



A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Five-Year Progress Report

Milwaukee City/County Commission on Supportive Housing

November, 2013



**SUPPORTIVE
HOUSING**
MILWAUKEE



Tom Barrett



Chris Abele

Message from Mayor Tom Barrett and County Executive Chris Abele

Welcome to our report highlighting the life-changing work we have accomplished with our partners in the non-profit and business communities. Together we have been able to build safe and secure homes for people who struggle with mental illness and are at risk of homelessness. Over the past five years, the Commission on Supportive Housing has led the building of nearly 500 units in 12 developments throughout the City and County – a significant breakthrough and improvement for all of us.

Building homes for our neighbors has also had a profoundly positive impact on each of their neighborhoods. While this type of housing was unfamiliar, it has proven to be a community asset, providing spaces for all parts of our community to come together.

As we endeavor to create jobs and develop a well-prepared workforce, and as we focus on improving governmental efficiencies and cost effectiveness, the success of permanent supportive housing serves as a model for what we can accomplish in all these realms. Working across governmental jurisdictions and through partnerships with business and non-profit organizations has made a big impact on one of our toughest issues, and proved to be a sustainable economic model. Most importantly, it has given hundreds of people a new chance for recovery, a new home, and new hope.

Our work is not complete – of the 1260 units needed in Milwaukee County, 742 have yet to be built. We encourage a continued commitment to construct all the needed supportive housing that will improve the lives of our neighbors and strengthen our communities.

Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

Chris Abele
Milwaukee County Executive

Five years of significant progress

Homeless. Or life in a hellish apartment. Before 2008, these were often the only two options for many Milwaukee County residents who were dealing with mental illness.

While the staff of governmental and non-profit supporting organizations, as well as philanthropic funders, were certainly frustrated with the problem, and many mentally ill people were living with it every day, it was still primarily under cover and unknown by most people. A series of articles in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in 2006 and 2007 was one of the catalysts that propelled our community into action. A Special Needs Housing Action Team was assembled to develop a roadmap to provide higher quality housing options for individuals with mental illness and others at risk of homelessness.

In accordance with the Team's recommendation, and at the request of Mayor Tom Barrett and then County Executive Scott Walker, the Milwaukee Common Council and the Milwaukee County Board both enacted legislation creating the City/County Commission on Supportive Housing in the fall of 2007. The Commission held its first meeting in January of 2008. Comprising representatives from the philanthropic community, the Milwaukee Continuum of Care, mental health advocacy organizations, mental health consumers, real estate developers, and citizens, the Commission has been led by Kenyatta Yamel (chair, 2008-2010) and James Tarantino (chair, 2011-2013).

Since the Commission's formation, local government, developers and non-profit partners have taken action, based on sound plans and sustainable business models, to begin alleviating the pain and damage caused by an ill-coordinated approach to permanent housing for people with mental illness. Keeping an open mind to a variety of models, and engaging with a number of developers and partners, the Commission has reviewed proposals and advocated for measures to streamline the process of building permanent supportive housing with outstanding outcomes.

Not shelters, and not transitional housing, these homes are designed for people who pay affordable rent to live independently in an environment conducive to their recovery.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SCORECARD

Figures current as of 10/31/13

Units needed in Milwaukee County*: 1260

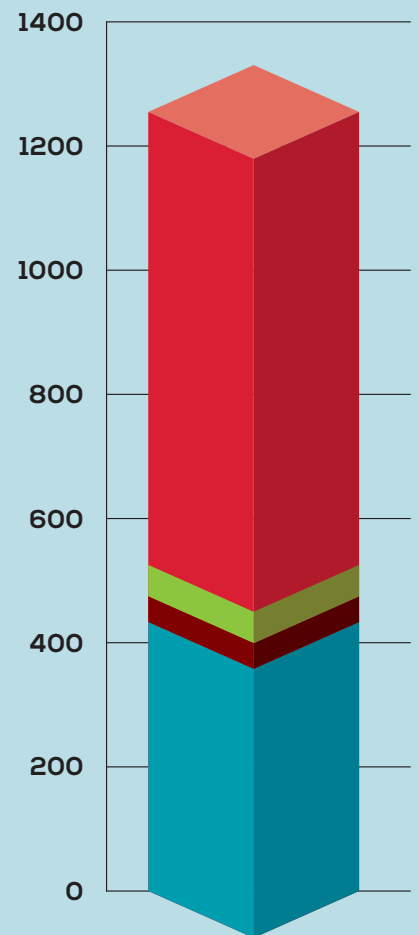
Units occupied: 421

Units under construction: 37

Units proposed: 60

Unmet need: 742 units

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





This housing model has been proved nationally to be very effective. Not shelters, and not transitional housing, these homes are designed for people who pay affordable rent to live independently in an environment conducive to their recovery.

The City and County Housing Authorities play key roles in the Supportive Housing picture. Every development has received rent vouchers from either one or both of the Authorities. Without those vouchers, it would be impossible for these buildings to operate, as the vouchers pay the difference between the operational costs of the development and the amount the residents can afford to pay.

Both established supportive housing developers, such as Mercy Housing Lakefront and Heartland Alliance of Chicago, and local developers new to the supportive housing product, joined the work of the Commission early on. This group has provided important impetus and best practices for our work. Federal, state, and local government subsidy and financing serve as a foundation for the development of supportive housing; the allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits by the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority has been a critical ingredient in the financing packages. Philanthropic investment has assisted to fill gaps. Non-profit service providers have signed on to ensure strong case management and peer support services in each development. Community business and civic partners helped to complete the picture. The first project, the 24-unit United House, opened in September, 2008, and was developed by the United Christian Church and Cardinal Capital, with support from the Milwaukee County Housing Trust Fund, the City's Housing Authority, and HUD's Shelter Plus Care Program.

Cutting through some onerous regulations, including zoning density and parking directives that did not relate to these developments, has been one of the ongoing public policy challenges. So too has been the sharp erosion of federal and state funding sources. Another challenge has often been community misconceptions about new residents moving into their neighborhoods.

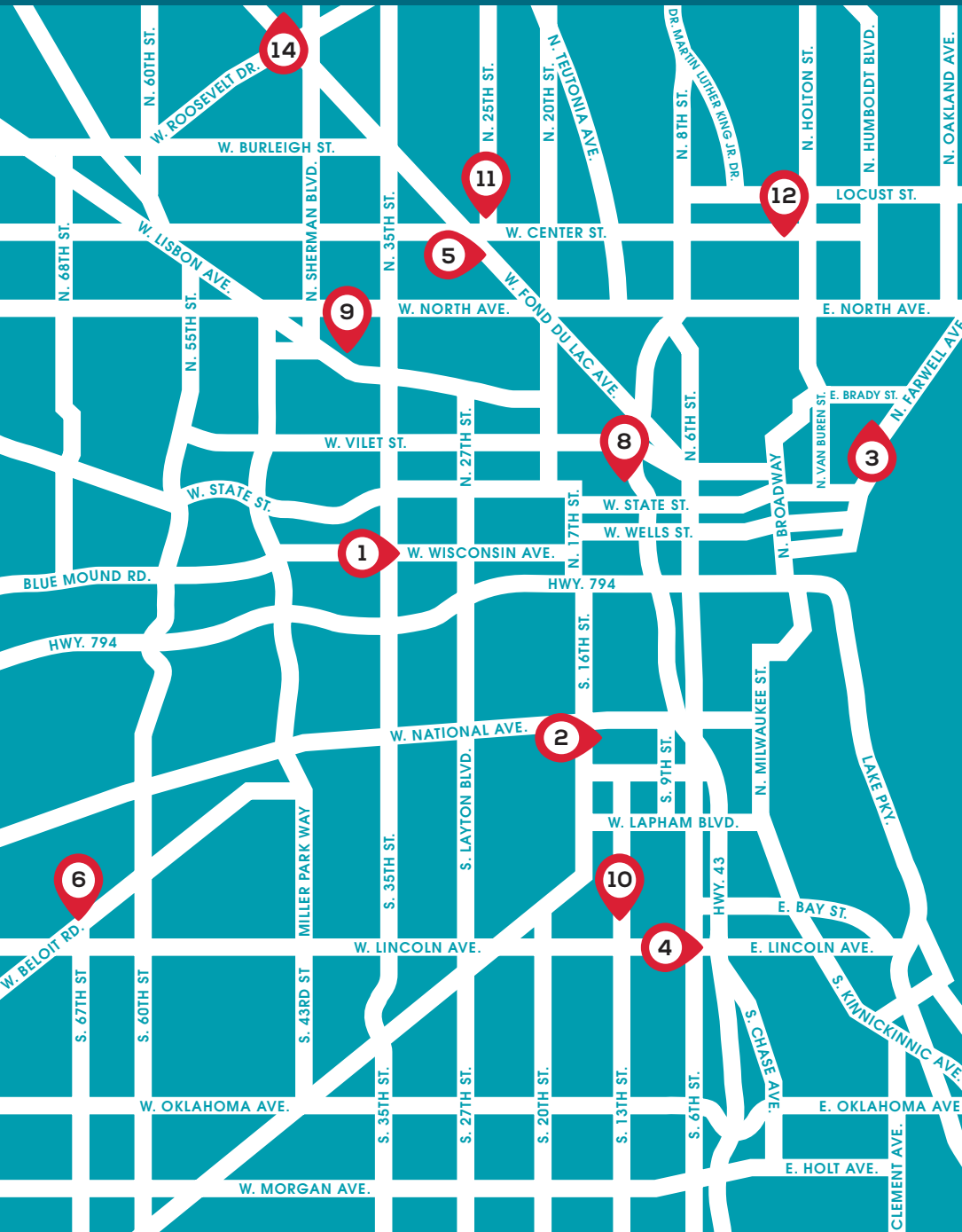
The reality is that supportive housing in Milwaukee County is an effective way to develop new collaborative models and streamline government regulations:

- Federal, state, and local funding is more than recovered in light of significant decreases in health care and community costs, including police and emergency shelter services.
- Job creation and retention are enhanced when people have a permanent home of their own.
- Supportive Housing invariably improves and revitalizes its neighborhood, and becomes a community resource for all.

Together we have made strong inroads to meet the supportive housing needs of our City and County in our first five years. With approximately one-third of our work accomplished, the coming years present significant challenges and opportunities to complete our goals. Government funding reductions and community perceptions must be overcome to realize the clear cost and community benefits of supportive housing.

We are grateful for the ongoing support and involvement of all our partners. We invite you to join us to build a bright future for our community, and to build places to call home for all our neighbors.

Supportive Housing Development Activity



- Veterans Manor**
 3430 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee
 (414) 207-8387
Developer: Cardinal Capital
Supportive Services Provider: Center for Veterans Issues
- Empowerment Village – National Avenue**
 1528 W. Walker St., Milwaukee
 (414) 383-4650
Developer: Cardinal Capital
Supportive Services Provider: Our Space, Inc.
- Farwell Studios**
 1328 E. Albion St., Milwaukee
Developer: Cardinal Capital
Supportive Services Provider: Our Space, Inc.
- Empowerment Village – Lincoln Avenue**
 525 W. Lincoln Ave., Milwaukee
 (414) 383-4830
Developer: Cardinal Capital
Supportive Services Provider: Our Space, Inc.
- Capuchin Apartments**
 2501 W. Tamarack St., Milwaukee
 (414) 372-9440
Developer: Heartland Housing
Supportive Services Provider: Guest House of Milwaukee
- Highland Commons**
 6700 W. Beloit Rd., West Allis
 (414) 344-0191
Developer: Cardinal Capital
Supportive Services Provider: Transitional Living Services
- Bradley Crossing**
 Bradley Crossing Phase I –
 4375 W. Bradley Rd., Brown Deer
 (414) 354-2700
 Bradley Crossing Phase II (occupancy 1/2015)
Developer: General Capital, Inc.
 and Jewish Family Services
Supportive Services Provider: Our Space, Inc.
- Prairie Apartments**
 1218 W. Highland Blvd., Milwaukee
 (414) 933-4999
Developer: Heartland Housing
Supportive Services Provider: Guest House of Milwaukee
- Washington Park Apartments**
 3940 W. Lisbon Ave., Milwaukee
 (414) 344-1818
Developer and Services Provider: United Methodist Children's Services
- Johnston Center Residences**
 2150 S. 13th St., Milwaukee
 (414) 383-7232
Developer: Mercy Housing Lakefront
Supportive Services Provider: Hope House of Milwaukee
- United House**
 2500 W. Center St., Milwaukee
 (414) 265-5740
Developer: Cardinal Capital
Supportive Services Provider: Our Space, Inc.
- Maskani Place** (occupancy 12/2013)
 320 E. Center St., Milwaukee
Developer: Heartland Housing
Supportive Services Provider: Community Advocates
- Veterans Gardens** (occupancy 2014)
 Several different addresses on northwest side of Milwaukee, in pre-development stage as of 9/15/2013
Developer and Supportive Services Provider: Center for Veterans Issues
- Community for Returning Women Soldiers**
 (occupancy 2015)
 4906 W. Fond du Lac Ave., Milwaukee
Developer: Common Bond Communities
Supportive Services Provider: Community Advocates

A home that's safe and welcoming

Luis Reyes has lived in his apartment at Empowerment Village-National for one year, and he loves it. "It's a pretty apartment, especially the bathroom!" laughs Luis, who considers his place a home in all respects. The 34-unit complex at 1528 W. Walker St., Milwaukee, opened in 2009. Developed by Cardinal Capital, Empowerment Village includes community meeting space and is directly connected to the headquarters of Our Space, a social service agency that serves individuals with mental illness.

Luis grew up in Milwaukee, and after a short time in Florida, he returned here. Moving to Empowerment Village gave him access to his Transitional Living Services caseworker, his dedicated peer specialist, and all the help they provide him in managing his mental health issues. It also enabled

him to join existing friends already living here and the opportunity to make new friends. He notes that he's close to his relatives, but that he also enjoys the "peaceful" atmosphere and benefits of being able to live independently.

Luis enjoys his neighborhood, where he can walk or ride his bike to many stores and restaurants. He loves music and playing his guitar, as well as singing in his church. Luis stays very busy with his family and volunteer commitments, as well as treatment protocols, and has many talents. He has worked as an electrician's helper, custodian, yardman, and day care teacher, and his interest in his neighbors shines through his demeanor. Being safe and supported at Empowerment Village has been a blessing for Luis. "It's more than nice – it's beautiful here!"

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"It's more than nice – it's beautiful here!"



Luis Reyes



From homeless to “Wow!”

Michael Johnson is polite and reserved. But he is enthusiastic to be living at the Johnston Center Residences at 2150 S. 13th St. on Milwaukee’s south side. “When I first saw it, I said ‘Wow!’”

A Chicago native, Michael has also lived and worked in Michigan. He moved to Milwaukee in 1997 to be near his ailing mother. “I wanted to be with her,” Michael notes, and was able to do so for five years before she died.

Michael’s long struggle with depression, coupled with significant physical challenges, culminated in his living on the streets in Milwaukee. While spending time at a Salvation Army shelter, he put his name on the list for Johnston Center, and was able to move in six weeks later.

Michael has worked demanding jobs in his life, including a graphics plant, for temporary services, and a Cargill slaughterhouse processing more than 1500 cows every day. Before moving to Milwaukee, he had the misfortune of breaking his neck in a Detroit car accident, necessitating 15 months in a halo, and his hands took a beating at the Cargill plant.

Living at the Johnston Center has been wonderful for Michael. “My case managers have each been 100 percent helpful to

me,” he says. Michael volunteers at the nearby St. Hyacinth Church’s food pantry, has made several friends at his complex, and enjoys cooking in his immaculate kitchen. He also is fully committed to his ongoing emotional and physical rehabilitation, including religiously keeping his appointments with his psychiatrist and his physical therapist.

The Johnston Center Residences is the largest supportive housing complex in the County; Hope House of Milwaukee provides the supportive services. Developed by Mercy Housing Lakefront, it provides homes for people who have been homeless or have a high risk of homelessness. Combining a remodeled vacant former City of Milwaukee health clinic and a handsome addition, it includes a number of green design elements (including solar hot water and a green roof). Its lower level features common areas including an exercise room, a computer lab, a resident lounge, and a community space for use by neighborhood organizations.

Michael is proud to show his apartment and the building’s amenities, and glad to be in an environment where he – and his neighbors – have the best chance they’ve ever had to build a new life with a promising future.

A safe space for everyone

Non-profit service providers are lifelines to the residents who have chosen to make supportive housing their home.

As a cornerstone of each supportive housing development, these agencies deliver on-site case management, coupled with other specialized services, to ensure the best possible medical, economic, and social outcomes for the residents.

Our Space, Inc. provides services in five supportive housing buildings – Empowerment Village (National and Lincoln Avenue locations), Farwell Studios, Bradley Crossing, and Fardale Apartments, as well as the Pathways to Permanent Housing Program. Founded in 1987 by family members, clergy, mental health providers, and consumers of mental health services as the Committee for a Milwaukee Drop-In Center, the organization was first given space by All Saints Cathedral.

Our Space supports adults in their recoveries from mental illness, and is based on a voluntary membership and peer support concept. It offers a number of programs, including occupational therapy, prevocational, educational, recreational, and psycho-socialization services to support recovery, rehabilitation, and renewal. The agency has grown in response to our community's significant needs. Our Space is funded by Milwaukee County and generous individuals and foundations, including ongoing support from the Erica P. John Fund.

Now located at 1527 W. National Avenue, the welcoming headquarters of Our Space bustles with energy. The building offers a variety of on-site supportive services for Our Space members, as well as space for outside community groups, and is connected to the Empowerment Village – National Avenue development.



Manager of Employment Services David Brown, who joined the Supportive Housing Commission in 2012, is a strong advocate for people with mental illness and for the peer support program that he leads. He also heads up vocational services and fund development, and supervises the staff at the Fardale and Bradley Crossing locations.

Hit by clinical depression in his mid-40s, David didn't leave his house for a year. While getting psychiatric treatment, it was finding the resources of Our Space "that gave me the chance I needed," says David. He enrolled in the peer support program, and then held a series of positions with Our Space. David's talents, including extensive hospitality management expertise and professional acting credentials, have been valuable additions to Our Space. After taking a leave for a year to serve as an executive director for another agency, David returned in 2013.

Our Space is skilled at training and placing its members in jobs, ranging from janitorial work to positions at Our Space's Blue Dove Gift Shop and Price Is Right Shoppe, where customers can obtain just about any household item they need to live independently free of charge. The Our Space peer support program is another success; it is a bridge to trust for many residents who otherwise may be wary of professional support givers. "Of course, stigma is still a big problem

Our Space supports adults in their recoveries from mental illness, and is based on a voluntary membership and peer support concept.

for people with mental illness who are trying to enter or reenter the work force," says David. "It's beneficial to remember one in four people will deal with mental illness at some point in their lifetimes, and that we all work with people who are dealing with it, whether we know it or not. Let's truly see the person, not the illness."

David has been fortunate to receive the medical and community support to rebuild his life, coupled with the encouragement of his "wonderful wife." He gives back that good fortune every day through his work at Our Space, as do all the Our Space members and staff.



Bradley Crossing – a new vision for Inclusion

A true hybrid model of supportive and affordable housing, Bradley Crossing, 4375 W. Bradley Rd., Brown Deer, serves individuals and families with a full range of mental and physical disabilities. Residents range in age from newborns to octogenarians, and the people who have chosen to call it home are working hard to make it a true community, where caring and creativity bring celebration to life every day. Helping to knit this together is Sister Patrice Colletti, SDS, inclusion coordinator, who has brought her enthusiasm and expertise to the residents and the surrounding Village of Brown Deer. In fact, the Village's Lois and Tom Dolan Community Center moved to space within Bradley Crossing, and the senior meal program is also held here. Ninety-seven residents engage with Sister Patrice to nurture each other, based on a model of caring, participation, and problem solving. Thanks to Sister Patrice and Jewish Family Services, Bradley Crossing is becoming a national model for successful supportive housing. Bradley Crossing is a partnership between Jewish Family Services, Inc. and JFS Housing, along with General Capital Group, and the inclusion coordinator's position has been made possible by a grant from the Helen Bader Foundation. There is a long waiting list and additional units will be built to open in early 2015. "I love to make things happen," says Sister Patrice. She and her friends and colleagues at Bradley Crossing are making great things happen every day.



Erich Schwenker



Veterans Manor

Building places to call home

“I believe in this city and region, and want to help people achieve their highest potential.” So says Erich Schwenker, President of Cardinal Capital, a national supportive housing developer based in Milwaukee. Along with all the developers who share the vision of a stronger community, Cardinal has been a significant force in the supportive housing success in Milwaukee County. Following a successful career in wealth management and real estate investment with both M&I and Chase, Erich and his partner Dan O’Connell started Cardinal 12 years ago.

Cardinal and its affiliate, Astar Capital Management, have acquired and developed and now manage 8000 affordable multifamily housing units on behalf of non-profit clients in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Arizona. Erich serves as President of Astar Capital Management, which provides all real estate services for the Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corporation, a non-profit that specializes in preserving the state of Wisconsin’s subsidized multifamily housing portfolio.

Working closely with non-profit housing partners is key to Erich’s business philosophy. The supportive housing model “takes the real estate risk off the plate for the non-profits so they can focus on providing the highest quality residential services” during the critical planning and start up phases. Cardinal provides important due diligence, and “stays with each tax credit project for 15 years,” he says. “Together with our non-profit colleagues, we help to ensure we are being

as realistic and smart as possible in delivering services to our residents and to all the citizens of Milwaukee County.”

Erich is convinced that planning and building homelike residences for our neighbors in need is a great investment for taxpayers. “Our residents need the safety and therapeutic benefits of a shared community, while still living independently,” he notes. “These supportive housing models are cost effective and good for the neighborhoods they are located in – and they enable people to call them home for as long as they want to.”

One of the most visible Cardinal projects is the award-winning Thomas H. Wynn, Sr. Memorial Veterans Manor at 3430 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, home to 52 people. Named in honor of Thomas Wynn, one of the founders of the National Association for Black Veterans, Veterans Manor was built on land that had been vacant for more than a decade before a development team led by the Center for Veterans Issues and Cardinal pursued redevelopment. Since opening on Memorial Day in 2011, the Manor has become a revitalizing force in the community, and includes a public restaurant – Troop Café – staffed by veterans as well as a catering business whose clients include 4000 children in Milwaukee Public Schools.

Erich sums up by saying: “There isn’t a block in this City that doesn’t have great people doing great things. We’re proud to work with many of them every day.”

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING COMMISSION MEMBERS

James Tarantino, Chair
CEO, Tarantino & Co.

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Jim Marks
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Manager of Employment Services, Our Space, Inc.

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Milwaukee Department of City Development

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This progress report was made possible by the generous support of the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, and Milwaukee Mental Health Consultants/Irving H. Raffe Fund. Thank you.



In memory of Joan Lawrence

-by Paula John

The Supportive Housing Commission and all our colleagues were saddened by the death of Joan Lawrence in September, 2012. Joan, who served as executive director of Our Space and a member of the Commission, was one of a handful of people in the Milwaukee community with the compassion and courage to serve persons with severe and persistent mental illness. Even before joining Our Space, for many years Joan worked on behalf of persons marginalized by society. In the early 80's she led the way in serving persons with AIDS/HIV illness. She was also instrumental in creating the Indian Health Board, as well as the Madre Angela Dental Clinic. Then in 2001, when Our Space was struggling, Joan stepped in and built it up to the dynamic thriving organization it is today. Among her many achievements with Our Space, including launching programs that have been replicated across the county, Joan was instrumental in organizing fund development efforts that resulted in a \$500,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, matched by an equivalent amount from local funders, to start the Crisis Resource Center. Joan fought for Our Space members with vim and vigor, but supported members themselves with kindness, respect and humor. The greatest testament to this is the many Our Space members who turned out for her memorial, tearfully expressing their love for her and sadness at her passing. Milwaukee will never fully know the tremendous contribution Joan made to our community, and it is with our deepest gratitude we say to our brave and generous friend, Adieu.



Bradley Crossing

Milwaukee City/County Commission on Supportive Housing

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