

Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance
 PO Box 120070
 Boston, MA 02112

THE NORTH STAR

Volume 6, Issue 1

"Initiating Solutions to End Homelessness"

Winter 2010

Home & Healthy for Good Selected as 2010 Social Innovator

At a celebratory event at the Parkman House in Boston on January 20, 2010, MHSA's Housing First initiative *Home & Healthy for Good* was announced as a 2010 "Social Innovator" by Root Cause and its Social Innovation Forum for demonstrating a promising solution to the pressing social problem of homelessness.

Six innovative nonprofit organizations in Greater Boston were selected from more than 145 entrants in the seventh year of the nationally recognized program. More than 60 leaders in business, philanthropy and the nonprofit sector reviewed the applications in a rigorous evaluation process.

The award entitles each organization to \$75,000 in cash and services, including strategy consulting, business planning, executive coaching and introductions



to potential philanthropic investors to help them gain visibility and acquire the resources necessary to expand their work. "We were absolutely thrilled to be chosen as a Social Innovator," said MHSA Executive Director Joe Finn. "We look forward to a productive partnership with Root Cause and the Social Innovation Forum."

The Social Innovators' strategy and business support will culminate on

May 4 with participation in the Social Innovation Forum "Showcase" event, which is modeled after venture capital forums in which early-stage organizations present their ideas directly to investors. During the showcase, each nonprofit will seek to present their most compelling case for support to more than 250 potential philanthropic investors.

Root Cause is a national nonprofit organization that works toward solutions to social and economic problems. Its Social Innovation Forum (www.socialinnovationforum.org) seeks to develop enduring solutions to social problems by directing an alternative flow of resources to innovative and results-oriented nonprofit organizations that strive for efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

HPRP: REGIONAL INITIATIVES TO END HOMELESSNESS

The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, signed into law in February 2009, included \$1.5 billion intended for a new Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). Through this new funding stream, MHSA received a grant for \$1.9 million from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and is now collaborating with six service agencies across the state.

The HPRP grant addresses a critical need: preventing individuals who are experiencing financial or social crisis from becoming homeless and helping recently homeless individuals find permanent housing. HPRP is unique in that it serves a very specific and vulnerable population of individuals who only need short-term assistance to build long-term stability. The new grant focuses on the value of the Housing First methodology, an emerging paradigm shift that places obtaining permanent housing as a top priority in ending homelessness.

Rapid re-housing is an important tool in Housing First strategies that removes newly homeless individuals from shelters and helps prevent the accrual of chronically homeless individuals and the long-term harm and dependency created by extended shelter stays. By ensuring that individuals have acceptable housing, Housing First catalyzes increased financial stability and reins in the social, medical, financial and psychological costs associated with living in shelters or on the street.

MHSA partner agencies will provide case management tailored to clients' specific needs and distribute short- and medium-term rental assistance as clients work to stabilize their finances.

All of our partners have proven success in serving their respective regions. Working in collaboration, each agency now has an improved capacity to reduce homelessness in Massachusetts.

MHSA has partnered with the following organizations:	Boston, Chelsea and Revere:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HomeStart Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership
Merrimack Valley:	Western Massachusetts:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Teamwork, Inc. Lowell Transitional Living Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Middlesex Opportunity Council HapHousing

"This program is going to ensure that people moving into permanent housing can maintain their housing as we now have the ability to give those individuals the necessary community support they need," said Peter Duda, Executive Director of the Lowell Transitional Living Center (LTLC). "HPRP is a critical, added resource that will help Lowell Transitional and our partner organizations move toward the Housing First model and further strengthen the tools we have to end homelessness."

While there are still overarching gaps in homeless services across the Commonwealth, the HPRP grant will provide a critical opportunity to develop long-term housing solutions. MHSA is grateful for the support from DHCD and is encouraged by the state's commitment to working with us on the many initiatives that will help us reach our goal of ending homelessness in the Commonwealth.

SAVE THE DATE Wednesday, May 26, 2010

Seventh Annual Spring
 Fundraising Event for MHSA
 Omni Parker House Hotel, Boston
 Cocktail Reception and Awards Presentation

Honorees

Chief Executive Officer of NAIOP Massachusetts

David Begelfer

President & Executive Director of Victory Programs, Inc.

Jonathan Scott

More information and honorees to be announced.

Join us!



MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING
 AND SHELTER ALLIANCE

MHSA is a non-profit public policy advocacy alliance with the singular mission of ending homelessness in the Commonwealth.

Through strategic partnerships formed with government, private philanthropy, business leaders, homeless individuals and service providers, MHSA works to ensure that homelessness does not become a permanent part of the social landscape.

Joe Finn, President and Executive Director

Tom Brigham, Housing First Coordinator

Erin Donohue, Development and Communications Director

Dr. Jessie Gaeta, Physician Advocate

Caitlin Golden, Outreach Coordinator

Nicole Silva, Development and Communications Associate

Doug Tetrault, Program Assistant

Patrick Walsh, Policy and Advocacy Director

Janice Whalen, Financial Assistant

Kaye Wild, Vice President

Tom Yotts, Director of Finance and Administration

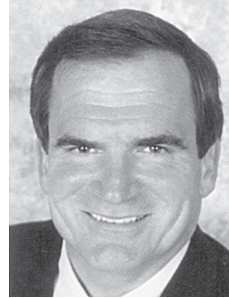
Contributing to MHSA

Today there is an unprecedented consensus on our shared capacity to end homelessness. State and local governments are taking an interagency approach to the problem, plans to end homelessness are being enacted, and corporate and community partners are joining forces to create systemic change. Action is producing visible outcomes in Massachusetts.

Please use the enclosed envelope to send in your tax-deductible contribution today and be a part of this revolution.

MHSA
PO Box 120070
Boston, MA 02112

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOE FINN



It's time for us to be in a rush.

I was late to a meeting, hurrying down Summer Street, when a disabled homeless person I'll call Bill, who I have known for years, approached me. He asked if he would have a home by February.

I didn't have an answer for him. If the housing and appropriate services were available, I would move him in tomorrow. The truth is, despite all of our success here at MHSA, **we aren't yet finished** in our efforts to move disabled, chronically homeless individuals off the streets, out of shelters, and into homes of their own. While we have proven time and again that permanent supportive housing is far less costly than relying on emergency shelter or simply doing nothing, **we haven't yet finished the job.**

FY 2011 Policy Update: Conversion and Rapid Re-Housing

Advocating for resources and constructing policy has never been as challenging as it is during these unprecedented fiscal times. The past six months of advocacy to end homelessness have been a **roller coaster ride** that has often had us holding on for dear life to protect the important but scarce resources serving homeless adults in Massachusetts. As we plan for the next fiscal year, we are prepared for any uphill, downhill or loops that may come our way.

After a 9C cut to the **Homeless Individuals Assistance Line Item (7004-0102)** in October, Governor Patrick thankfully found additional resources to maintain level funding in this line item for Fiscal Year 2010. The Governor's FY 2011 budget level funds 7004-0102 and the **Home & Healthy for Good Line Item (7004-0104)**. Governor Patrick recognizes the critical role these resources have played in forwarding new and innovative strategies that end homelessness. As we look forward to FY 2011, **MHSA and its partners are prepared to transform the current homeless service system into one based on triage, community-based services and rapid re-housing for homeless individuals.**

MHSA continues to promote **flexible use** of homeless service funds and conversion of shelter dollars into resources for housing opportunities. We are working with the Department of Housing and Community Development to promote our conversion strategy and to direct resources

And because of people like Bill, I'm in a rush to end homelessness. The good news is that I'm not alone.

More and more providers of homeless shelter and services are asking how they can use resources more efficiently to support chronically homeless people in housing rather than letting them languish on the streets or in shelter. The private sector and philanthropic groups are asking how they can make a more **lasting impact** on homelessness. New partnerships are forming every day with a shared ultimate goal: **ending, not managing, homelessness.**

What we need is a sense of immediacy, where low-threshold supportive housing - instead of temporary shelter - is the default option for people like Bill. I hope and believe that the day is coming soon when I can walk the streets of Boston or through the Common and realize that Bill isn't there. **I won't have to wonder where he is because I'll know - he's home.**

to effective housing programs. It is only with this flexibility that MHSA and its partners will be successful in providing more **permanent, sustainable solutions to homelessness.**

The passing of the federal economic stimulus bill in early 2009 had a positive impact on MHSA's efforts to end homelessness in Massachusetts. Through funds provided by the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), MHSA will collaborate with agencies in

Lowell, Greater Boston and Western Massachusetts to help **rapidly move individuals from shelter into housing with stabilization services.** This program will both limit the amount of time individuals have to spend in shelter and reduce the state's need for shelter capacity. **It will also set homeless individuals on a path to greater independence.**

In the past year, we have learned and been reminded of a number of lessons in policy advocacy and development. We know that we cannot move our mission forward without the **support of concerned citizens who embrace and spread the message that there is a better approach to homelessness than emergency shelter.** We have also learned that at times it is important to take a principled stand and we are grateful to have friends who stand with us when called upon. While our roller coaster ride to end homelessness might be filled with peaks and valleys, one thing is certain: **we are rapidly moving forward, on the right track, to end homelessness.**

POLICY

TALK

A YEAR IN REVIEW: MHSA ANNUAL MEETING

The MHSA Annual Meeting was held at member agency **Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program** on December 17.

MHSA Board Member **Jim Cuddy of South Middlesex Opportunity Council** welcomed guests and conducted official board business.

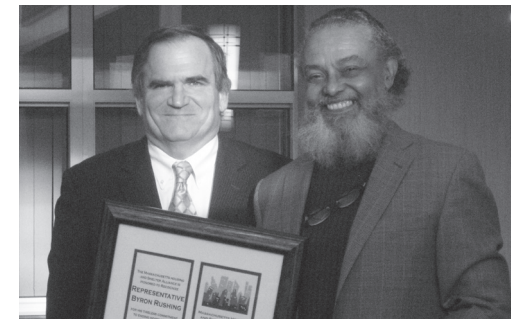
After a review of recent accomplishments, the Board of Directors voted and welcomed **Lyndia Downie of Pine Street Inn, John Yazwinski of Fr. Bills & MainSpring, Wilton Hyman of New England Law Boston, Dean Atkins of Mintz Levin and Kiley Gosselin of**

Holland & Knight to the board.

MHSA President & Executive Director Joe Finn presented Representative Byron Rushing an award for his tireless work and commitment to ending homelessness in the Commonwealth. Representative Rushing graciously accepted the award and remarked on his long relationship working with MHSA to end the homelessness of our poorest, most vulnerable neighbors.

Guests watched a slide show created using images by photographer Tara Morris of MHSA's **Journey to Success** tenants, which highlighted

the year's accomplishments and thanked all the supporters of MHSA for investing in permanent solutions to homelessness.



Social Action Ministries: Faith Communities Ending Homelessness Through Advocacy

Social Action Ministries (SAM) engages people of all faiths in MHSA's mission to end homelessness.

In the fall of 2009, SAM supporters demonstrated their dedication to our homeless neighbors by advocating for the reversal of a proposed 9C cut to the Homeless Individuals Assistance Line Item, which was ultimately restored.

People of various faiths called others to action from the pulpits and through volunteer programs, and they passed on that call to action to their elected officials.

Would you like to get involved in the mission of MHSA: ending homelessness? Visit www.mhsa.net and click "Get Involved" for more information about what you can do through SAM, the MHSA Young Professionals Group and more!

In addition to statewide advocacy, **SAM has focused on engaging faith communities in the Boston and Metro Boston regions** through grants funded by the Fireman Foundation, One Family, Inc. and Episcopal

City Mission. SAM chairs the Boston Faith-Based Advisory Council to End Homelessness, which is currently focusing on ways for faith communities to support permanent housing solutions to homelessness. **Caitlin Golden** of SAM and **Alexander Kern** of Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries co-chair the **Metro Boston Faith-Based Advisory Council**, which is developing an outreach and education strategy to engage faith communities in supporting the Metro Boston Regional Network's focus on Housing First, diversion, prevention and affordable housing.

MHSA Offers New Service to Members: Massachusetts Community Voice Mail



Continuing MHSA's commitment to connecting our poorest neighbors with the resources necessary to move from crisis to stability, MHSA began to serve as the host agency for **Massachusetts Community Voice Mail (CVM)** in September 2009. Formerly

known as "Project Connect," **Massachusetts CVM has assisted more than 10,000 people since launching in 1996**, including clients in Greater Boston, the South Shore and Western Massachusetts.

CVM helps people living in poverty, transition and homelessness rebuild their lives by connecting them to jobs, housing and information.

Each CVM client receives a **unique local telephone number** at which the client can receive voicemail messages and pursue goals

of work, housing, healthcare or safety from domestic violence. In addition to offering a tool for clients to attain personal goals, CVM allows case managers to send "broadcast messages" alerting CVM clients of job opportunities or emergency information.

To find out how to bring CVM to your organization or community or to donate to CVM, please contact Caitlin Golden at cgolden@mhsa.net or 617-367-6447 ext. 28.

New Faces at MHSA



Doug Tetrault, Program Assistant

Doug will be assisting in various MHSA initiatives including HPRP, **Home & Healthy for Good**, PDPR and **Journey to Success**. Prior to joining MHSA, Doug worked at an education reform organization in Indianapolis, IN and at Be the Change, Inc. in Cambridge. After graduating from Champlain College with a bachelor's degree in Professional Writing, Doug researched legislative issues pertaining to human rights and advocacy law as an intern for the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee.



Jeannie Sur, Social Action Ministries Intern

While at MHSA, Jeannie will be working to engage faith communities in ending homelessness. Jeannie is a Master of Divinity candidate at Harvard Divinity School. Jeannie earned her bachelor's degree in political science from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. She worked as a Housing Specialist for Amherst H. Wilder Foundation and Simpson Housing Services, Inc., both in Minnesota.

Welcome, Doug and Jeannie!