



Prevention + Outreach + Shelter + Resources

CONNECTIONS

2016 AT A GLANCE

570
PEOPLE RECEIVED
SHELTER AT HOMELESS
CONNECTIONS

362
NIGHTS WITH A
WAITING LIST FOR
SHELTER

98
PERCENT OF
PREVENTION CLIENTS
DID NOT BECOME
HOMELESS

78
PERCENT OF STREET
OUTREACH CLIENTS
CONNECTED TO
HOUSING

OUR MISSION

Ending homelessness by connecting individuals and families to resources that promote self-sufficiency and prevent future homeless episodes



Homeless Connections is a non-profit, United Way Fox Cities partner agency

Straight to the POINT

In February 2016, the Basic Needs Giving Partnerships of Green Bay, Oshkosh and the Fox Cities launched an ambitious effort to reduce poverty in our region. The effort known as **POINT: Poverty Outcomes and Improvement Network Team** is guided by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). IHI is a global not-for-profit that has developed a continuous improvement model that has been widely used in healthcare for achieving breakthrough improvements on complex issues. With the goal being to achieve a breakthrough improvement in poverty reduction, POINT is designed to:

Guide structural, service delivery and process changes, as well as capacity development of the participating organizations, needed to drive results for the community;

Develop a learning system at both the community and the regional level which fosters intentional testing, learning and feedback loops to understand movement on specified poverty aims and measures;



Executive Director Jerome Martin leads staff in an outcome improvement exercise

Accelerate results to integrate and align the assets of local leaders and organizations to develop capacity for long lasting collaboration with new and existing partners.

POINT has identified several key factors that contribute to poverty, including:

- Adequate education
- Family support and social connectedness
- Job and economic stability
- Adequate physical health
- Psychological health and addiction (e.g. mental and behavioral health, AODA, well-being)
- Adequate human and social services

Homeless Connections and several other area non-profit agencies are seeking to positively impact one or more of these drivers by testing and scaling-up successful interventions within each agency's improvement work. At Homeless Connections, our aim has been to reduce the average length of stay

in shelter to 40 days by the end of 2017. We first focused on how we schedule appointments for first assessments. First assessments are the initial meetings people have with their Case Manager, during which they begin to put together an individual action plan. By scheduling these assessments during initial intake and using an online calendar, we have already increased the number of first assessments being done in the first 72 hours of people's stay in shelter.

Another area which we identified for improvement is in how we assess people's benefit eligibility. We have started pre-screening individuals for benefits they could be receiving, often getting them enrolled to receive those benefits before they even come into shelter. Our belief is that this may help people avoid shelter entirely.

Finally, we are working with a group of local agencies to better coordinate referrals for housing. It is our goal for people to be identified for program-based housing opportunities as quickly as possible, so they transition from shelter to housing more efficiently.

CONTINUED INSIDE

UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information about these and other upcoming events, please visit our website: www.homelessconnections.net

Annual Report to the Community

Tuesday, May 23, 2017
Grand Meridian in Appleton
7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Join us for breakfast and networking, followed by a panel discussion on our 2016 Year in Review. Pre-registration is requested. Admission: \$10

27th Annual Garden Walk

Saturday, July 15, 2017
Locations throughout the Fox Cities
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Tour a selection of private gardens throughout the Fox Cities. Ticket sales will begin online and at select retail locations in May. Pre-event: \$15, Day-of: \$20

Motorcycle Ride to Benefit Homeless Connections

Saturday, August 19, 2017
The Office in Kaukauna
8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Brothers 100% is sponsoring a motorcycle ride to benefit Homeless Connections. The 100 mile ride will end with raffles, a silent auction, and food. Registration cost \$15 - \$25. All profits benefit Homeless Connections.

12th Annual Benefit Gala

Tuesday, November 14, 2017
SAVE THE DATE
More details to follow



CONTINUED FROM
FRONT COVER

Many organizations across our region have been able to make some very significant programmatic improvements as the result of their POINT initiative. At Homeless Connections, we're excited about the work that is being done in the community and the positive impact POINT will have on those we serve.

THANK YOU, SPONSORS

11th Annual Benefit Gala "Hope Has an Address"

Matching Gift Sponsor (\$25,000)

J.J. Keller Foundation

Future Builder Sponsor (\$10,000)

Affinity Health System/Ministry Health Care
Capital Credit Union

Hope Builder Sponsor (\$5,000)

Kimberly-Clark Corporation

Entertainment Sponsor (\$5,000)

Community First Credit Union

Media Sponsor (\$4,000)

Habush, Habush & Rottier
91.1 The Avenue

Dream Builder Sponsor (\$2,500)

Thrivent Financial

Corporate Table Sponsor (\$1,000)

Appleton Alliance Church
Century 21 Ace Realty
Commercial Horizons Inc.
Festival Foods
Fox Community Credit Union (1/2 table)
Fox Valley Technical College (1/2 table)
Goodwill NCW
Great Northern Corporation
Hoffman Planning, Design & Construction
Investors Community Bank
Inegrity Mutual Insurance
McCain Foods
Miron Construction
Omni Glass and Paint
Outlook Group Corp.
ThedaCare

Supporters

Bassett Mechanical
Galloway Company
McCarty Law

Sponsorship opportunities for our 12th Annual Gala are now available! Contact Beth Servais at (920) 734-9603 for more information.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

SENDING OVER 1,700 THANKS

In 2016, we were blessed with over 1,700 passionate volunteers who made it *their* mission to support us with their time and talents. From making and serving meals and snacks, to working the front desk, running errands, assisting with office and clerical work, and helping with miscellaneous projects within the shelter, our volunteers really make a difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness in our community.

Over the past few months we have seen so many volunteers coming together to make the lives of our residents a little brighter. During the fall, we saw volunteers serving hot breakfast

during the week, rehabbing an apartment in our 321 building, planning donation drives to help us keep our shelves stocked over the winter months, hosting benefit fundraisers, and keeping children entertained while in shelter by assisting them with craft projects.

We also have incredible volunteers that assist with our end of year fundraisers. Whether helping with event planning, purchasing tickets or bringing friends, your efforts make a huge impact! Our 11th annual Benefit Gala was held in November 2016 and raised over \$109,000 for Homeless Connections! Around the same time, we hosted our annual Giving Tree donation



drive. Over 35 collection sites participated in the drive, helping us bring in nearly \$10,000 in gift cards and over \$20,000 in in-kind items that are used regularly by our residents.

It is no secret that volunteers are a significant part of our organization. Each and every volunteer deserves a spotlight for their participation. Please know how much we appreciate your individual contributions—your collective impact makes all the difference!

DIRECTOR'S FORUM

When I reflect on last year, my mind instantly thinks of 2016 as a year marked by significant changes at Homeless Connections. First, Beth Servais, our Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator left in May to assume a marketing and development role with Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs. Samantha Uitenbroek then joined our organization in August in the Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator role.



In September, Community Relations Director Jennifer Dieter, accepted a new leadership role overseeing a development department for a non-profit in

Minneapolis. When Jennifer informed us she was moving we immediately began searching for her replacement. After four months of national recruitment, we found Jennifer's replacement just a few blocks away. We were very happy to welcome back Beth Servais to take over as our Community Relations Director.

As if all of that wasn't enough change, long-time Finance Director Barb Uehling announced in November that she would be retiring on February 3, 2017. In January, we selected Sara Kranpitz to be our new Finance Director.

It has been difficult for our staff, board and volunteers to say good-bye to such long-time friends and co-workers. Barb and Jennifer served our agency admirably and we wish them well in their future endeavors. On the other hand, I'm excited to welcome Beth back and to have Samantha and Sara join our team. Be sure to "meet" them in the staff feature of this newsletter.

While we worked through many organizational changes in 2016, perhaps some of the most profound changes occurred in the lives of the people we served. Of the 431 adults we served in shelter, 81 percent transitioned to permanent housing. Of those clients with an employment goal, 69 percent

obtained a job and 71 percent who entered shelter with income and were striving to increase their earnings, did so. Leroy was one such client.

We first met Leroy in March 2015. When Leroy accessed shelter, he was experiencing a debilitating anxiety disorder and was prone to panic attacks. His condition was so severe that he couldn't stay in shelter and on one night left shelter and chose not to return.

In April 2016, he again found himself experiencing homelessness. He continued to struggle with his mental health throughout his shelter stay, so his case manager connected him to support groups through NAMI Fox Valley. Leroy was also able to access Iris Place, NAMI's Peer Run Respite center, when needed. Leroy was also connected to mental health services through Outagamie County Mental Health as well as several community resources that are critical to his long term success. The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Food Share Employment Training (FSET) program were two examples of resources that proved beneficial to Leroy. His case worker from FSET assisted him with updating his resume and filling out college applications so he can finish his BS in Computer Programming. His employment specialist through DVR assisted him with obtaining a part-time paid internship as an IT specialist through Miller Electric. Finally, Leroy received financial counseling through the Financial Information Services Center to work through his credit issues, a result of years without income.

As the result of Leroy's stay at Homeless Connections, he is better able manage his mental health. He was able to advance his education, increase his income, better position himself for future employment, and secure housing. Leroy is well on his way to being a positive and contributing member of the Fox Cities community. There are many more stories like this and they were all made possible by your generous support and your commitment to work with us to end homelessness.



New faces...

CONTINUED FROM BACK COVER

Beth Servais, Community Relations Director
Started in January 2017



Beth started her career with Homeless Connections in March of 2013 as Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator. In May of 2016, she took on a new position with Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs as the Development and Marketing Coordina-

tor. Now, she is thrilled and honored to be back at Homeless Connections as the Community Relations Director. In her current role, Beth will be dedicated to ensuring that Homeless Connections continues to earn the support of the community in ending homelessness by connecting individuals and families to resources that promote self-sufficiency and prevent future homeless episodes.

URGENT NEEDS LIST

- Copy paper (8½ x 11)
- Bath towels and washcloths
- Twin sheet sets
- Bed pillows and pillow cases
- Oscillating tower fans
- Diapers (size 5 and 6)
- Coffee and K-Cups
- Gift Cards: Amazon, Menards, Home Depot, Grocery





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HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE: A SUCCESS STORY

Mary originally connected with Homeless Connections for assistance accessing community resources, but she returned after she was denied subsidized housing.

Kathy, a Homeless Connections Case Manager, helped Mary write a letter to appeal her denial, and the denial was overturned. After only two weeks at Homeless Connections, Mary moved out into her own subsidized, one-bedroom apartment. LEAVEN, a Homeless Connections partner agency, worked with Mary to help her move go smoothly, as well as ensure she had all the basics to get started in her new home.

In the past, Mary faced barriers with managing money and struggled with her personal credit. To assist with budgeting and saving, Mary was connected to FISC (Financial Information and Service Center). With their expert guidance, she was able to begin working through her personal finance and credit barriers.

In addition to working with FISC, Mary plans to connect with the Next Step Program. Next Step is a collaboration between St. Vincent de Paul, LEAVEN and Homeless Connections. It provides guidance, support, and encouragement from specially-trained volunteers to those striving to overcome chronic poverty. Mary will work with a Next Step mentor to set goals, track progress, overcome challenges and celebrate successes.

Mary is an excellent example of how Homeless Connections is helping individuals get connected to the resources they need to achieve self-sufficiency.

Mary built a trusting relationship with her Case Manager at Homeless Connections, as well as the individuals at our partner agencies. These connections will continue to provide guidance to Mary as she makes progress on her personal goals.



You have the opportunity to help more individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency by participating in our **Spring Matching Gift Campaign**. Now through our Annual Report to the Community on May 23, 2017, all gifts to Homeless Connections will be matched by an anonymous donor, up to \$50,000.

Make a gift by returning the enclosed envelope, calling 920-734-9603, or donating securely online at www.homelessconnections.net

Welcome to the team!

New faces at Homeless Connections

Recently we welcomed several dynamic, new colleagues to the team at Homeless Connections. Among the new faces at our organization:

Samantha Uitenbroek, Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator

Started in August 2016

Samantha has always held an interest in non-profits, specifically those which cater to basic needs. She has found tremendous joy in volunteering with Fox Valley Literacy Council, Habitat for Humanity, and most recently, Homeless Connections. Samantha is excited to join the Homeless Connections team and is eager to connect volunteers to meaningful opportunities within the organization.



Sara Kranpitz, Finance Director

Started in January 2017

Sara was the Accountant at Pathways Church in Appleton for four years before moving to The Mission Church where she has been Director of Finance since 2008. She was also Financial and Human Resources Controller for Appetize, Inc, the Appleton-based franchisee for all of the Wisconsin and Indiana locations of HuHot Mongolian Grill, until that company was sold in 2012. During her time at Appetize, Sara graduated summa cum laude with a Master of Business Administration degree from Grand Canyon University. After taking a few years off to help raise her nieces, Sara is excited to return to the workforce in the role of Finance Director for Homeless Connections.

CONTINUED INSIDE