

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

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MAYOR'S TASKFORCE TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

The goal of the Mayor's Taskforce to End Chronic Homelessness is by 2014, all individuals and families facing chronic homelessness in the City of Springfield will have access to a coordinated array of housing options and support services that will enable them to secure and maintain decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing. The Taskforce is asking for your help to make this mission a reality.

The Mayor's Taskforce to End Chronic Homelessness is asking for anyone interested in addressing homelessness in Springfield to get involved, either as a committee member or as a resource. "We encourage all community members to come together to help us address homelessness in Springfield. When a community collaborates to address issues, such as homelessness, we are able to make a significant impact towards solving the issue," said John Kelker, Taskforce Chairperson.

There are four (4) taskforce committees, each chaired by community members, and all committees have open membership. "We encourage anyone with an interest in ending chronic homelessness to participate on a committee," said Kelker.

Maintenance/Coordination Committee

Chaired by Jackie Newman, Executive Director of Springfield Housing Authority, the Maintenance/Coordination committee focuses on improved collaboration and information sharing of support service providers; the development of a "one stop" information number for services; the development of the Springfield Overflow Shelter (S.O.S.) system that will ensure emergency shelter is available for homeless individuals and families during the winter months when shelters are full and the development of a Safe Haven, ensuring the acutely mentally ill have access to emergency shelter services; and strengthening permanent housing supports that will enable individuals and families to maintain permanent and stable housing.

Meetings:

Springfield Housing Authority, 200 North 11th Street
Second Tuesday each month from 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Public Awareness Committee

The Public Awareness Committee is chaired by Faith Sanderson, Regional Office of Education and Linda Kopecky, Community Volunteer. The public awareness component focuses on elevating the involvement of the media service industry by developing a partnership approach with the local markets of radio, television and newsprint, as well as, promoting an increased knowledge base on the homeless challenge in Springfield to local businesses, civic organizations, faith-based organizations and the general public.

Meetings:

Last Monday of the Month at 12:00 p.m. (except holidays)
Catholic Charities, 120 South 11th Street

Prevention Committee

The Prevention Committee is chaired by Dana Wilkerson, Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois. The prevention component focuses on systematic changes needed to prevent homelessness from initially occurring. The committee looks at addressing systematic strategies that seek to prevent homelessness of persons being discharged or paroled from facilities.

Meetings:

First Wednesday of every month at 12:00 p.m.
MHCCI 710 N. 8th Street

Evaluation Committee

The Maintenance Committee is chaired by Charlene Edminston, Springfield Community Federation, and Stephanie Malcom, Grant It Consulting. The evaluation component will develop and implement a reporting mechanism to track progress made toward outlined goals and objectives inclusive of, but not limited to: committee activities/accomplishments, press releases, media contact, community presentations and community involvement.

Meetings:

Third Wednesday of every month at 3:30 p.m.
United Way of Central Illinois, 730 East Vine Street

Resources

In addition to opportunities to serve on a committee, the taskforce is developing a resource list of local businesses and organizations interested in supporting the Taskforce's efforts. "There are many businesses in Springfield interested in addressing homelessness, but do not desire to participate on a committee. These businesses are encouraged to volunteer as a resource, offering their services on an as-needed basis by committee members," explained Kelker. Businesses wanting to offer in-kind services and serve as a resources for the Taskforce are encouraged to contact Kelker at 789-7000 or jkeller@uwcil.org.

For more information about the Mayor's 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, contact John Kelker, Chairperson, at 217-789-7000 or see a copy of the plan at <http://www.springfield.il.us/>

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