

## Supportive Housing Commission members

Mr. Kenyatta Yamel, *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*

Ms. Anne McDevitt

Mr. Robert S. Berlan

Mr. Ken Schmidt, *Executive Director, Hope House*

Mr. James Tarantino, *Owner, Tarantino & Co.*

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

Ms. Martha Rasmus, *President, Mental Health America of Wisconsin (resigned January 2009)*

Ms. Rochell Williams, *Program Manager, Social Development Commission*

Ms. Suzanne Breier

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

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

## 10-YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

A coalition of more than 100 agencies and individuals worked throughout 2009 to develop a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Milwaukee. The plan, expected to be released in early 2010, will include recommendations regarding preventing homelessness, emergency shelter, employment

strategies, behavioral health and support services, and development of permanent supportive housing units. The Milwaukee Continuum of Care, an organization of agencies that work to prevent homelessness and provide services to homeless individuals, sponsored the planning project.

## 2009 POINT IN TIME SURVEY

As required by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, the Continuum of Care conducted a 24-hour count and survey of homeless individuals the weekend of January 28, 2009. The survey counted 1,660 adults and children who were homeless in Milwaukee. This number includes both sheltered and

unsheltered individuals, and does not include people who are doubling up or living in sub-standard housing units. A copy of the data collected during the survey is available at [www.mkedcd.org/SupportiveHousing/Resources/pdfs/MilwaukeePointinTime2009.pdf](http://www.mkedcd.org/SupportiveHousing/Resources/pdfs/MilwaukeePointinTime2009.pdf).

## LOCAL, ILLINOIS STUDIES LINK SUPPORTIVE HOUSING TO COST SAVINGS AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

Data released in 2009 regarding the experiences of residents at United House in Milwaukee and a larger study in Illinois provide insight into the impacts of supportive housing.

Our Space, Inc. provides recovery-oriented supportive services at United House, a 24-unit supportive apartment building at 2500 W. Center St. that opened in August 2008. According to outcome data compiled by Our Space for 2009, residents required minimal use of emergency mental health services, and most scored high on coping skills assessments, participated regularly in community activities offered at the building, and were compliant with medication needs. No residents of United House were arrested during the year. Most residents of United House are at risk of homelessness because of mental illness.

The Illinois study examined expenditures for Medicaid, mental health hospitals, substance abuse treatment, and corrections for 177 residents of supportive housing, comparing expenses for the two years before they entered supportive housing and the two years after. It found a 39 percent reduction in the total cost of services from pre- to post-supportive housing, with an average savings of \$2,414 per resident per year.

Other findings:

- Once in supportive housing, residents who had previously lived in more restrictive settings (i.e., nursing homes, mental health hospitals, and prisons) were unlikely to return.
- Residents shifted the type and volume of services they used, from a high reliance on expensive Inpatient/Acute services before supportive housing to less expensive Outpatient/Preventive services after supportive housing.
- Residents reported an increased quality of life after entry into supportive housing. Not only did their housing stabilize, but their health improved, and they experienced less stress.

Because the analysis did not include public costs related to homeless shelters, meal programs and free clinics, the study authors concluded the actual savings linked to supportive housing were even higher.

The full report, titled "Supportive Housing in Illinois: A Wise Investment," is available in the resources section of [www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org](http://www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org).

[www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org](http://www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org)

# 2009 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."*

At the request of Mayor Tom Barrett and County Executive Scott Walker, the Milwaukee Common Council and the Milwaukee County Board both enacted legislation creating a City/County Commission on Supportive Housing in September and October, 2007. 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, and mental health consumers, and citizen and business representatives. Two new members were appointed to fill vacancies on the Commission in 2009: Robert Berlan and Ken Schmidt. A list of the Commission's membership is contained in this report.

## 2009 ACTIVITIES

The Commission held quarterly meetings, on January 13, April 28, July 28 and October 15, 2009. Agendas and minutes of these meetings are available at [www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org](http://www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org). Throughout 2009, Kenyatta Yamel chaired the Commission, and James Tarantino served as vice-chair.

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

The Commission received ongoing updates regarding the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness developed by the Milwaukee Continuum of Care.

The Commission engaged in advocacy on behalf of several supportive housing projects and related legislation.

- The Commission advocated for the continuation of 2009 levels of funding for supportive housing activity in the 2010 Milwaukee County budget. This effort was successful.
- The Commission advocated for proposed state legislation that requires that health insurance policies provide coverage for mental health services at a level comparable to coverage for physical health services. The legislation was pending at the end of 2009.

**Message from the County Executive**

The partnership between Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee through the Commission on Supportive Housing has quickly shown positive results for those with special needs in our community. Breaking ground on several developments and meeting the residents excited to move into the newly completed buildings has been heartwarming.

It is wonderful to see the steady progress being made on developing permanent supportive housing in Milwaukee County. The participation of city, county, and community organizations has created safe and affordable options for those who are at risk of homelessness. The seamless collaboration of agencies from both the public and private sectors shows what is possible when we are all focused and committed to a shared core mission.

Congratulations to all those involved in meeting a critical need. These first projects provide a successful model that will attract future partners. The Commission on Supportive Housing's role will continue to improve the quality and number of housing options in the community.



Scott Walker  
Milwaukee County Executive

## 2009 SUPPORTIVE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

**Two new supportive housing developments opened their doors in 2009.**

- **Prairie Apartments**, a 24-unit building at 1218 W. Highland Blvd., held a grand opening celebration April 3, 2009.



Guest House of Milwaukee and Heartland Alliance of Chicago teamed up to sponsor the development. The project provides 24 new one-bedroom and studio apartments with private baths and kitchens.



Other amenities include a fitness center, technology center, laundry facilities, and tenant storage. Rent subsidies are available for two-thirds of the units.

Prairie Apartments serves individuals at risk of homelessness because of mental health or other conditions. Supportive services are provided to tenants by Guest House of Milwaukee.



- **Washington Park Apartments**, a 24-unit building at 3940 W. Lisbon Ave., held a grand opening December 18, 2009. The project was developed by United Methodist Children's Services, and includes 12 apartments reserved for families in recovery from homelessness or mental illness.



The building includes new space for the UMCS Family Resource Center food and clothing bank. Washington Park Apartments was financed with Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and received additional assistance from the City and County Housing Trust Funds, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and the Helen Bader, Greater Milwaukee, Jane Bradley Pettit, Elizabeth Brinn and Wells Fargo Foundations.

**Message from Mayor Tom Barrett**

I want to extend my thanks and congratulations to the members of the Commission on Supportive Housing, supportive housing developers, social service providers, and City and County staff. In just two short years, your partnership has made a significant start toward the achievement of our goal: ensuring that our community provides quality housing choices for our most vulnerable residents.

Our task is only beginning, however. Additional projects will come on line in 2010, and we also will receive recommendations regarding supportive housing in the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Commission's dual roles as advocate and monitor will be even more critical as we seek resources and partners to increase Milwaukee's supply of supportive housing.



Tom Barrett  
MAYOR

**Construction was underway at year's end at Milwaukee's largest supportive housing development to date.**

- Ground was broken May 28, 2009 for **Johnston Center Residences**, a 91-unit building at 1230 W. Grant St., Milwaukee.



The developer is Mercy Housing Lakefront, and supportive services will be provided by Hope House. The project involves renovation of the former Johnston Community Health Clinic and construction of a new addition on the north side of the building. The City and County Housing Trust Funds have provided grants to the project, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is providing rent vouchers through the Shelter Plus Care program. Occupancy is expected in 2011.



**Four supportive housing projects received allocations of Low Income Housing Tax Credits in 2009.**

- **Empowerment Village—National Avenue** is proposed as a 34-unit apartment building at 1525 W. National Ave. An existing building at the site will be used to house office and program space for Our Space, Inc., and apartments will be constructed in a building addition. Cardinal Capital is the developer, and Our Space will provide on-site supportive services. Construction is expected to begin in early 2010.
- **Empowerment Village—Lincoln Avenue** is proposed as a 30-unit apartment building at S. 5th St. and W. Lincoln Ave. Cardinal Capital is the developer, and Our Space will provide on-site supportive services. Construction is expected to begin in 2010.
- **Veterans Manor** is proposed as a 52-unit apartment building at N. 35th St. and W. Wisconsin Ave. The target population for this building is military veterans at risk of homelessness. The developer is the Center for Veterans Issues; the organization also will provide supportive services at the building.



A special Community Development Block Grant allocation, provided

through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will provide financial support to the project. Construction is expected to begin in early 2010.

- **2500 W. Fond du Lac** is proposed as a 30-unit building. The development is a partnership between Heartland Alliance and the St. Ben's meal program.