Turning Point

Bethany House launches Housing Development Fund

The Obvious Need:

Washington, December 8, 1999 - HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo released a landmark study today that paints the most comprehensive picture of homelessness in America that has ever been compiled. This report is entitled *The Forgotten Americans - Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve,* and is filled with revealing statistics that tell the story of individuals and families from around our nation who have fallen through the social safety nets into homelessness. The study also shows how Federal Programs are responding to the pressing needs of these people. [A list of the most pertinent facts contained in this study can be found on page 2.]

One of the most encouraging statistics found in this report states that when homeless families get housing assistance and needed support services (such as health care, education, and job training), **76% of these families move on to improved and stable living situations.** Bethany’s success rate is even higher: **92% of our families successfully move out of homelessness.**

*With this information before us, how can we not continue Bethany’s important work?*

The Hidden Tragedy:

However, there is another report that has received far less attention. It was prepared by **NETWORK,** the National Catholic Social Justice Lobby. The NETWORK Report gathered information from more than 2,500 respondents from ten states, including New York. **[Additional statistical information is likewise on page 2.]** This report states that the percentage of those receiving welfare dropped by more than 28% within the one year studied, while the percentage of “disconnected persons” - those who are unemployed but do not receive any welfare benefits - rose sharply by 27%.

78% of the respondents were women, and 75% of these women had minor children in their care. These statistics show us that low-income single-parent families continue to be at extremely high risk, even in our affluent economy, and that those who no longer receive welfare but were not fortunate enough to receive housing assistance and support services have plunged even deeper into poverty.

*With this information before us, how can we not expand Bethany’s important work?*

The Challenge Before Us:

With the leadership, full support and technical assistance of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Bethany House has begun to increase its long-term housing for low-income families. In addition to Bethany’s present housing stock, a small apartment building containing **four two-bedroom units** is available for purchase in Bellmore. It is an ideal location - close to schools, churches, shopping, parkway, and bus routes.

Federal funds are available for part of the cost of acquisition and renovation, but Bethany House must provide 50% in cash - about $225,000. Bethany needs your help now more than ever before, and **every dollar you donate will count as two** in the match for federal monies. **Will you help us to change children’s lives by providing clean, decent, and affordable housing for them as their families move toward total economic independence? If everyone reading this article were able to donate $25, we would immediately reach our goal!**

Planning for Bethany’s fourth annual GOLF OUTING has begun, and all proceeds from this event will go toward the HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FUND so that this first purchase will be quickly followed by others!
The top priority among homeless people was to get a job - the first step toward self-sufficiency.

44% of those surveyed had worked at least part-time during the past month.

Serious problems since childhood are common among homeless people, with 25% reporting childhood physical or sexual abuse [note: only 32% of those surveyed were women, which makes this 25% statistic most alarming]. 33% had run away from home, and 27% had lived in foster care, a group home, or other institution.

Homeless people are among the poorest in the nation, with incomes averaging half the federal poverty level: homeless individuals reported a mean income of $348 per month; homeless families reported only $475 monthly.

40% went without food one or more days in the previous month because they could not afford food, compared to 3% of other poor Americans.

48% reported chronic physical health problems such as arthritis or cancer; 39% reported a mental health problem; 38% reported an alcohol problem while 26% reported a problem with drugs.

55% of the homeless have no medical insurance.

Homeless persons report lower education levels: 38% have less than a high school diploma, compared to 18% of the overall population. This makes it harder for homeless people to get jobs.

It costs only 31% of the cost of a night in jail to provide housing and a variety of support services to the homeless.

68% of homeless surveyed were male; 32% female. 43% were Black; 36% were White; 15% were Hispanic, 3% Native American, and 1% other races.

33% of homeless surveyed were military veterans.

71% of the homeless live in central cities, 21% in suburbs, and 9% in rural areas.

79% of the respondents were female, and 75% of them have minor children who live with them.

49% reported that their health was only “fair” or “poor,” and 31% were unable to fill prescriptions for needed medications due to cost.

70% of those surveyed who are without any government assistance are female, and 50% of these women have children.

41% of those with jobs report that they go without food due to lack of money, and 22% of the working poor said their children also eat less due to cost.

In New York, only 29% of those leaving the welfare roles found some kind of employment, compared to 83% in Wisconsin.

In general, people with jobs in this study were as likely as those without jobs to report that their children suffered from a lack of food, health care, and dental care.

Overall, only 16% of those surveyed receive any financial assistance from the government, but 63% receive Medicaid and 59% receive some Food Stamps.

24% of those surveyed reported that they receive no assistance whatsoever, and 70% of these are women with 87% of these women having children in their care.

There are at least 630 single people with children in this survey who reported receiving no TANF [welfare] benefits. Of these, 88% are women and 69% are women without jobs.

Only 18% of those in homeless shelters were “chronically” homeless, while 82% reported that they had had a place to live during most of the past six months.

79% of those surveyed were female; 21% male. 29% were White; 35% were Black; 36% Latino. 62% lived in cities, 38% in non-urban settings.

This, rather, is the fasting that I ask of you:
release those bound unjustly . . . let the oppressed go free.
Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor.
Clothe the naked when you see them,
And do not turn your back upon your own!  Isaiah:58
Bethany House announces its 4th Annual Golf Outing

Thursday July 6, 2000

At

The Newly Renovated

Lido Golf and Country Club

**Sponsorships**

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**Day of Golf**

Includes

Bountiful Brunch
Cocktail Hour
Lavish Buffet Dinner

$300.00 per person

Cocktails & Dinner only $150.00 per person

All proceeds will go toward Bethany House’s housing development fund to provide long-term housing for homeless families.

For more information, to donate gifts or prizes, or to reserve your foursome, call

Bethany House [516] 546-7970

To make corporate sponsorship donations or to donate goods or services, call

Event Co-Chairpersons
Bill Kerwick [516] 223-6664
Joe Grzymalski [516] 485-1600
Save the Date!

FOR THE
FOURTH ANNUAL
BETHANY HOUSE
GOLF TOURNAMENT

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2000
AT THE NEWLY RENOVATED
LIDO GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

BILL KERWICK
JOE GRZYMALSKI

Call For More Details
(516) 223-6664 or
(516) 485-1600

ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT BETHANY'S HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FUND