

Liberty

FOR FRIENDS AND PARTICIPANTS OF LIBERTY COMMUNITY SERVICES

Supportive Housing Key to Ending Homelessness

Few people would disagree with President Bush's call to move people who are homeless "from dangerous streets to safe, permanent housing."

Yet budget delays and an increasingly difficult task of adequately supporting previously funded programs that keep formerly homeless citizens off the streets endanger anti-homelessness efforts nationwide.

Local Successes Could Turn Tragic

Two local stories make the case. Twenty-year-old "Ivy" worked hard in a local HUD-funded transitional housing program to improve her health and reunite with her children. For her, the loss of services would catapult her back onto the streets, leaving her less likely to access critical medical support.

"Tom," a 57-year-old veteran struggling daily to maintain his sobriety and find the courage and strength he needs to reenter the workforce, losing his apartment and round-the-clock staff would surely land him in a hospital, emergency room, shelter, detox facility or jail.

Both area residents show how people can turn their lives around when given

(see Key, p 2)

A Model Neighbor

[An innovative solution]

You know what makes a good neighbor. Taking care of one's property. Being helpful. Friendly. Considerate. And aware that a community will flourish if and only if every resident, visitor and business feels welcome and valued.

With this in mind, Liberty Community Services is breaking ground on a project that promises to transform New Haven into a national model of hope for individuals and cities confronting homelessness.

Want to lend a hand? Call us!

Liberty



safe haven

getting real about homelessness

What is Liberty Safe Haven?

Liberty Safe Haven is a residential apartment building for adults who have experienced long-term homelessness and confront a variety of disabilities. Scheduled to open next spring in New Haven's historic Ninth Square district, the project will restore significant historical aspects of a landmark turn-of-the-century factory.

In addition to 33 wheelchair-accessible studio apartments, the site will house program and retail space to support residents and complement the surrounding businesses community.

How Will it Help Residents?

The events, illnesses and disabilities that lead to chronic homelessness are often also what prevents individuals from seeking and successfully utilizing traditional services.

For instance, a person who has experienced childhood trauma may be deeply fearful and distrustful of other residents and of even the most caring staff. A person living with untreated mental illness may not be able to comply with rules typically required by shelters and other housing settings, and may resist help for a time.

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SUPPORTIVE HOUSING & SERVICES FOR OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

One Worthy Cause at a Time: Yale Student Anna Levine Does Her Homework

Some students simply laze about over school vacation, composing email, reading or otherwise whiling away the time.

Not so for 27-year-old Anna Levine, a law student at Yale from a local family with a passion for philanthropy.

In Her Parents' Footsteps

Following in the footsteps of parents who consistently and quietly volunteer their time and money to a wide variety of causes for the public good isn't always easy. In her characteristically candid and unassuming manner, Anna reveals one of her early forays into charita-

ble work as a failed attempt to raise money to grow trees in Israel. Her meager penny fund languished in its slotted cardboard box weeks after she was to have turned it in at Hebrew school.

Anna spent her early teens in Woodbridge, just 15 minutes from downtown New Haven. She portrays herself during those years as concerned with the world's problems but also with things typical of adolescents.

An Unusual Assignment

Later, as a freshman in college, Anna and her sister Sara were given an unusual assignment by their parents over Thanksgiving break: research worthy charities to which they would like to contribute from a modest yet growing family fund.

As part of the techno-savvy generation, Anna turned to the internet. This past year, she searched guidestar.org, a website that provides information on mission, programs, leadership and financials of non-profits nation-

wide, which led her to www.libertycs.org.

Educated, Wired & Inspired

"It's a very appealing site," recalls Anna, "I like how it outlines the different programs that allow people to live with dignity along the spectrum of housing toward independence." She scrutinized several housing providers and made her recommendations. Then the family surprised Liberty with a substantial first-time gift.

Anna is part of the new generation of philanthropists. They're young, educated, wired and inspired. Thank you, Anna! ■



Little Dot of Hope

Getting the

In Troubled Times, We Must Do More

How You Can Help

If you're like our participants, board, supporters and staff, you have been deeply affected by current events. War, the ongoing threat of terrorism, a difficult economy and slashed social service budgets remind us all that life cannot be taken for granted, not even for a moment.

the lives of our neighbors and the health of the towns in which we live and work.

Thank you. For volunteering, both for Liberty and throughout the community. For making your voice heard to your legislators. For supporting the organizations you believe in with your hard-earned income.

And, most of all, thank you for treating people who are homeless and disabled with the dignity and compassion they need to find their way off the streets and to a healthier, more peaceful future.

Together we *are* making a difference. Gratefully,

Sarah

Fortunately, caring people like you prove time and again that our community will not fold in the face of adversity but rather will muster every bit of energy and creativity we have to improve



A Word from Executive Director Sarah D. Caldwell

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supportive HOUSING SERVICES FOR OUR NEIGHBORS IN NE

Homelessness. The word itself conjures a sense of loss. A loss of direction. A loss of family, friends, community, connection. A loss of hope, strength and health.

For many individuals, homelessness occurs amidst the confusion of untreated mental illness or disability.

It often follows the impoverishment and isolation of catastrophic diseases like HIV and AIDS.

And it sometimes stalks what one participant describes as "the bad, the devil, the hell of addiction" with each and every relapse.

From this vortex of suffering, Liberty Community Services emerges as a truly collaborative leader and a national model of hope.

The heart of Liberty Community Services is our residential programs, located in three well-kept Victorian homes in New Haven and multiple apartments throughout the region.

Liberty Community Services
contact us! (203) 493-7600

Need Supportive Housing Help Now? Call our Outreach Department (203) 493-7600 ext. 120

"Liberty helped me get my life back in order."

From Homelessness to Hope

To learn more about Liberty, please visit us online at www.libertycs.org.

[Neighbor, cont.]

So in keeping with proven and emerging clinical methodologies, Liberty Safe Haven will offer a much-needed alternative: a highly supportive environment where every individual can rest and feel safe, often for the first time.

Staff will begin by treating each resident with unconditional positive regard, patience and acceptance—all of which build self-esteem necessary for change. By offering to help with daily activities like meals, chores and socializing, staff may slowly earn residents' trust.

By listening carefully when residents speak about their needs, staff will be later able to assist with client-directed goal planning. By making opportunities for medical, psychological, social and legal services accessible, residents will be more likely to pursue them.

Finally, by recognizing that progress is rarely linear for anyone and that success will need to be measured incrementally, Liberty Safe Haven will have realistic expectations, procedures and systems in place to accommodate individual setbacks that would otherwise land the resident back on the streets while protecting a safe, healthy environment for other residents and the surrounding neighborhood.

How Will Liberty Safe Haven Help New Haven?

Individuals who are chronically homeless disproportionately utilize emergency rooms, hospitals, detox facilities and institutions at great expense to Connecticut's economic, business, social and cultural climate. By creating realistic, permanent solutions for individuals who experience chronic homelessness, Liberty Safe Haven reduces these costs.

Furthermore, Liberty Safe Haven is being created not only with its residents' needs in mind, but also those of the neighborhood and the community at large. It will:

- Pay property taxes and create jobs;
- Launch a first-floor business that will complement the surrounding businesses;
- Welcome community participation in programs and events;
- Preserve significant historical aspects of the structure, including the stone façade, hand-carved woodwork and beams, adding to the aesthetics of the neighborhood;
- Support the successful positioning of New Haven as an excellent place to live, work and visit by improving the quality of life downtown; and
- Improve the reputation of our city as one that takes care of its most vulnerable citizens while building their capacity to engage in community life.

Watch for more articles on this exciting new development in upcoming issues of our newsletter! ■

"By offering to help with daily activities like meals, chores and socializing, staff slowly earn residents' trust."

[see Key, cont.]

appropriate opportunities and resources. Yet if adequate funding is not ensured for Shelter Plus Care (which provides rental assistance and leverages supportive services) and the Supportive Housing Program (which funds the development of housing and services), then thousands of homeless people like Ivy and Tom will remain on our streets. These programs form the background of anti-homelessness efforts by some of our community's most effective nonprofits.

A Multi-Tiered Effort

As supportive housing providers, Liberty and its sister organizations citywide work hard to educate citizens and legislators about the importance of maintaining federal and state funding for the homeless.

Yet we also recognize that the current economic and political climate will likely mean a volatile public funding environment for some time to come, and that we must do a better job of educating, inspiring and rallying area citizens and businesses to work together for the benefit of our entire community.

It's Here, It Works, Let's Preserve It!

Permanent supportive housing is a cost-effective and successful strategy for the chronically homeless. In New Haven it continues to make a huge difference in the health and vitality of individuals and our community.

"So much has been accomplished through our programs and the programs of our sister agencies," reminds Director of Clinical Services Yolanda Sidoti, "we just need to do more, much more." ■

Everything Kind of Fell Apart

That's why I agreed to come here today, began Mark (last name withheld at resident's request). "I'd like to help younger people to not make the same mistakes I had to go through."

A tall man with an athletic build and pensive brown eyes, Mark spoke of his experiences with a balance of confidence and fragility. His voice wavered but his gaze was steady.

You Don't Get to Choose Your Crib

Mark couldn't help a lot of what he went through. You don't get to choose which crib you're born into. No one asks for a family afflicted by poverty, alcoholism, despair and the violence that often follows. Certainly no one choose to be a victim of childhood sexual abuse, or to contract HIV.

Burnt Bridges and Heartbreaking Setbacks

Still, Mark's own mistakes, though understandable, were big ones. Marijuana and beer by age 12 to block out the beatings. Heroin by 19. A long series of good jobs held and lost. Prison. Burnt bridges in every direction.

Again and again, Mark tried to recover. Eventually he was referred to Liberty through a local treatment program. Despite a couple

Just the Facts: On Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of life-threatening events such as childhood neglect, physical abuse, military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents or violent personal assaults like rape.

People who suffer from PTSD often relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have difficulty sleeping, and feel detached or estranged. These symptoms can be severe enough and last long enough to significantly impair the person's daily life. An estimated 7.8 percent of Americans will experience PTSD.

PTSD is associated with the increased likelihood of co-occurring psychiatric disorders. In a large-scale study, 88 percent of men and 79 percent of women with PTSD met criteria for another psychiatric disorder.

The co-occurring disorders most prevalent for men with PTSD were alcohol abuse or dependence, major depressive episodes, conduct disorders, and drug abuse and dependence. The co-occurring disorders among women were major depressive disorders, simple phobias, social phobias and alcohol abuse/dependence.

National Center for PTSD

of heartbreaking relapses, he gained the strength and stability he needed to graduate from our Transitional to our Supportive Living Program. His days are filled with healthful activities, goal-setting and a newly emerging self-respect.

Hard-Won Wisdom

Mark is still sorting out the confusing and frightening corners of his life, and making peace with his past. Yet one thing he knows for

sure, and is eager to share with young people is to not be tempted by drugs.

"Don't even start to experiment. If you get to liking it it's nothing but trouble." Speaking more softly he adds, "Heroin will destroy you mentally, physically and spiritually. It will eat you alive. Make you want to die. That especially."

How did Liberty help? "Places like this give you

some self-confidence, some dignity to become productive members of society. We don't want to be outcasts; we don't want to be shunned," Mark confides, his hunger palpable. ■

To apply for Liberty's transitional, supportive and independent living programs, call Liberty's Supportive Housing Case Manager—Outreach at 203.495.7600, ext. 120.

Words of Wisdom

Home

Give me a house that's a home, a co-op or condo
A lock on the door something to hang onto

Give me a window to open, to stare out of, or break
With painted weathered windowpanes that peel and flake

A place to hang my hat, or to hide from the world
With a mail slot for cards, junk mail and bills

A place to run to when I want to be alone
A place to lay my head, a place to call home

by FF. L. Mass



"There are two things
you can do on the sea of life...
You can sink...
or you can float. Stay floatin'!"

—FF.L. Mass

Liberty invites your poetry, journal excerpts, photography and artwork about your experiences of homelessness and healing. Please submit them to Liberty along with your name and contact information. Thank you!

Liberty's Supportive Housing Case Manager Outreach

You're Invited to...

Join Us for Liberty Safe Haven's First-Ever Shout Out to the Community!

Monday, September 29, 2003 • 10:00 AM-Noon • FREE

Be Part of the Celebration. Be Part of the Solution.

Gather with us to celebrate a project that promises to transform New Haven into a national model of hope and to publicly recognize the individuals who have been its most dedicated and visionary champions.

Scheduled to open spring 2004, Liberty Safe Haven will provide 33 permanent apartments in historic Ninth Square for individuals facing chronic homelessness and disability.

For more info, call Karen Cavanaugh, Director of Development & Communications, at 203.495.7600, ext. 119.



Learn More About Our Programs

Whether you need our help, want to help or are just plain curious, call Tyrone Moore at 203.495.7600, ext. 116 to ask for more information. Or visit us online at www.libertycs.org today.

Department of Outreach
& Supportive Housing Access (DOSHA)

Transitional, Supportive
& Independent Living Programs

Liberty Safe Haven

Open Door Alliance (ODA)

Care Technologies Collaboration &
Resource Enhancement (CTCARE) Alliance

Community Services

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254 College St., 2nd Floor • New Haven, CT 06510



Please Help!

Yes, Sarah! I want to help spread the word about homelessness and house my neighbors in need. Please accept my tax-deductible gift of
 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other \$_____.

I have enclosed a check made payable to Liberty Community Services.

I'd like to know how to include Liberty in my estate plans.

My gift is in honor/memory of _____.

I'd like to volunteer my time and talents. Call me at _____.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-mail _____

Telephone _____

Please return this form to Sarah D. Caldwell, Executive Director • Liberty Community Services, Inc., 254 College St., 2nd Floor, New Haven, CT 06510 • Thank you for your gift!



\$25 provides bedding and toiletries for a new resident desperately in need of a good night's sleep.

\$35 equips a kitchen for an individual who can't remember their last home-cooked meal.

\$50 helps us offer much-needed emotional and psychological support for a resident battling mental illness, addiction or life-threatening disease.

\$75 helps us provide a home, transportation and round-the-clock support for someone escaping and recovering from the dangers of the streets.