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- Executive Office of Elder Affairs
- George F. & Sybil H. Fuller Foundation
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- Greater Worcester Community Foundation
- The Hanover Insurance Group Inc.
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- Metso Automation
- Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development
- Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
- MLS/Property Information Network, Inc
- One Family Inc./Paul and Phyliss Fireman Foundation
- Planting the Seed Foundation /BOLD STEPS
- Penny Wise Markets
- Rotmans Furniture and Carpet Store
- St. George Parish
- South High Community School
- Sovereign Bank
- St. Lukes Episcopal Church
- The Stoddard Foundation
- UBS Financial—Mike Martin
- United Way of Central Massachusetts
- Unum
- U.S Department of Housing & Urban Development
- WCTR TV
- WTAG/WSRS Radio
- Webster Five Cents Svgs Bank Foundation
- Will Sherwood & Blaine Bershad
- Worcester City Manager's Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development
- Worcester State College Foundation
- Worcester Telegram & Gazette



## CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING ALLIANCE

### 2008 Annual Report



## STAFF

**Executive Director,** Grace K. Carmark  
**Assistant Executive Director,** Ann Gibbons Smith  
**Administrative Assistant,** Nydia Febo  
**HMIS Coordinator,** Patrick Mahoney  
**NeighborWorks® Home Ownership Center,** Rosa Salas  
**Continuum of Care, Advocacy and Education/HMIS,** Erin Burns-Maine  
**Program Development,** Amy Walsh  
**Elder Home Repair and Maintenance**  
 Sam R. Niford—Director  
 Mike Cahill  
**Donations Clearinghouse**  
 Jessica Cox  
 Efrain Mercado  
 Torrance Shannon

**Housing Counseling**  
 Noemi Martinez— Director  
 Danielle Croteau  
**Housing Assistance Program**  
 Kelly Filock – Director  
 Patrick Smith  
 Leticia Anaya  
 Ruth Carrion  
 Jane Henderson  
 Kate Kerr  
**Village at Cambridge Street**  
 Lynn Millette – Director  
 Bethzaida Rodriguez - Asst. Director  
 Evelyn Trepanier  
 Barbara Duda  
 Krystof Budzynski  
 Emilia Ibanez  
 Leonor Cintron  
 Sara Skonieczny  
 Portland Relf  
 Tara Johnson

CMHA

7-11 Bellevue Street, Worcester, MA 01609  
 Phone: 508-791-7265 • Fax: 508-791-0639  
[www.cmhaonline.org](http://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

As we usher in a new year amidst a troubled economy at which housing loss through foreclosure and displacement is central, we reflect upon and celebrate a successful 2008 which was one of hard work, strengthened collaborations and forging new directions. In the fifteen years that I have been privileged to be a member of the CMHA team, I continue to be struck by the optimism, boundless energy and community commitment exhibited by staff, board members and all of our wonderful partner agencies.

This report contains year end numbers for each of CMHA's programs as to how many households benefited from a range of programs and services for you to review; but these numbers do not begin to capture the full impact within our community or the individual victories at the heart of our mission. I wish that I could share with you some of the moments that frame our past year and fuel our efforts for the year to come. The following examples are the human stories that really depict what it is all about:

- It is the mom who runs into our office with her children in tow dancing and jingling the keys to their new apartment
- It is the senior homeowner who crafts one of those hand written and heartfelt thank you notes for the grab bar

## THE ANNUAL WALK FOR THE HOMELESS

This event raises awareness about housing & homelessness in Worcester County, and financial support to combat homelessness. This year, Walkers raised \$125,000 in cash and in-kind donations.



## HOPE FOR HOUSING

### CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

### PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS –PROVIDING HOPE

HFH is an Interfaith Coalition of 22 congregations dedicated to preventing family homelessness in Worcester County. Partnering with local Grocery stores, food cards are sold after services to create a new Homelessness Prevention Fund. Twenty families have been assisted to remain in their homes in the past three months.

## CMHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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ers Bureau of people whose lives had been directly impacted by homelessness was formed, and broad based advocacy resulted in key legislative victories for homelessness prevention, shelter eligibility and affordable housing programs. \$5.4 million in funding was secured for homeless service, shelter and permanent housing programs on behalf of the Worcester County Continuum of Care.

## THE VILLAGE AT CAMBRIDGE STREET

The Village is an apartment based family shelter program providing short-term housing, employment training, housing search and other educational programs and services to assist displaced families transition to self-sufficiency. The Village celebrated its fourth birthday in February of 2008. The Village is an innovative program which takes a strength-based approach in working with families to achieve independence.

**In FY'08 the Village assisted 102 homeless families with shelter and wrap around services. Since its inception the Village has assisted 300 families to move to permanent housing**

## 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 affordable units available to low income families

**In FY' 2008, HAP assisted 191 families to move from shelter to permanent housing, prevented homelessness for 60 families and provided follow-up housing stabilization services to an additional 190 families.**

## YAH (YOUTH AGAINST HOMELESSNESS)

YAH is an organized group of teenagers from local public, private and catholic High School who are united from Worcester County. YAH's goal is to bring awareness to the community about homelessness providing aid through fundraising to those in need. By fighting homelessness in the community they hope to prevent homelessness from increasing and to one day eradicate homelessness all together in Worcester County. Through donations dedication and education YAH hopes to stop the spread of homeless in Worcester.



and stair repair allowing her to remain independently in her own home and her mention of the Elder Home Repair and Maintenance staff respect and kindness.

- It is the elderly veteran moving from shelter who comes in to thank us for assisting him with the basic furniture and household goods to make a new start
- It is the relief on the faces of parents facing a short term crisis that put them behind in rent to know that emergency rental assistance is available and they will remain in their home
- It is the pride and confidence on the face of a mom living in shelter who just received word that she has been hired for that job that she so wanted for her and her family's future
- It is the beaming faces on the 70 kids per month at the Village who are so filled with hope through the support, encouragement and guidance they receive
- It is the coming together and true collaboration of community partners from many different agencies in agreement to build a better future for the families and individuals that we serve

In 2009, we seek to build on these successes through a new model that is focused on homelessness prevention, housing first, employment and asset development that build true pathways out of poverty. Join with us in seeking to reduce our reliance on emergency shelter and to increase our focus on housing families and increasing their earning potential through providing employment and educational opportunities.

In fact "there is no place like home".

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 FY'08, 5,893 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 Economic and Neighborhood Development, Worcester Community Housing Resources and the Worcester East Side CDC 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 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'08, 599 households attended pre-purchase orientation, 438 households graduated from the First Time Homebuyer Program, and 157 purchased homes.**

### 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 2008, 259 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

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

**In FY 2008, 1,473 unduplicated households received furniture and household goods to make a fresh start and over 1,000 Worcester County residents donated items to make it all possible. Referrals came from more than 50 area agencies or service providers.**

### 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 of 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 2008, more than 600 people participated in advocacy forums, a Speak-**

