

June 2018



# REACH News

## BRIEF NOTES

- We will not be publishing **REACH News** in the months of July and August.
- A **Memorial Service** for our homeless friends who have died will be held on Thursday, June 14 at 11:00 a.m. at Incarnate Word Lutheran Church, 597 East Avenue.

## REACH Happenings:

- Please read **Andy Carey's report on the REACH Home during this past winter** on page 3 of this newsletter. All of us on the REACH Team are indebted to the fine work done by the staff and especially our social work team in the operation of this third winter shelter.
- The REACH Team is now actively working on becoming a fully incorporated entity under NYS Law. A **Nominating Committee** composed of Dan Callan (Chair), Jeanette Creighton, Marge Matzky, Heide Parreno, Deb Peiffer made a report on June 4 and are now charged with holding a ballot to elect members of the team to the Board. In addition, the Nominating Committee is recruiting people from the wider community whose expertise would enrich our work. We are anticipating a board of eleven members that would initially meet monthly, and then quarterly. The current REACH Team will become the REACH Operations Team to execute the work of our organization.
- REACH Advocacy is now actively exploring how we might create a **REACH Village of Tiny Homes**. We have identified three parcels of land for this project, two of which are owned by the city, and one by City of Refuge Ministries who meet as a church in a large house on their land. We have met with the pastor to describe our project and he has agreed to put together a committee of three from his congregation to meet with three of us from REACH. We have also made an initial presentation to Carol Wheeler, Housing Manager, City of Rochester and it was well received. In addition to this project, John Curran is in the very early stages of researching the potential for an additional project. REACH is now a partner in the **ROC Tiny Homes** group.
- REACH Advocacy is represented at the **Housing Justice Alliance of Rochester** in advocating for truly affordable housing for the very poor. This alliance came into being as a result of the closing of the Cadillac and the developer's goal of gentrifying the building. We recently made a FOIL request of the City to learn how many units of truly affordable housing have been lost due to gentrified developments? We were told that the City does not keep track of this number! The loss of truly affordable homes is a contributing factor in homelessness.

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## ***Local Homelessness News:***

- **The Cadillac Hotel closing** is symbolic of the housing crisis in our city. Poor people are being marginalized and forcefully removed from our central city area where many of the services this population needs are located.
- **South Avenue Encampment** continues to face an eviction by the landowner, Spectrum. Pat Dupont of St. Joe's House of Hospitality is coordinating an "eviction watch" and members of REACH are participating in this. Any interested person can message Pat at: [patrickdupont@gmail.com](mailto:patrickdupont@gmail.com)
- **Potluck in the Park**, one of our REACH Team members, Michael Gill, is helping to organize a meal program for people living on the streets. He has created a Facebook page where people can sign up to help create and serve meals. Please go to [Potluck in the Park](#) for details.
- **Project Homeless Connect – September 13**, Jeanette Creighton of our REACH Team is the VA liaison to this event and is collecting toiletries to be handed out to those in attendance. Please email Jeanette at [jeanettegcreighton@gmail.com](mailto:jeanettegcreighton@gmail.com) if you are able to assist her in this valuable work.
- **June 6 Albany trip**, following a virtual sit-in at the Governor's Rochester office, members of the Housing Justice Alliance were invited to meet with Alphonso David in Albany. Sixteen of us made the journey and we met for over two hours with Mr. David and four of his staff members. He heard from tenants facing either eviction or dealing with absentee and irresponsible landlords, and from people who are homeless and frustrated at the rigidity of DHS systems as they try to cope with the stress of homelessness. Our three central requests were that the Governor would initiate and support: an end to no fault evictions; that the rent stabilization statute now operating in three down state regions be extended to the whole state; and that a local housing court be created giving tenants access to legal defense against predatory landlords. While Mr. David was gracious and welcoming to all of us, he was careful to point out that the political challenges of Albany make it very difficult for the Governor to announce his position on these kinds of items before a great deal of preparatory work has been done. He assured us that the Governor was doing his utmost to change the narrative around housing in the NYS. We reminded him that the Governor has a moral responsibility to lead in the face of the current housing crisis that is affecting the lives of the very poor.

## ***National Homelessness News:***

The Rochester Tenants Union rent strike was mentioned in [The Nation](#) magazine. This article gives a significant review of the housing crises we are facing as a nation.

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## ***Funding REACH:***

While we are in the process of becoming fully incorporated as a non-profit organization donation can still be made through our account at the Finger Lakes Area Community Endowment Fund of the Canandaigua National Bank. Just [click here](#) and select REACH Advocacy, or send a check to REACH Advocacy, P.O. Box 10845, Rochester NY, 14610. Donations will be used to assist us with the creation of a Tiny Home Village and, if necessary, to open another shelter in the coming winter.

We were delighted to receive a donation of almost \$2,000 from Laurelton Presbyterian Church this past month.

## ***Final Report of REACH Home 2017-18 - Andy Carey, Co-Chair***

So much of what made the REACH Home at Dimitri House an amazing adventure revolved around subjective criteria. The guests, staff, and volunteers learned a great deal in relationship with each other. These intangibles are best expressed by the people who experience them, so they are difficult to track. Gratefully, there is also objective criteria to show the achievements of REACH Home at Dimitri House.

Over the 143 days REACH was open, we provided roughly *4,000 individual nights of shelter*. REACH Home provided shelter to *165 different guests* over the season. *115 of the guests were men and 50 were women*. REACH was especially pleased with the number of women served because sheltering women was a focus this season. A warm bed at night during the Rochester winter was important, but REACH Home stayed open during the day, as well.

The daytime hours allowed REACH Staff and social workers to work with guests to build supports that enabled people to move towards their goals. REACH Home was grateful to have other community agencies utilize the shelter as a platform for providing their services, as well. A wide variety of services were offered and provided:

1. 31 guests were linked to Substance Abuse Services including detox, inpatient, medically assisted treatment, and outpatient treatment. The staff was especially good at motivating people towards treatment. This has always been important but felt even more pressing this year due to the ongoing opioid epidemic.
2. 5 guests were linked to intensive Mental Health Treatment. This service was especially important because the stabilization of mental health symptoms greatly decreases the risk of adverse events happening to homeless individuals with acute mental health issues.
3. 29 guests were newly linked to Health Home Care Management for ongoing support. Many guests were already linked to Care Management, so REACH staff was able to alert care management agencies when their clients were guests. Re-connecting guests and care managers was another important service provided by REACH Home.
4. Many guests received physical health care while at REACH. Heide Health and the URM Medical Outreach Team provided these much-needed services.
5. 115 guests received housing education to better prepare them for the next step into housing.
6. **71 guests were assisted with moving into permanent housing through a variety of services.** The methods utilized for housing were rapid rehousing, permanent supported housing, DHS Temporary Assistance, regular housing searches for people with income, and some security deposits provided by REACH. That means **42% of REACH Guests were permanently housed.**

One of the most important statistics, is the generosity of the community members who provided a hot meal every night REACH Home was open. REACH Home Supporters provided 4,290 individual meals. That type of community involvement truly helps create an environment conducive to growth.

Please feel free to contact Andy Carey at [mccollaborative1@gmail.com](mailto:mccollaborative1@gmail.com) for further details on any of these statistics.