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**Housing Service Specialist,**

Pat Connors

**Housing Assistance Program,**

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Scattered Shelter

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Pam Easter

Yesica Rodriguez

Patrick Smith

Mary Turner

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Bethzaida Rodriguez, Assistant Director

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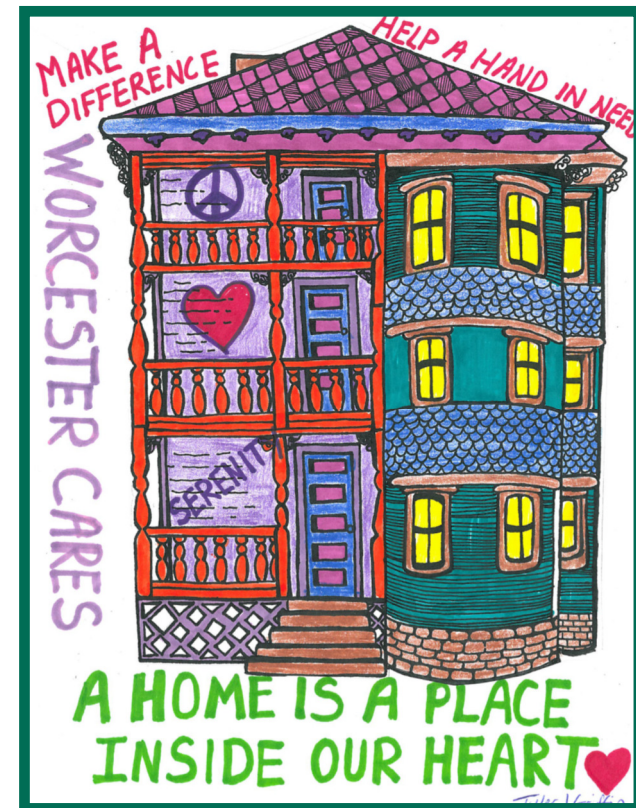
Patty O'Leary, Program Director

Alexandra Kartheiser, Case Manager



# CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING ALLIANCE

## 2013 Annual Report



**CMHA**

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## VISION STATEMENT

*Leading the way to create a community where everyone has a home through accessing the tools and resources to obtain residential and economic stability.*



## MISSION STATEMENT

*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.*



## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends, and Supporters,

Upon writing the CMHA annual progress report, I am reminded that I celebrated my twenty year anniversary with the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance in November of 2013. My roots in this agency and work sprung from my role as a community organizer in the late 1970's in Worcester. As time progressed, I increasingly saw that the gap between the cost of housing and the average wages for low to moderate income households was the most critical issue dividing those who could maintain their housing and those who could not and that is when and why I joined the staff at what is now the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance.

I am more committed than ever that the strategies of focusing on prevention resources; offering supports for employment and education; enhancing life skills and other tools for families to move to a path out of poverty will ensure that we win this battle.

## CMHA BDARD DF INCORPORATORS

Ann Bureau  
James Andreoli  
Reverand Bob Bacheldor  
Lori Buckley  
Eve Gilmore  
Gordon Hargrove  
Tom Holland  
Michael Martin

John Miller  
John McCoy  
Barry Morgan  
Michael O'Mara  
Mel Pelletz  
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Andrea Park  
Matthew F. Ryan  
Doreen Samuels  
MaryAnn Wedgewood



## SUPPORTERS

- Alden Trust Foundation
- Bay State Savings Bank
- Caldwell Banker
- Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging
- Charter TV3
- Chuck and Mud Band
- Coney Island Hot Dogs
- The Diocese of Worcester
- Elder Services of Worcester Area
- City of Worcester Division of Elder Affairs
- Ellsworth Foundation
- Francis Asbury Palmer Fund
- George F. & Sybil H. Fuller Foundation
- Gilbane Building Company
- Greater Worcester Community Foundation
- Price Chopper/The Golub Foundation
- The Hanover Insurance Group
- Harvard Pilgrim Health Care
- Metso Automation
- Mass. Dept. of Housing & Community Development
- MLS/Property Information Network, Inc.
- Montachusett Opportunity Council
- 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
- Rotmans Furniture and Carpet Store
- Saint Gabriel the Archangel Parish
- Saint-Gobain Abrasives, Inc.
- Southbridge Savings Bank
- South High Community School
- The Stoddard Foundation
- TJX Foundation
- United Bank
- United Way of Central Massachusetts
- UNUM
- U.S Department of Housing & Urban Development.
- Webster Five Cents Savings Bank Foundation
- Worcester Area Mission Society
- Worcester County Management Company
- City of Worcester Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development
- Worcester Telegram & Gazette
- WTAG/WSRS

CMHA has learned many lessons over the years and has played a leadership role in our county and across the state and nation in leading new responses to ending family homelessness. We applaud our staff and the staff at all of our partner agencies for working with us to move forward collectively with great success in moving homeless and at risk families and individuals to permanent, acceptable, safe housing in a truly housing first model.

After twenty years, I am more convinced than ever that the answer and the solution is within our reach. I am heartened by the ongoing support we receive in reducing and ultimately ending homelessness from a wonderful convergence of partners from all sectors of the community. I thank all of our supporters, partners and friends for all you do to support our mission to ensure that all families at risk receive the needed supports and that families are assisted to access safe and quality housing quickly.

We all walk a common path with a mutual goal that recognizes the importance of a safe home for each family that builds and supports a vibrant and safe neighborhood, school system and community going forward. Please stay on that path in the coming year and understand we can see change working with one family at a time.

My very best,

*Grace*





## PROGRAMS

### HOUSING COUNSELING AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SERVICES

CMHA's Housing Counseling Program provides assistance to tenants and landlords to stabilize tenancies through mediation, individual counseling and education on landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities. Housing Counseling provides emergency payments including rental and utility arrearages as well as a range of other needs to promote long-term housing stability for families and individuals as funds are available. The program also mediates housing problems between landlords and tenants that do not require cash assistance. Services are available to all with no income restrictions. WALK In Counseling is available Monday and Friday from 1:00- 3:30 pm; Wednesday from 9:00 to 11:00am and Thursday from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Appointments can also be scheduled for Housing Counseling. CMHA provides group Housing Rights and Responsibilities Trainings throughout the year.

**In FY'13 more than 8,099 Households were assisted through the Housing Counseling program. A total of 308 Households were assisted with Prevention Funds and the average grant was \$1,346**

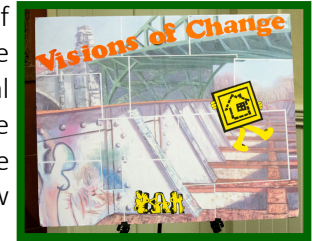
### NEIGHBORWORKS® HOMEOWNERSHIP CENTER OF WORCESTER

CMHA is proud to partner in The NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center of Worcester assisting area residents with their housing needs, preventing homelessness, training landlords and securing productive homeowners throughout the community.

The Annual production for the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center of Worcester include:

- 187 of Group Orientation Households participated
- 42 of Households Completed Homebuyer Training with 33 First Time Homebuyers

Youth Summit was held in the spring. The goal of each year's summit is to inspire the attendants to believe in their ability to enact positive change. Eleven high schools sent groups of student leaders to attend the half day conference. Liz Murray author of Homeless to Harvard gave the keynote address. Save the date - The 3rd Annual Visions of Change Youth Summit will be held on April 16 2014. The Keynote speaker Joshua Kraft, President New England Patriots Foundation.



### HOPE FOR HOUSING (HFH)

HFH is an Interfaith Coalition of 29 congregations dedicated to preventing family homelessness in Worcester County. HFH purchases food cards in bulk from Big Y, CVS, Hannaford, Shaws, and Stop & Shop. Cards are sold after services. The participating stores donate a percentage of the sales to the HFH program, these funds are use to prevent family homelessness. CMHA assesses families to ensure that prevention funds will lead to stability and is responsible for administering the distribution of funds to prevent family homelessness.

**In FY 13 HFH distributed \$40,188.40 to 74 families and the average prevention intervention was \$543.09. Since the inception of the program in 2006; we have distributed \$195,000 of homeless prevention funds.**

vation of participants to strengthen their education and job skills. This program develops individualized plans for each participant based on their own career goals and self-identified barriers. This is accomplished through comprehensive case management and stabilization services; referrals to support agencies; and by creating opportunities to expand professional experience. P.O.W.E.R, adopts a holistic approach, drawing out the best in each participant to advance them toward economic stability.

**If FY 13 P.O.W.E.R assisted 41 individuals in workforce and educational development**

## THE ANNUAL WALK FOR THE HOMELESS

This signature event of CMHA raises awareness about Housing and the needs of homeless and at-risk households throughout Worcester County, and provides financial support to combat homelessness. Last year we included a 5k run and raised over \$144,000, cash and in-kind donations to aid families who are in need of housing assistance. Over 1,000 WALKERS and 144 registered runners participated. Save the date for the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual WALK/Run for the Homeless. Sunday May 18, 2014.



## YOUTH AGAINST HOMELESSNESS (YAH)

YAH is a dynamic organization founded in 2007. YAH is made up of teenagers from local public, private and Catholic High Schools in Worcester County. Our mission is to raise awareness in the community about homelessness and provide a vehicle for all students in Worcester to take an active role in the community by concentrating on education, advocacy, and community service.



Students learn the importance of engaging in advocacy, organizing, and the importance of giving back to the community through service. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Visions of Change

- 6 million dollars of low/moderate mortgage loans facilitated
- 233 of Households participating in Post Purchase Workshops
- Over the last three years 40% of those counseled have positive outcomes

## ELDER HDME REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE



Minor home repairs that threaten the health and safety of elder homeowners in Worcester and Southern Worcester County are provided by CMHA experienced licensed contractors. Repairs are done with no charge for labor for senior homeowners. Recipients pay for materials only. The program prioritizes the correction of health and safety concerns that allow elders to remain

living independently in their homes; while protecting valuable housing stock for the future and promoting neighborhood stability. Routine maintenance such as snow removal, yard work and gutter cleaning for elder homeowners is provided to frail and low income elders to assist the elder homeowner and to ensure that essential services such as Meals on Wheels and Visiting Nurses can continue to provide services.

**FY'13, 330 Elder Homeowners were assisted through the Elder Home Repair and Maintenance Services.**

## DDNATIDNS CLEARING-HOUSE



The Donations Clearinghouse (DCH) provides quality gently used/pre-owned furniture and household goods to families and individuals most in need, including but not limited to: elders at risk, families and individuals leaving shelter and victims of fire, flood or domestic violence. Items are collected from donors throughout Worcester County, many of whom heard of the DCH via the Rotmans Furniture Exchange Program. The items are distributed, free of charge, to families and individuals who were referred to the DCH by local social service agencies. Furniture and Household goods drives are sponsored throughout the County by faith congregations and local business to assist in supporting the

supply available for those in need of assistance.

**In FY '12- '13, 570 unduplicated households made up of 1647 individuals received furniture and household goods to make a fresh start. More than 680 Worcester County residents generously donated 2178 items to help make a house a home. Recipients of the Donations Clearinghouse were referred by 60 local shelters, neighborhood center and social service agencies.**

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZING**

This program is at the heart of CMHA's mission and weaves together the delivery of quality services to homeless and those at risk of homelessness within a larger advocacy agenda striving to get to the root causes of homelessness in order to promote solutions that reduce the need for on-going services. The PE&A program supports and promotes ongoing and new community wide collaborations to best meet our goals of reducing family and individual homelessness. This program coordinates providers across Worcester County in an integrated manner in designing programs and measuring outcomes of their impact for best practice solutions to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families within our community. Yearly, over 500 representatives from community agencies, private citizens and service providers participate in monthly Continuum of Care and Housing Homeless and Benefit meetings. The program promotes community awareness to support best practices in serving homeless, near homeless, or at-risk households. PE&A leads the coordination of the Continuum of Care in Worcester County including submission of the annual McKinney Grant to HUD to fund Homeless Services and Shelter across the county which results in an average level of \$6 million in funding for programs throughout the county

## **THE VILLAGE & IVES STREET FAMILY SHELTER**

The Village is an apartment based family shelter program, and Ives Street is a congregate shelter, both provide short-term housing, employment training, housing search and other education programming and services to assist displaced families transition to self



-sufficiency. The Village and Ives Street are innovative programs that embrace a strength-based approach in working with families to achieve financial independence and residential stability.

**In FY 13 the Village Served 107 families and successfully moved 34 families from shelter to housing.**

CMHA opened the Ives Program in February 2013. Thirteen families were served through June 2013 and of those families, five were placed into affordable and sustainable housing.

## **MAIN STREET & SCATTERED SITE**

CMHA opened Main Street in May 2013. Thirty nine families were served through June 2013 and ten families were served from our Scattered Site Shelter.

## **HOMEBASE**

The HomeBASE program provides, housing placement, housing search and stabilization services to families in State funded shelter in Worcester. CMHA's philosophy in working with families to move from shelter to stable housing is based on a strength-based approach that works with one family at a time to empower families and assist them to attain the tools needed to achieve self-sufficiency.

**FY'13 CMHA HomeBASE assisted 336 families in obtaining or retaining safe, affordable long-term housing.**

## **PERSONAL, OPPORTUNITIES, WORK, EDUCATION, AND RENEWAL (P.O.W.E.R.)**

Personal, Opportunities, Work, Education and Renewal, is an education and workforce development program specifically designed for homeless families living in transitional housing in which individuals work with a mentor toward their path toward self-sufficiency. P.O.W.E.R fills a gap by adopting a long term model of mentorship in order to be part of transforming the lives of participants. The program builds upon the commitment and moti-