

## HOMELESS RESOURCE CENTER RENOVATIONS ON TARGET

Renovations at the First Regional Homeless Resource Center started in earnest during the Fall of 2010. The interior of most of the buildings were completely taken out and fresh drywall and frames were installed. The County Facilities Department has taken a special interest in this construction to ensure a top quality product.



Division of Human Services staff have been working very closely with Facilities during each step of the process. The interior was designed to ensure a smooth flow of clients and provide an inviting and respectful place to help those in need end their homelessness. The design goal was to make this facility as non-institutional as possible with warm colors and comfortable furnishings. A security plan was developed and approved as part of the Interlocal Plan.



The renovation was substantially completed by the contractor in August 2011. Currently Facilities is conducting a walkthrough with minor adjustments to be made before the facility is turned over.

Human Services staff has been in discussion with four agencies who will provide services: Adopt-A-Family, Goodwill, The Lord's Place and the Department of Health. The three homeless services provider agencies have been meeting on a regular basis along with Homeless Advisory Board, Homeless Coalition and Homeless and Housing Alliance board members to work on a smooth transition and further implementation of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.



Thanks to the Quantum Foundation a Community Vegetable Garden and a Serenity Garden will be established at the Homeless Resource Center (HRC). Studio Sprout Landscape Design contributed their time to furnish plans and oversight for both projects. These areas will provide the clients at the HRC with gardening skills, fresh vegetables and a place to feel secure.

A community "build the garden" day will be held in the coming months with volunteers building the vegetable garden frames and tables in addition to planting vegetables and native plants.



## Homeless Advocacy Day 2011

Palm Beach County homeless advocates participated in the Homeless Advocacy Day in Tallahassee on April 13, 2011. Individuals from around the state representing Homeless Coalitions and other agencies who provide services for the homeless numbered around 40 - 50 people. The Palm Beach County contingent met with Rep. Mark Pafford, Rep. Will Snyder,



Rep. Betty Reed. Diana joined us to visit Rep. Mack Bernard and Rep. Aubuchon. We also visited many offices

including, Sen. Chris Smith, Sen. Negron, Sen. Bullard, Sen. Mike Bennett, and Sen. Benacquisto. Our last stop was the Governor's Office. We did not get in but did leave him information from Palm Beach County and the Homeless Coalition.

Some of the items that we left with the Representatives and the Senators included a book-mark, paper dolls representing clients and a house that was made by the MSW students interning with the Salvation Army.

The Homeless Advisory Board and Homeless Coalition Legislative Agenda called for advocating for the following:

- **Senior Center/ West County Homeless Resource Center**—Supporting an allocation of \$3.5 Million to assist in building a new Senior Center in Belle Glade and a \$500,000 allocation to retrofit the existing senior center in the Glades as the County's second Homeless Resource Center. **This was successful in both houses but was vetoed by the Governor.**
- **Affordable Housing** - supporting the removal of the collection cap on the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund and supports language that would allow monies collected for the trust fund to be used only for affordable housing. **This was successful.**
- **Homelessness Prevention Grant Program** -The Florida Office on Homelessness seeks to add a voluntary contribution check off item on all motor vehicle registrations and drivers' license fees. This was not passed.
- **Employment of the Homeless** -Provides a tax credit to corporations hiring a homeless person who resides in transitional, permanent supportive, or permanent housing facility and employs that person for at least 6 months. This was not passed.

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## A Better Way to Give Campaign—Stop Panhandling



Participating in the press conference was—Leo Abdella, Brent Ion, Ezra Krieg, Commissioner Taylor, Capt. Jeff Lindskoog, Kerry Gallagher and Dean Lavallee

In collaboration with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, the Homeless Advisory Board and the Homeless Coalition joined together to develop a public awareness campaign to educate the community regarding panhandling. The message that was imparted—it is okay not to give at street corners—donate your change to the providers that can make a difference and help end a person's homelessness. A public service announcement sponsored by the Sheriff's office was introduced over the Thanksgiving weekend and ran for a month on a local station. A text to number to donate was established and is still currently used. Other promotional items were created and distributed throughout the community. Six signs were erected at intersections that were prolific with panhandlers and a decrease in panhandling at those corners has been noted.

# PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE HOMELESS COALITION OF PALM BEACH COUNTY SIGNED



In March of 2011, the Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) started conversations with the Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc. in order to further align their mission by joining forces and partnering to add a stronger component to the sustainability of the Ten-Year Plan. The HAB Liaison and County staff worked closely with both boards to create a Memorandum of Agreement that further detailed the part-

nership. Under this agreement, the HAB Liaison would staff the Homeless Coalition as their Executive Director, the Coalition would move into County Human Services office space and the Coalition would chair the Policy and Legislative Committee, Community Outreach and Public Awareness Committee and fundraising for the Ten-Year Plan.

Two programs that this partnership brought to the fold—Project Homeless Connect and the Faces of Homelessness Speaker's Bureau have increased public awareness on the issues of homelessness in the community and provided numerous volunteers. The HAB looks forward to working very closely with the Coalition.

## Project Homeless Connect

Three Project Homeless Connect (PHC) events were held during 2011. The events were held in West Palm Beach, Riviera Beach (in conjunction with STAND DOWN) and Lake Worth. PHC is a national best practice model and is implemented in cities across the United States. It has been identified by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness as an innovative initiative, recognized for its effective and results-oriented approach that move people quickly towards stability. The goal is for community volunteers to partner with government agencies, non-profits, businesses, service providers, faith communities and the private sector to provide a one-stop opportunity of health and human services to help end homelessness.

This year over 800 participants received services and resources at these events. Over 200 free haircuts,

170 HIV screening tests, 30 bicycles, toiletries, clothing, health screening, hot meals and bag lunches were given out. Over 100 volunteers participated. Four events are being planned for 2012.



*The Point-In-Time Count was held in January 2011. Using the State Homeless Definition 3,228 individuals were counted as homeless during that 24 hour count.*

## AmeriCorps VISTA Grant Approved



HAB/HC staff has been working closely with AmeriCorps VISTA to receive six fulltime staff members through their grant program. The grant was approved in September 2011. Potential VISTA's were interviewed and three hired for positions. We now have four VISTA's working in the office on projects that will help to implement and sustain the Ten-Year Plan. They are John Allison (Faces of Homelessness), Michelle Howell (Volunteer Coordinator), Oudeline Narcisse (Project Homeless Connect and Outreach) and Yolanda Kennedy will be moving into the position of Social Media/Web/Newsletter Coordinator.

An additional two VISTA's will be hired in early 2012 to work in the area of Public Awareness and with the Homeless Resource Center.

## Homeless Resource Center Tours and Events

County and City Commissioners are encouraged to arrange for individual on-site tours of the facility. (Please call Marilyn Munoz at 355-4764 to make arrangements). The HRC will be opening in 2012.

### Ten-Year Plan on Target

**Goal 1—Develop a Universal System for Intake/Assessment and Enhance Client Information Management System:** A Universal Application has been developed and will be implemented in December 2011. The Homeless Resource Center is almost ready and will become the “front door” single entry for all homeless services.

**Goal 2—Provide Interim Housing Services:** The Discharge Planning Committee is working on discharge policies for individuals who are discharged homeless from hospitals or psychiatric facilities. Interim housing is being studied in the Glades.

**Goal 3—Coordinate Partnerships and Resources for Homeless Services:** An Executive Committee of the Homeless and Housing Alliance has been developed with the purpose of reporting to the Homeless Advisory Board pertaining to prioritization of local funding recommendations. The Homeless Coalition is working with the HAB to raise funds in support of the Ten-Year Plan.

**Goal 4—Improve Access to Homeless Services with Outreach and Education:** With the Homeless Coalition partnership and through the new programs of Project Homeless Connect and the Faces of Homelessness, speaking engagements and

community awareness has increased. Branding for the Homeless Coalition as the HAB partner is ongoing and a marketing plan has been developed in support of the Ten-Year Plan.

**Goal 5—Prevent Individuals and Families from Becoming Homeless:** Homeless Prevention and Rapid-Rehousing was a huge success with 880 persons in 332 households receiving financial assistance and case management. This program will be a model for the new Homeless Resource Center.

**Goal 6—Secure a Stable Stock of Affordable/ Accessible Housing:** Engagement of Housing Authorities and other community partners is ongoing and several programs have been identified.

**Goal 7— Provide System Oversight and Evaluation of the Ten-year Plan:** The Strategic Planning Committee meets regularly and monitors committee reports and the progress of the Ten-Year Plan implementation. The East Carolina University will be comparing our plan with the national strategic plan to see if we are in alignment. The National Alliance to End Homelessness will be contacted in 2012 to offer technical assistance if needed.

**ten2end**

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

Palm Beach County Homeless Advisory Board

*“It starts today!”*

**HOMELESS**  
**COALITION**  
palm beach county

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**Claudia Tuck, Division of Human Services Director**

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