



## MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING AND SHELTER ALLIANCE

Fall 2008

Dear Friend:

You can help save lives.

Just one year ago, Jim was homeless. He had been suffering on the streets for more than five years. Cold. Alone. Sick.

Jim has emphysema. It required four breathing treatments and 10 pills daily. He had to see three different doctors. Despite all of this, his health was getting worse.

You see, Jim's homelessness made it impossible for his treatments to be effective. He didn't have anywhere safe to store his medicine so it wasn't stolen. He didn't have a stable place to plug in the machine for his breathing treatments. Every night, he slept within a foot of eight other people.

Then, it seemed like a miracle happened. Jim's case manager told him about a new program called **Home & Healthy for Good, overseen by the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA)** and its member agencies. He offered Jim an apartment that was available through MHSA member Father Bill's Place in Quincy. Without a moment's hesitation, Jim took it. And his life hasn't been the same since.

MHSA is a statewide non-profit organization that advocates for the **solution to homelessness: housing.** We develop effective programs like *Home & Healthy for Good* that **save lives – and taxpayer dollars.**

The truth is, homelessness is expensive. We all pay for the costs of homeless people on the street, in emergency rooms and in shelters. But once someone has a permanent home with supportive services, his life can finally stabilize. His need for expensive state-funded emergency services goes down dramatically. His health improves. Jim is living proof.

**Home & Healthy for Good saves the Commonwealth almost \$8,000 per tenant annually.** In only two years, **we estimate that we've saved taxpayers \$2.4 million by providing housing with services to a very sick, vulnerable population.** More importantly, we've also saved more than 300 lives.



### Meet Jim

Jim is from Dorchester. He's a veteran. **He's also a father and grandfather.** He makes tasty spaghetti sauce and loves to grill in his backyard.

But for more than five years, Jim didn't have a backyard. **He didn't even have a home.**

Every day, he waited in line with other homeless people for a shelter bed. Some nights he got one, other nights he didn't. **This was his routine for more than 1,800 days.** As a result, he was sick and in the hospital "all the time."

But not all was lost for Jim. **Thanks to MHSA and Home & Healthy for Good, Jim now has his own bed in his own home.**

He has a place to treat his emphysema, a bed to rest in and most importantly, he's connected with his family and regained his **independence.**

He's learning to use a computer, too. **A typical grandfather,** he'll boast about his grandson any chance you give him (who, by the way, is 11 years old, has a red belt in Taekwondo and is taking advanced math).

Jim is proud of his healthy new life. I couldn't be more proud that **we helped make it happen for him.**

**Please make a gift to MHSA today** so that together, we can help more people like Jim come *home for good.*

(Over, please)

Meet a few tenants that MHSA helped find homes:



Someone's brother: Joe

When he lived on the streets, Joe's medications were constantly stolen.

If he was somehow able to hang onto his pills, they didn't work well because they needed refrigeration.

Now in an apartment, Joe has a refrigerator to keep his medicine safe and effective. He prepares his own healthy meals and feels stronger, more energized – and ready to start his new life.



Someone's mother: Mary

Mary became homeless at 56. During her two-year stay in a shelter, her health suffered.

One she obtained a home, her medical conditions improved dramatically. She was able to have a routine cancer screen, which led to a diagnosis.

Mary had surgery and recuperated **in her own home**. She is alive today because of advocacy for programs that *end*, not manage, homelessness.



Someone's son: Tim

Tim was discharged to the streets after being in the hospital for his mental illness. The next years of his life were a haze as he bounced among hospitals, shelters and the street.

Now in an apartment with supportive services, Tim is keeping up with his medications. He is paying rent. His mental health – like his life – has stabilized. He loves to exercise to stay healthy and is on the road to recovery.

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So now you know: Jim's transformation wasn't a miracle. MHSA's policy advocacy, program development and **commitment to ending homelessness** brought *Home & Healthy for Good* to life. It also gave Jim a new lease on life. Since moving in, Jim's health has improved and he's been visiting the hospital a lot less. It turns out the best remedy for his illness was the key to an apartment where he could take care of himself.

Today, I am asking for your gift to help us provide keys that will end the homelessness of so many others like Jim, Joe, Mary and Tim. Whatever you can manage will make a difference. We can't do it without you. We need you to support the critical advocacy, innovation and program development that has helped Jim – and more than 300 others like him in the *Home & Healthy for Good* program – finally turn the key and enter homes of their own.

Your gift will help so many others who still need the keys to their new lives. They need a place to feel secure, treat their illnesses and get back on the road to health. They need the stability only a home, not a shelter, can provide. Will you join me in bringing our poorest, most vulnerable neighbors *home for good*? Please send your tax-deductible contribution to MHSA today. Thank you for your generosity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Joe Fiori".

President & Executive Director



P.S. We all know how bitterly cold New England winters can be. Please remember our poorest, most vulnerable neighbors by making your gift to MHSA by December 21 - the longest night of the year.