a staff of twenty-nine and a twenty-two member Board of Directors is proud that all programs of the merged agencies were preserved and strengthened, new programs have been added to meet emerging community needs, and that the combined mission of advocacy informed by the day to day work of providing direct services to those in need has had a positive community impact

Ten years of heart, hard work and enormous community support has grown the initial vision born in the early 1980's by our founders Kathleen Hassagawa and Paul Grossbeck and we dedicate the coming year to their leadership and inspiration. Their vision was simply that we must help those in need and at the same time be diligent in our advocacy in the public policy and public opinion arena to overcome the root causes of poverty and homelessness. We celebrate ten years of remaining true to that vision in promoting real change in our community and in the lives of those that we serve.

In February of 2004, CMHA launched a new program to respond to the drastic rise in families being sheltered in emergency hotel/motel rooms in Worcester County. Families living in hotel/motel rooms

units affordable to low income families

Since its inception in 2000, HAP has housed 876 families and prevented homelessness for 332 families. Families housed through the HAP program have a 93% success rate in maintaining their housing.

THE ANNUAL WALK FOR THE HOMELESS



This event raises awareness about housing & homelessness in Worcester County, and financial support to combat homelessness. The 19th Annual WALK was a great success with 800 people

participating and raising over \$68,000.00. Visit us at www.walkforhomeless.org.

THE VILLAGE AT CAMBRIDGE STREET

The Village is a new apartment based family shelter program providing short-term housing, employment training, housing search and other services to assist displaced families transition to self-sufficiency. Since the opening of the Village in February of 2004, the number of families being housed by the State in emergency hotel and motel rooms has decreased in Worcester County from 50 to Zero, saving an estimated \$400,000.00 for the taxpayers of the Commonwealth while providing a fresh start for families in transition.



Never has the phrase 'It Takes A Village' hit home more than with what is happening at the Village on Cambridge Street. The outpouring of help from all corners of the community has been fantastic, heartwarming and so appreciated by the families and CMHA. The Village at the former Cambridge Street School has been embraced by the community and since opening in February has assisted 29 families to move out into their own homes.

CMHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Tom Holland, President | Judith Brown Cahill, Clerk | Michael O'Mara |
| John Miller, Vice-President | Janice Chiaretto, Esq. | Michael Martin |
| Patti Ann Faucher, Second Vice President | Melvin Pelletz | Barry Morgan |
| | Mary Ann Angus | Rep. Bob Spellane |
| | John McCoy | Erin O'Leary |
| Andrew Howarth, Treasurer | Elvira Guardiola | James Andreoli |
| | Jonathan Mannina | |
| | Ann Seltz | |

- Tenant Screening
- Tenant/Landlord Education and Mediation of Disputes
- Property Management Services
- Assistance in tenant selection and after care services



In 2004, the program has provided assistance to 32 senior and disabled landlords with a range of services and placed 28 parents and children who had been homeless or at risk of homelessness. The program also developed new partnerships with the Greater Worcester Mission Society's WAYS program and the Grafton Job Corps Center, which provided volunteers labor to assist senior homeowners get apartments ready for families.

PUBLIC EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZING

- Plan and support community response to need for safe affordable housing, shelter and appropriate supportive services
- Promote community awareness and support for best practices and new solutions to provide affordable housing, reclaim neighborhoods, and prevent homelessness
- Coordination of Continuum of Care in Worcester County including submission of annual McKinney Grant to HUD to fund Homeless Services, Shelter and Permanent Housing opportunities
- Advocacy on legislative and budget issues to increase affordable housing options, homelessness prevention and adequate supportive services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

This program is the heart CMHA's mission striving to get to the root causes with solutions that will realize the dream of reducing the need for services and providing safe quality housing and shelter to help people transition to self-sufficiency. In 2004, more than 600 participated in advocacy forums and 150 new voters were registered. \$3.8 million in funding was secured for homeless service, shelter, and permanent housing programs on behalf of the Worcester County Continuum of Care.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- Provides homelessness prevention, housing stabilization services, and housing search assistance to income eligible families in Worcester County. Must have referral from Department of Transitional Assistance
- Works with local landlords, Realtors, and Housing Developers to increase the number of available

had increased ten fold from the previous year at great expense to the State while providing no services to assist families crowded into one room often without cooking or laundry facilities and far from job opportunities, schools, and other supports. The Village at Cambridge Street provides apartment based shelter with wrap around services such as job and housing search and child care resources. A unique program, the philosophy of the Village is one of building on the strengths of participants, offering families the privacy and independence of living in a nice apartment to support their journey back to self-sufficiency. The program goal is to gain employment within three months with an average length of stay of six to nine months. Since opening, twenty families have successfully transitioned to their own apartments and the practice of sheltering families in hotel/motels has been eliminated. In addition to providing families from our community with a strong home base to transition out of homelessness, the Village has improved a previously problem property in the South Worcester neighborhood through providing extensive rehab, on site management and security in the former Cambridge Street School.

2004 was also a year in which the most successful housing program in the nation's history faced an unimaginable crisis in which more than 2,000 Massachusetts Section 8 voucher holders and their landlords faced immediate termination from the program. CMHA took the lead on this issue in Worcester County working with allies across the state in producing an historic turnout at a hearing in which the State House was actually forced to shut it's doors due to more than 2,000 who came to support for this program which closes the gap between skyrocketing housing costs and the incomes of low and moderate wage earners. The crisis was averted and funding was restored due to the strong, immediate and unified public outcry.

Starting up The Village at Cambridge Street and the successful advocacy around the Section 8 Crisis were two defining moments among the work of so many CMHA programs this year. It is that blending of innovative service delivery and effective advocacy that remains at the core of CMHA's mission. The outpouring of support from so many in the private sector, faith community and general citizenry in helping with these efforts continues to be an inspiration as we embark on the challenges of the coming year together with our many community partners!

Grace K. Carmark



PROGRAMS

HOUSING COUNSELING AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SERVICES

- Tenant/landlord mediation
- Individual counseling on Landlord/Tenant rights and responsibilities
- Emergency payments for rental and utility arrearages (as funds are available)
- Housing rights and responsibilities trainings to landlords, tenants and service providers
- Walk-in and telephone counseling, information and referral to tenants and landlords

In 2004, over 4,200 Households were assisted through the Housing Counseling program.

NEIGHBORWORKS® HOMEOWNERSHIP CENTER OF WORCESTER



CMHA is proud to partner with the Oak Hill CDC, the Worcester City Manager's Executive Office of Neighborhood Services and Worcester Community Housing Resources to assist residents to realize and retain the American Dream of Homeownership. The Neighborworks® HomeOwnership Center of Worcester is located in the beautifully restored

Odd Fellows Building at 674 Main Street in Worcester. The HOCW provides the following services:

- Homeownership Orientation and Financial Fitness Classes
- Revolving 5 week First Time Homebuyer certification classes training prospective homebuyers from credit to closing
- Pre and Post Purchase Counseling
- Counseling Services for existing homeowners
- Down payment Assistance, Affordable loan and insurance products
- Foreclosure/default prevention counseling

In FY'04 , the Center assisted over 1,000 Worcester area residents through pre purchase training and 2,000 households received comprehensive individual counseling. 124 households purchased their own home.

ELDER HOME REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

- Minor home repairs for elder homeowners in Worcester and Southern Worcester County. Work done by professionals for free. Charges for materials only.
- Routine Maintenance such as snow removal, yard work, and gutter cleaning for elder homeowners in the City of Worcester. Volunteers Welcome. Donations accepted.

In 2004, 275 low income elder homeowners benefited from repair and or maintenance services through this program which allows seniors to remain independently in their own homes and promotes the preservation of valuable housing stock

DONATIONS CLEARINGHOUSE FURNITURE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- Donated furniture and household goods assistance for families and individuals moving out of shelter, victims of fire, victims of domestic violence. Referrals from shelters and agencies working with the homeless. No Charge.
- Curbside delivery is available for a small fee.
- Rotmans Furniture Exchange Program.



THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONNECTION

CMHA is the lead agency for this initiative. Partners in the effort are the Worcester City Manager's Executive Office of Neighborhood Services, Oak Hill CDC and Worcester Community Housing Resources. The program creates matches between families who have been impacted by the severe shortage of affordable housing and owner occupied senior landlords with vacant apartments. Income eligibility for both landlords and tenants is restricted to those whose income does not exceed 80% of the area median income. Services include:



- Needs assessment
- Assistance in apartment repair and correction of sanitary code issues
- Assistance in arranging for moderate rehab of vacant apartments