

## **2015 Annual Report**

### **Milwaukee City/County Commission on Supportive Housing**

The Milwaukee City/County Commission on Supportive Housing was formed in 2007 through actions of both the Milwaukee Common Council and the Milwaukee County Board. The Commission held its inaugural meeting in January 2008.

The enabling legislation established the following mission for the Commission:

*...serve as a community infrastructure with the institutional commitment and the financial resources necessary for providing safe, affordable and accessible housing options with supportive services for persons with mental illness or other special needs. The commission shall establish goals and benchmarks for the effort to address housing needs for persons with mental illness and other special needs in the community, and monitor progress and hold the community accountable for meeting these goals.*

Under the leadership of Chair Jim Tarantino, the commission met three times during 2015. Others who served on the Commission during 2015 are Suzanne Breier, vice chair; Ken Schmidt; Paula John; David Brown; Tony Perez; Steve Mahan; Matt Melendes; Jim Marks, and the late Ald. Joe Dudzik.

The Commission receives staff support from the Milwaukee Dept. of City Development and the Milwaukee County Housing Division.

### **Key supportive housing accomplishments in 2015**

#### **Partnership to End Chronic Homelessness**

The *Partnership to End Chronic Homelessness*, announced by County Executive Chris Abele and Mayor Tom Barrett in June 2015, provides significant resources to address the needs of individuals whose circumstances meet the federal definition of chronic homelessness. These individuals generally have a disability and have lived continuously for a significant period of time in a shelter or a place not meant for human habitation, such as an outdoor encampment or a vacant building.

The Partnership, which pools resources from Milwaukee City and County government and the City and County public housing authorities, follows the “housing first” model. This concept posits that the lack of a permanent place to live is the single most important problem that must be solved for homeless individuals.

Over time, Milwaukee County will identify a number of small apartments that can provide housing for up to 300 chronically homeless individuals identified by a County outreach team and the Milwaukee Police Dept. Rent support for these individuals is supplied by rent vouchers issued by the City and County housing authorities, along with City HOME funds. Housed individuals are offered case management services provided by non-profit agencies including the Salvation Army, Guest House, Hope House, Community Advocates and Pathfinders for Youth.

By year’s end, 64 chronically homeless individuals had been housed and voluntarily accepted case management services. A \$100,000 grant from Bader Philanthropies supplemented public resources. The Bader funds support a jobs program for individuals housed through the Partnership and “bridge case management” to assist in moving these individuals into permanent housing. The Greater Milwaukee Foundation has contributed \$50,000 for case management and outreach services.

For more information, consult the initiative's web site: [www.housingfirstmilwaukee.com](http://www.housingfirstmilwaukee.com).

### **Veterans Gardens**

Four previously City-owned, tax-foreclosed multi-family properties were converted into 30 units of supportive housing for veterans in 2015.



The four buildings, located on Milwaukee's northwest side, were sold to the Center for Veterans Issues. CVI, in partnership with Cardinal Capital, undertook extensive renovation at the buildings, and created outdoor garden and recreation spaces for residents.

Veterans Gardens is supported by a \$972,000 grant from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. The project also received support from Home Depot staff and friends, who volunteered to do some of the demolition work and donated needed equipment. Volunteer work included demolition of kitchens and bathrooms, and debris removal included carpeting and padding, built-in-kitchen cabinets, appliances, bathroom vanities and plumbing fixtures including steel and cast iron tubs.

### **Thurgood Marshall Apartments**

Low Income Housing Tax Credits were awarded in 2015 to assist in financing the construction of supportive apartments that will serve chronically homeless individuals with alcohol addictions. Thurgood Marshall Apartments, located in the 1900 block of N. 6<sup>th</sup> St., Milwaukee, will provide 24 one-bedroom units. Wisconsin Community Services will provide on-site social service support. The building is expected to open in 2016. The project is being developed by Cardinal Capital in partnership with Wisconsin Community Services and Milwaukee County.





**Greenwich Park Apartments**

Construction began in fall 2015 on Greenwich Park Apartments, 2353 N. Farwell Ave., Milwaukee. When the two-phase project is complete, it will provide 93 apartments in two buildings. Fourteen units are set aside as permanent supportive housing.

The project is developed by Mercy Housing. The supportive units are partially financed by a 2014 LIHTC allocation.

**Journey House Campus Housing Initiative**

Milwaukee’s first supportive housing designed specifically for young adults aging out of foster care was opened in June, 2015. The six-unit property, 741 S. 23<sup>rd</sup> St., Milwaukee, was developed by Journey House at a formerly tax-foreclosed property purchased from the City of Milwaukee for \$1.00. Forty volunteers from Northwestern Mutual and Eppstein Uhen Architects assisted in the renovation work.

**Supportive housing scorecard for 2015**

Milwaukee County’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, published in 2010, estimated that Milwaukee County needs 1,260 units of permanent supportive housing. Counting the 777 units that were either occupied, under construction or proposed by the end of 2015, our community is more than 60 percent of the way to that goal.

