**New Hope Shelter**

**& Transitional Housing**

601 N Summit Dr

CRANDON, WI 54520

Nov. 1, 2013

**Annual Report:**

With the end of July, three years are in the books since we opened the doors of New Hope Shelter and Transitional Housing! Our third year has been a time of polishing established procedures and refining how to better serve our residents.

**Some of our year-end totals/numbers Aug. 2012 – July 2013:**

* + This year we provided 1,848 nights of shelter, over last years’ 1,490 nights of shelter.
  + YTD 5,095 nights of shelter.
  + This year we served 37 total residents including 15 single men, 1 single woman and 6 families comprising 21 people.
  + ALL TIME we have served 112 people total, 48 single men, 18 single women and 14 families (47 people)
  + This year we have received approximately 101 calls from people looking for shelter, just a few less than last years’ 105 (11/12), and the previous years’ 114 (10/11).
  + YTD 65% of our residents checked-out successfully finding help with things like employment, education, housing, etc.
  + YTD 19% were walk-outs, electing not to complete the program
  + This year we averaged just over 5 residents per night.
  + The average length of stay was about 51 days, up from last years’ 47 days.
  + This year we have had 12 people stay the entire 90 days, last year we had 10.
  + ALL TIME we have had 27 people stay the entire 90 days.
  + We have had up to 12 people here at one time.
  + We have helped people transitioning from jail, rehab, and probation/parole providing a stable supervised place from which they could find employment and seek housing.
  + We have expanded and maintained a great working relationship with the other service providers in our community to help families find the assistance and resources they need to move forward with stabilizing their lives.
  + This year we have logged over 10,000 miles helping transport residents to doctor appointments, court dates, or even just to the grocery store.

**Program Updates:**

This year we’ve continued to maintain some of our programs while refining other areas in our Emergency Shelter program:

* We’ve continued our Transitional Housing program, signing another year-long lease for 2, 1 bedroom apartments here in Crandon. We have had 5 households representing 7 people in this program and it has been an incredible compliment to our existing 90 day shelter plan, providing our residents that do well in our emergency shelter program the added flexibility of additional time to stabilize their lives. We also utilize these apartments as overflow or for special needs situations when residence in the main shelter isn’t possible. They have hardly been empty since we began in Jan 2012.
* We’ve contracted with a case manager to help with some of our case management needs and to meet the administrative requirements of our state grants. This splits the workload and helps our residents get the attention to detail that they need. The case manager for last year took a full time job at Social Services and we’ve since contracted with another case manager for our current fiscal year. This program is working wonderfully.
* We decided not to participate in a third year of the Tribal AmeriCorps Program. Valerie Swanson’s last day was the end of August. We’ve instead combined that position with our case manager position, having that person work the same hours as the TAP worker, but do the work of a case manager. This has been a wonderful addition for both our residents and our staff. We have also taken on additional volunteers in the office this last year.
* We have decided not to participate this year in the Emergency Solutions Grant program. We applied and were approved but we felt there was a conflict of interest between HUD and our Shelter mission statement. Below are some highlights of the conflict:
* There is a disconnect between HUD's definition of homelessness and its stipulations on who we can serve based on this definition; and how it applies or rather doesn’t, to homelessness in a rural area. We find ourselves faced with the situation of denying service to applicants, based on the definition of homelessness, despite having empty beds. We don’t always having waiting lists where we can hand select, and only serve, the "neediest of the needy".
* We have had to use our non state-funded Transitional Housing program to serve Emergency Shelter clients that were ineligible based on HUD's criteria. If we would have served these clients under our Emergency Shelter program we would have faced the very real possibility of repaying grant monies that had already been spent. We don’t always have this option as our Transitional Housing program is often full.
* Most often we are faced with the situation of an applicant where they are "doubled up" (couch surfing). This generally requires the person housing them to document or certify that they can no longer stay in their house, whether or not this may actually be the truth. This is a grey area that, for us, is often walking closer to a lie than the truth. Asking our applicants or intake workers to "rephrase" an applicants housing situation to make them eligible for a program is not the example we want to set for our residents. It is a slippery slope.
* Mark 9:43 *If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It would be better for you to enter God’s kingdom with only one hand than to go into hell with two hands. In hell the fire never goes out.*
* The strings attached to the HUD funds are many and sticky (funding restrictions, audits, complex eligibility, documentation, reporting, etc.), making the potential for clerical mistakes or misunderstandings higher in a largely volunteer and small budget operation such as ours. For us, the risk is not worth the reward in my opinion. Allowing a few grant dollars from one program to dictate how and who we can serve with every dollar we receive, is restrictive.
* Accepting this money only further complicates and hampers our ability to serve homelessness in our area. We cannot serve more people with this money, we can serve less people with more paperwork.

My speculation: I do not see the situation getting better, although we are relatively new to this, having only just entered into our 4th year of operation. The rules get more complicated every year, while the funding decreases. For this year the shoe doesn’t fit. Maybe next year it will get better but I would suggest, based on the source of funds, historically that doesn’t seem likely. As far as our future prospects funding wise, we do not want to find ourselves dependant upon a program that is steering us in a direction that does not completely line up with our primary mission and goals, that is to serve the homeless population in our area to the best of our ability.

We continue to address a previously un-met need here in our community providing emergency shelter, case management and transitional housing where none existed.

While some of our numbers have gone up from last year, like shelter nights and total residents, other numbers have gone down like transportation miles, from over 15,000 last year to about 10,000 this year. The biggest change in our numbers comes from single female residents and families that have either been here or not been here. In 2010-2011 we had 7 families, with many children. In 2011-12 we had only 2 families and 1 child. This last year we had 6 families and 12 children. Numbers of single men are consistent year over year, averaging between 14-19. Last year we had 1 single woman. Another number that I think is interesting is average length of stay, which hasn’t changed much in the last two years averaging between 47-51 nights. This last year a higher percentage of our residents **checked-out** of the program rather than **walked-out**, which means they have been willing to follow their plan to fruition rather than give up and walk away, back into a life of instability.

Our emergency shelter budget grew slightly last year, mostly due to vehicle repairs, maintenance and fuel costs. We were also blessed with the opportunity to continue our programming with transitional housing, and increase our case management time and depth.

In His service,

Micah Dewing



Shelter Director