

# Leading the way home.



**cmha**

Central Massachusetts  
Housing Alliance, Inc.

**2015 Annual Report**

[cmhaonline.org](http://cmhaonline.org)

## A Message from the Executive Director



On behalf of CMHA, I simply extend a heartfelt thank you for another impactful year of making positive changes in the lives of families and so many individuals across the Central MA region. The work we accomplish together is often difficult and year after year so many of you step up to challenge and go above and beyond in offering your time and talent to improve the lives of so many who you touch directly.

We are blessed with an amazing staff team that continuously pushes forward to fulfill our mission and a Board of Directors who are consistent and persistent in their commitment to the mission and all of the individuals we serve.

We are grateful to walk this path with partners from the human service, business, governmental, private foundation and faith communities. Our partners throughout the region and beyond lock arms in determination to make incidences of homelessness rare and year after year we come closer to our goal together.

The true definition of community is each of us bringing our own resources and creativity together to improve the lives of all in our community; the results of those collective measures are nothing short of amazing.

Looking forward,

**Grace K. Carmark**—Executive Director

## Congratulations to the 2015 Award Recipients

We recognize the following people for their commitment to our community and who share the spirit of CMHA:

**Kathy Tsandikos**

*David Palmgren Memorial Award*

**Dr. Margot Barnett**

*Janice Nadeau Award for Housing and Community Service*

**Barbara Lucci**

*Judy Brown Cahill Award*



I continue to be inspired by the dedication of the CMHA staff and how the community rallies around CMHA; especially at our Annual WALK for the Homeless. The 30th Annual WALK for the Homeless was a great success and plans are already underway to

ensure that the 31st will be even more successful. This event is how I first became involved with CMHA and it brings so much awareness to the community and provides additional resources to CMHA and our partner agencies. I am proud to be a part of CMHA and the tireless work of our staff to raise awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness and to provide services, advocacy, and prevention to end the cycle of homelessness.

Sincerely,

**Sam Bitar**—President

### Board of Directors

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# the mission

**Prevention • Self-sufficiency • Advocacy and Education • Collaboration**

*“Recognizing the dignity of all, CMHA leads a collaborative response to homelessness that fosters long-term housing stability through prevention, quality services, education and advocacy.”*

## Convening the Worcester County Continuum of Care

CMHA convenes and manages the Worcester CoC, leading providers across the county in long term planning and collaborations for the most effective and humane approach to reducing homelessness in the region. In 2015, CMHA secured over 6 million dollars from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for vital homeless services and supportive housing programs operated by 13 agencies across the county. CMHA manages a county wide data collection and reporting system for all homeless programs within the continuum.

## Public Education & Advocacy

Public Education & Advocacy is the heart of CMHA's mission in addressing the root causes of homelessness and long term housing stability. Working with partners and stakeholders across the region we address barriers to accessing and maintaining affordable housing through civic engagement and public policy, legislative, and budgetary campaigns. Key partners are families and individuals who have experienced homelessness who work to increase community awareness and mobilize support to influence decision makers for systemic changes. In 2015, these collective efforts resulted in significant increases to housing assistance resources and stopped severe eligibility restrictions for families in need of emergency shelter.

## Youth Against Homelessness

Youth Against Homelessness (YAH) creates an environment in which local high school students in Central MA have an opportunity to make a positive change in their community and to develop the knowledge and leadership skills to make a direct impact on this critical issue. YAH Chapters exist in the following schools: Abby Kelley Foster Charter High School, Holy Name High School, St. Peter Marian High School, and South High Community School.

**\$22,372**

AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED TO FAMILIES FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SERVICES

**47**

INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED JOB PLACEMENT THROUGH THE P.O.W.E.R. PROGRAM

**8%**

DECREASE IN HOMELESS FAMILIES IN WORCESTER COUNTY

**9,020**

HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED BY THE HOUSING COUNSELING PROGRAM

**188**

FAMILIES HOUSED OUT OF SHELTER BY THE HOMEBASE PROGRAM

**446**

HOMEOWNERS ASSISTED BY THE ELDER HOME REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

**1,571**

INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED BY THE DONATIONS CLEARINGHOUSE

## Hope for Housing

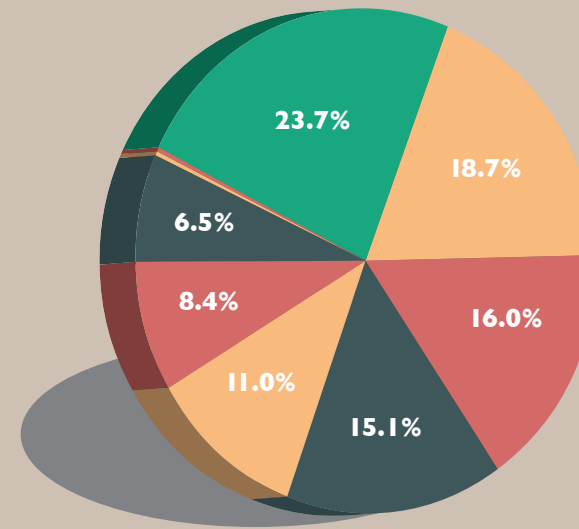
Hope for Housing is a partnership with the Interfaith Coalition to prevent family homelessness. The project raises community awareness and utilizes the collective buying power of congregations to prevent family homelessness. 29 congregations partner with local retailers who donate 2-10% of all sales to CMHA's family homelessness prevention fund. In 2015, \$22,372 was distributed to families for homelessness prevention services. Since its inception in 2009, the Hope for Housing Program has distributed over \$224,226 in family homelessness prevention funds.

## P.O.W.E.R. (Personal Opportunities for Work, Education, and Renewal)

P.O.W.E.R. is an innovative program assisting families in shelter to attain long term self-sufficiency. Collaborating with local workforce development resources, local colleges and the Worcester Community Action Council, P.O.W.E.R. provides employment and educational opportunities that fit each individual's goals, time frame and skill sets. In 2015, a total of 47 individuals received intensive case management and were placed in jobs through the P.O.W.E.R. program.

## Family Shelter

Families with school age children continue to be the fastest growing segment of the homeless population locally and nationally. Despite the fact that other regions of the state saw dramatic increases in the number of homeless families, Worcester County saw an 8% decrease in the number of homeless families in 2015. This decrease is largely due to a collaborative approach to ending homelessness with our partner agencies. Families are assisted, while in shelter, to access tools and services to overcome barriers and move from homelessness to self-sufficiency. CMHA currently provides 190 units of family shelter serving 311 families in 2015. 188 families were successfully re-housed in 2015.



## HOW OUR DOLLARS PREVENT FAMILIES FROM BECOMING HOMELESS – FY15 IMPACT

Rental Arrearage.....	23.7%	Utility Arrearage.....	8.4%
Security Deposit .....	18.7%	Furniture .....	6.5%
Subsidy.....	16.0%	Heating .....	0.5%
First Month's Rent .....	15.1%	Other.....	0.2%
Last Month's Rent.....	11.0%		

**224 families 674 individuals 341 children \$2,000 average grant \$448,221 total support**

## Housing Counseling and Homelessness Prevention

Housing Counseling is the longest standing and highest volume CMHA program rooted in a prevention first model through providing counseling, education, and mediation to landlords and tenants as to their rights and responsibilities. Community resources, state prevention funds and other resources are brought together in a holistic approach to address issues placing families at risk of homelessness. Mediation and problem solving is used to resolve housing issues and homelessness prevention assistance is made available where the intervention will lead to housing stability.

*In 2015, the Housing Counseling and Homelessness Prevention Program served 9,020 unduplicated households who received individualized housing counseling services.*

A total of \$448,221 in prevention resources were distributed to prevent homelessness for 224 families including 674 individuals and 341 children. An average intervention cost of \$2,000 prevented 224 households from entering shelter at a cost of \$3,000 per month with an average shelter stay of 4 months. Homelessness prevention is the most cost effective and humane approach for families and our communities.

## HomeBASE Program

HomeBase is a flexible financial assistance resource available to families eligible for the state's Emergency Assistance (EA) Program. Up to \$8,000 of Household Assistance is available to help families find housing and to cover moving expenses and ancillary needs. In partnership with the Department of Housing and Community Development, 188 families were housed out of shelter and received stabilization and supportive services through the HomeBASE program in 2015; a 44% increase over 2014.

## Elder Home Repair & Maintenance

The program coordinates closely with partners in the Elder Service and Health Care network to allow elder homeowners to remain living independently in their own homes through providing repairs and routine maintenance to keep elders safely and independently housed. 446 unduplicated senior homeowners were served in 2015.

## Donations Clearinghouse

The Donations Clearinghouse (DCH) collects and redistributes gently used household goods and furniture to those moving from shelter, fleeing domestic violence, recovering from a natural disaster or elders at risk. The DCH helps individuals and families to receive items that make a house a home. Rotman's Furniture and Carpets is a key partner in providing this service. Local churches and businesses also hold drives throughout the year.

In 2015, the DCH assisted 1,571 individuals in 748 Households referred from 65 agencies. 643 Worcester area residents donated 1,733 items.

# thank you.



## \$170,000 raised

Thank you for making our 30th Anniversary of the Annual WALK for the Homeless our most successful year to date! With your help, we raised \$170,000 in cash and in kind donations. Nearly 85% of the proceeds raised went to vital programs including CMHA, St. John's Food for the Poor Program, Friendly House, and the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN). We thank our very special co-chairs, Father John Madden of St. John's Parish and Kevin O'Sullivan for their dedication, support, and enthusiasm.

THE 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**WALK+RUN**  
FOR THE **HOMELESS**



# A snapshot of families we serve through homelessness prevention funds:

## Head of Household

Female.....	85.3%
Male.....	14.7%
Average Age.....	40.1
Employed.....	48.7%
Disabled.....	25%
Average Household Income.....	\$18,409

## Marital Status (%)

Divorced.....	7.6
Domestic Partnership.....	9.8
Married.....	13.8
Separated.....	6.7
Single.....	61.2
Widowed.....	0.9

## Ethnicity (%)

African American / Black.....	18.8
American Indian.....	0.9
Asian.....	0.4
Hispanic.....	52.7
Other.....	0.4
White.....	26.8

## Education (%)

Certificate.....	3.1
Client Refused / Unknown.....	1.8
College Degree.....	8.0
Did not Complete High School.....	26.8
High School or GED.....	40.2
Some College.....	20.1

## Household Locations

Blackstone	Leicester	Southbridge
Charlton	Leominster	Sterling
Cherry Valley	Marlborough	Warren
Clinton	Millbury	Webster
Dudley	New Bedford	W. Brookfield
Fiskdale	Oxford	Whitinsville
Fitchburg	Roxbury	Worcester
Jefferson	Shrewsbury	

**Average Family Size.....** 3.0

**Households with Children.....** 76.3%

**Single Parent Household.....** 36.4%

## Thank you to our supporters:

Alternative Technology Group

Bay State Savings Bank

Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging

Charter TV 3

Chuck and Mud Band

City of Worcester Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development

Coney Island Hot Dogs

CVS Health

The Diocese of Worcester

Elder Services of Worcester

City of Worcester Division of Elder Affairs

Fallon Community Health Plan

Francis Asbury Palmer Fund

George F. & Sybil H. Fuller Foundation

Greater Worcester Community Foundation

Hoche Scofield Foundation

Price Chopper/The Golub Foundation

The Hanover Insurance Group

Metso Automation

Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development

MLS/Property Information Network, Inc.

National Center on Family Homelessness

Oak Hill CDC

One Family, Inc.

Paul & Phyllis Fireman Foundation

People's United Bank

Planting the Seed Foundation

Polar Beverages

Rainbow Furniture

Reliant Medical Group

ReMax Vision

Rotman's Furniture and Carpet Store

Saint Gabriel the Archangel Parish

Saint-Gobain Abrasives, Inc.

Southbridge Savings Bank

South High Community School

SMC, Ltd.

The Stoddard Foundation

TJX Foundation

United Way of Central Massachusetts

UniBank

UNUM

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Webster Five Cents Savings Bank Foundation

Massachusetts Woman's Home Missionary Union

Worcester Area Mission Society

Worcester County Management Company

Worcester Telegram & Gazette

WTAG/WSRS

Vital Emergency Medical Services



**cmha**

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Leading the way home

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