

Supportive Housing Commission members (2010)

Mr. James Tarantino
Chair
Owner, Tarantino & Co.

Ms. Suzanne Breier
Vice Chair

Ald. Michael Murphy
Alderman, 15th District,
representing Milwaukee
Common Council

Supv. Lynne DeBruin
County Board Supervisor,
15th District, representing
Milwaukee County Board

Ms. Lisa Jo Marks
Acting Director, Milwaukee
County Department of
Health and Human Services

Ms. Joan Lawrence
Executive Director,
Our Space, Inc.

Mr. James Marks
Vice President of Grants,
Greater Milwaukee
Foundation

Mr. Kenyatta Yamel

Ms. Anne McDevitt

Mr. Robert S. Berlan

Mr. Ken Schmidt
Executive Director,
Hope House

Ms. Paula N. John
President, Erica P. John
Fund

Ms. Rochell Williams
Program Manager, Social
Development Commission

Mr. Steven Mahan
Director, City of Milwaukee
Community Development
Grants Administration

Mr. Tony Perez
Executive Director, Housing
Authority of the City of
Milwaukee

Critical Policy Initiatives During 2010

Recent policy initiatives at the federal, state and local levels will affect the development of permanent supportive housing and support for individuals at risk of homelessness.

The federal McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act was re-authorized through the adoption of the Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009. The act broadens a long-standing federal definition of homelessness, expanding the use of federal homeless program funds to include services to people at imminent risk of homelessness and families living unstably. Previously, these funds could be used only to assist individuals living in places not meant for human habitation, and people living in a shelter or transitional living facility.

The Wisconsin Parity Act, adopted in April 2010 by the Wisconsin State Legislature, took effect December 1. The act requires health insurers to cover mental health, alcoholism and other drug abuse treatment services at the same level as other types of medical treatment. The law also requires that insurers count costs paid by consumers for their mental health treatment toward their overall deductible and out-of-pocket costs.

Both City and County government adopted resolutions of support in 2010 for the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The plan calls for the development of 1260 units of permanent supportive housing in Milwaukee County, and recommended a strategy to fund the creation of these units. The plan was written by the

Milwaukee Continuum of Care, an organization of agencies that work to prevent homelessness and provide services to homeless individuals.

The Milwaukee Department of City Development completed a planning study recommending strategies to regulate and site housing for individuals at risk of homelessness. The study proposed zoning changes that would relax density and parking standards for permanent supportive housing buildings, and permit transitional living facilities as a matter of right, provided they met limited use standards. Action on these proposals was expected in early 2011.

The City of Milwaukee distributed \$6.9 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act ("stimulus") funding to implement the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program. The funds provide short- or medium-term rental assistance, housing relocation and stabilization services, mediation, counseling, security, utility deposits, utility payments, case management and related costs to individuals and families who are homeless or would be homeless but for HPRRP assistance. Thirteen local agencies that serve people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness received grants through HPRRP.

Milwaukee County was awarded \$715,000 in HPRRP funds to provide security deposits, six months of rental assistance, and case management to eligible consumers from the Behavioral Health Division.

Partners in Permanent Supportive Housing

The significant expansion of permanent supportive housing buildings in Milwaukee reflects the work of many partners that provide resources including affordable housing tax credits, development expertise, social service expertise, rent vouchers, financing, and grant funds. The Commission wishes to acknowledge the following partners whose participation has been so crucial to the success of our efforts thus far.

Cardinal Capital Group
Center for Veterans Issues
City of Milwaukee Community Development Grants Administration
City of Milwaukee Dept. of City Development
City of Milwaukee Housing Trust Fund
Guest House of Milwaukee, Inc.

Heartland Housing
Hope House
Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Mercy Housing Lakefront
Milwaukee Common Council
Milwaukee Continuum of Care
Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division
Milwaukee County Board
Milwaukee County Housing Trust Fund
Milwaukee County Division of Housing
Our Space, Inc.
St. Ben's Meal Program
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Wisconsin Office
Veterans Administration
Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org

2010 Annual Report

Milwaukee City/County Commission on Supportive Housing



Mission of the Commission

The enabling legislation established the following mission for the Commission on Supportive Housing:

"...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 those goals."

The City/County Commission on Supportive Housing was created by resolutions adopted in fall 2007 by both the Milwaukee Common Council and Milwaukee County Board. Both City and County officials appoint Commission members. The Commission held its inaugural meeting January 15, 2008.

The enabling legislation provided for appointees to the Commission representing the philanthropic community, the Milwaukee Continuum of Care, mental health advocacy organizations, mental health consumers, and citizen and business representatives. A list of the Commission's membership during 2010 is contained on page 4 of this report.

2010 Activities

The Commission met five times during 2010, on January 5, April 27, May 10, July 20, and October 19. Agendas and minutes of these meetings are available at www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org. James Tarantino was elected chair of the commission in January, and Suzanne Breier was elected vice-chair.

The Commission received quarterly updates on the development of supportive housing units in Milwaukee County.

The Commission also received presentations regarding federal SAMSHA funding, the Wisconsin Parity Act, and the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee's Designated Housing Plan. The Commission also adopted service standards for permanent supportive housing, and adopted bylaws to guide Commission business.

The Commission engaged in advocacy on behalf of the following:

- Support for the Housing Authority's Designated Housing Plan. The plan designates 1081 public housing units for occupancy by non-elderly disabled individuals. With 1300 non-elderly disabled applicants on the authority's waiting list, implementation of the Plan will help to reduce the number of low-income disabled individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Support for Milwaukee County's application for \$3.5 million in federal SAMSHA funding. The funds would assist the County to expand peer support networks and place additional peer support resources in supportive housing buildings, and implement a best practice model for supportive services.
- Support for proposed changes to the City of Milwaukee zoning ordinance to facilitate development of permanent supportive housing buildings, by relaxing the density and parking requirements for such buildings.

2010 Supportive Housing Development Activity



One new supportive housing development, Johnston Center Residences, opened its doors in 2010. Developed by Mercy Housing Lakefront, Johnston Center includes 91 studio units. Half were created through the remodeling of the City of Milwaukee's former Johnston Community Health Clinic at the intersection of S. 13th St. and Windlake Ave., which had been vacant for several years. The remaining units were constructed within a new addition built to the north of the clinic building.



Forty-one of the units house individuals who are chronically homeless, very low-income and disabled. The remaining 50 units house very low-income people who are at high risk of homelessness.

Hope House is providing supportive services at the building. Residents have access to an on-site service team comprising case workers, a property manager and a 24-hour front desk, who work together under a blended management model. Resident services include case management, employment services, education and training and resident leadership skills training.



The project includes a number of green design elements, such as solar hot water heating, a green roof, and an outdoor green space, to increase the building's energy efficiency and support the project's long-term sustainability. Building amenities include resident lounges, a laundry room, exercise room, computer lab, resident storage, and a community space open for use by neighborhood organizations.

Apartment occupancy began in September, and the grand opening for the building was held in mid-November. Financial support was provided by the City and County Housing Trust Funds, Community Development Block Grant, affordable housing tax credits allocated by the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Helen Bader Foundation, Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, and several local financial institutions.

Top left: The grand opening of Johnston Center Residences on November 18, 2010 reached its climax with a ribbon-cutting led by Mayor Tom Barrett and other government officials, leaders of Mercy Housing Lakefront, and new residents at the building. Johnston Center Residences is the largest permanent supportive housing development constructed in Milwaukee to date.

Right: Among those enjoying new apartments at Johnston Center Residences are Joel (left) and Erica.

At year's end, construction was underway at four additional supportive housing developments.

- **Empowerment Village—National Avenue** is a 34-unit apartment building at 1527 W. National Ave. The project includes renovation of an existing building to house offices and program space for Our Space, Inc.



The agency will provide supportive services at the building, which is being developed by Cardinal Capital. Our Space moved into its new quarters in

summer 2010, and occupancy of the residential units is expected in January 2011.

- **Thomas H. Wynn Veterans Manor** is a 52-unit apartment building at N. 35th St. and W. Wisconsin Ave. Ground was broken in June for the project, which will provide apartments for military veterans at risk of homelessness.



Top and middle: Before renovating the existing building at 1527 W. National Ave. into a new headquarters for Our Space, Inc., the developer tore down an aging addition to the original landmark building. A new addition containing 34 supportive housing units was constructed just south of the landmark building.

Bottom: Many military veterans joined neighborhood residents and local officials at the groundbreaking for Veterans Manor. The ceremony was held on a sunny June afternoon, just a few days before the nation celebrated Independence Day.

The Center for Veterans Issues is the developer and also will provide supportive services. Occupancy is expected in May 2011.



- **Empowerment Village—Lincoln Avenue** is a 30-unit apartment building under construction at S. 5th St. and W. Lincoln Ave. Cardinal Capital is the developer; services will be provided by Our Space.



- **Capuchin Apartments** is a 38-unit building at 2501 W. Fond du Lac Ave. Construction began in September. Development partners are Heartland Housing, Inc. and St. Ben's Community Meal program, which envisioned the building as an extension of its long-time mission to serve the poor and vulnerable.



Top: Construction proceeded quickly at Veterans Manor. This photo was taken at year's end.

Middle: An architect's rendering for Empowerment Village—Lincoln Avenue. Site preparation was underway at year's end.

Bottom: Capuchin Apartments, developed by a partnership that includes St. Benedict the Moor Church (St. Ben's), are named for the Capuchin Franciscan religious order, which serves the church.

Supportive Housing Scorecard

Figures current as of 12/31/10

Units needed in Milwaukee County*: 1260

Units occupied: 163

Units under construction: 154

Units proposed: 150

Unmet need: 793 units

*Per 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, published 2010

