Dear Partners and Friends;

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff, we are pleased to offer this 2016 Annual Report for your review. Following achieving the milestone of ending Veterans' homelessness in December 2015, we used 2016 to build on that momentum, laying groundwork for the next coordinated campaign for ending homelessness for those suffering homelessness the longest. This subset of people suffering homelessness, known as “chronic,” is defined as someone with a disability and experiencing homelessness for a year or more. The target date for Montgomery County’s meeting this goal is December 2017.

As a housing-focused outreach program, we know that housing is healthcare. The scourge of homelessness is a public health issue as well as an affordable housing issue. Those experiencing long-term homelessness die an average of 25 years earlier than their cohorts. We are proud to be part of the effort to end homelessness for all.

Our mission, to prevent, ease and end homelessness in our county, begins with prevention. Keeping people from homelessness not only saves money by minimizing the use of costly social service programs, it also reduces trauma to those involved. Their belongings aren’t left in the street, children stay in their schools and families stay intact.

Living unsheltered is miserable and dangerous. We offer multiple services to ease the harshness our clients endure: hot meals, clothing, showers and mental health services, to name a few. Each service also serves as a tool of engagement, building trust with the client each time we are able to say “yes” and meet their needs.

Our work doesn’t end once someone is in housing. After years of survival on the streets, going to day-to-day normalcy takes a period of adjustment. Our Critical Time Intervention social worker walks with them on this path. From helping to navigate opening bank accounts, getting a library card and teaching bus routes, he helps them navigate the frustrations of learning a new way of life.

We thank you for being part of this journey and look forward to celebrating the end of homelessness with you in the very near future.

Warm regards,

Susan W. Kirk
Executive Director

Kathy Pettit
President, Board of Directors
As a housing focused outreach program, our goal is to house every person we work with. But the process of ending someone’s homelessness is far more complex—and lengthy—than simply perusing apartment listings and moving someone in. Thus, while we are working with clients, we strive to reduce the harm inherent in living on the streets.

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Most of our clients have been on the streets longer than 5 years; a few as long as 40 years. We work with each at his/her own pace, based on our building trust with each individual. But while we are working with them, they are still living on the streets, exposed to the elements. Thus, part of our engagement with them is aimed at keeping them as healthy as possible.

DROP-IN LOBBY
Located in downtown Bethesda, our lobby serves as a day shelter. Clients are welcome to get out of the weather and to have a place to rest without being told to move along. A hospitality hub, we foster a welcoming environment with coffee, tea and food. We help clients keep ties with people in their lives: we permit clients to use our mailing address as theirs, so families and agencies have a place to contact them. We also offer a landline phone for their use, as well as outlets to charge their own phones. Everyone is welcome in the lobby, regardless of whether seeking other services. For those who do seek services such as seeing our psychiatrist, social workers or outreach workers, they will sign up at our front desk. The lobby is also where they may sign up for showers and obtain vouchers for our clothing closet. We make toiletries available to use and to take along. We keep socks, ponchos, water, backpacks among other items to give out in the office, as well as use for street engagement.

LUNCH PROGRAM
We serve a full hot meal every day of the year except Christmas (offered by a partner), totaling more than 13,000 each year. Decades ago, lunch was the first service Bethesda Cares offered clients; to this day, our volunteers and community maintain major roles in food donations as well as service. This wonderful outside involvement provides a welcoming presence that helps ease isolation that occurs from living on the streets. It also helps integrate our community; food and conversation are wonderful normalizers.

CLOTHING CLOSET
People suffering homelessness have nowhere to store clothing, so their need to replace soiled or wet clothes is constant. In spaces provided by the Regional Services Center and Bethesda Presbyterian Church, we provide clients with seasonal donated clothing, shoes and accessories free of charge, through our Clothing Closet. The Closet is open at the Regional Services Center Tuesday and Thursday mornings and at Bethesda Presbyterian on Saturdays, during our lunch program.
**SHOWER PROGRAM**

On Tuesday afternoons, Bethesda United Methodist Church opens its doors to host a shower program for our clients. In addition to merely offering the space, volunteers work with our staff to greet clients, as well as offer small incentive gifts. Most importantly, they help ensure that our clients feel welcome and heard.

**MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES**

Over the years, we have gratefully added services offered by volunteer groups or individuals. Services have ranged from medical clinics to smoker cessation to tickets to various events.

In 2016, for instance, clients received tickets to the final Ringling Brothers’ circus courtesy of the NIH Recreation and Welfare office. Sathya Sai providing full breakfasts once a month and quarterly Saturday lunch. The Jim and Carol Trawick Foundation donated tickets to Bethesda Big Train baseball. Our annual Thanksgiving Dinner was sponsored in large part by KVS Title. The annual Goodwill Dinner, offering a fabulous holiday meal, gifts for the children and visit with Santa, was again sponsored by Bethesda Hyatt Hotel, The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, Regional Government Services Center, Bethesda Urban Partnership, B-CC Rescue Squad and Bethesda District Police. Gifts to distribute to clients at Bethesda Cares’ own holiday party are donated from the Women of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church.

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**EASING HOMELESSNESS, BY THE NUMBERS**

- **13,216** hot meals served
- **256** requests for clothing filled
- **103** prescriptions prescribed and/or paid for
- **1506** responses to requests for mail-checks
- **117** group therapy sessions, with a total of **42** participants
- **36** clients attended individual therapy sessions
- **1097** requests to speak with caseworkers met
- **6093** visits to our Drop-In Lobby
In 2016 we served 13,216 hot meals.
Outreach Program: ENDING HOMELESSNESS
In 2016, we arranged for housing referrals for 11 of our clients
Ending Homelessness

Our ultimate goal is to house each and every client suffering homelessness. Discerning who is truly experiencing homelessness is difficult, during the day; people with no place to sleep blend in with those who have homes. Thus, our outreach workers are on the streets, late at night or before dawn to look for people sleeping outside. Once trust is established, we can meet with clients during the day.

The trauma endured by people living on the streets is enormous and addressing related issues can take years. Generally speaking, our clients are deeply disenfranchised, unwilling to believe they might get housing. Self-sabotage of the process is not uncommon. Thus enters our clinical social worker, on staff to work with clients that need long-term counseling or assistance on the road to housing. As a medical doctor, our psychiatrist addresses both psychological and somatic issues. Additionally, we offer weekly group therapy session, which clients find healing; they are not alone in what they are enduring.

As soon as we have established enough trust, we start the hard work of rebuilding identity-paper trails, including birth certificates, identification cards and/or Social Security numbers. Such information is necessary in filling out housing applications and applying for benefits. Once applications are accepted, our staff will accompany clients to housing interviews, lending the emotional support needed to help navigate this unfamiliar territory.

A final note: In August, we said a sad farewell to Dr. Mark Stephens as he retired from the Navy and moved out of the area. Mark was an innovator and leader at Uniformed Services University. Under his direction, medical students had weekly clinics in our offices, including introducing Battle Field Acupuncture to clients, easing chronic pain. In return, the students learned to observe, listen and ask good questions. The students also accompanied our outreach team on street outreach.
ENDING HOMELESSNESS, BY THE NUMBERS

• 153 housing referrals filled out, with clients
• 11 clients housed
• 5 Veterans housed
• 5207 total transactions with clients suffering homelessness
Eviction and Utility Shut-Off Program: PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

The best way to bring an end to homelessness is to not let it occur in the first place.

Our Eviction/Utility Shut-Off Prevention Program serves the County’s working poor and seniors on fixed incomes. The County is a desirable place to live, with jobs and high-caliber community resources, but the cost of living here is high and too many people are but one crisis (job loss, medical expenses) from a spiral into homelessness or unsafe living conditions. In fact, our county is so expensive that even middle-income workers often end up choosing among food, heat and rent, a sign that a client is heading into grave financial trouble.

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And client who doesn’t have enough money to pay rent doesn’t have first/last/security for a new apartment. Providing grants directly to landlords or utility companies, our program assists low-income clients at risk of homelessness or utility shut-off, county-wide. Our clients are either single heads-of-households (often working multiple jobs but still struggling) or elderly clients on fixed incomes. While sometimes evicted clients can find a place to stay for a few days or even weeks, eviction often forces families to split up to fit into the lives and homes of friends and families, or children have to precipitously move school districts, or job commutes become untenable. When hospitality runs out, those clients will land on our streets.

The County divides responsibility for this safety-net service among a coalition of partner agencies by zip code, although Bethesda Cares is the only agency that backstops the entire county. Clients are referred to us through HHS case workers or collaborating agencies within the Emergency Assistance Coalition (EAC). Our counselor then interviews each client, to determine whether our funding a small grant as part of an aid package with our partners will keep them in their home. The interview process both informs clients of other services available—free food can free dollars for other use—confirms that other emergency public assistance has been exhausted. In some instances we coordinate with other EAC members to pay larger bills.

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS, BY THE NUMBERS

- 461 households assisted
- 1268 individuals assisted
- 630 children kept in housing
- 193 evictions averted
- 268 utility shut-offs averted
- 69% of clients in Silver Spring, Germantown and Gaithersburg (Low Income Areas, as defined by HUD)
- 97% of crises caused by under- or unemployment, insufficient income or illness
Outreach Program: CRITICAL TIME INTERVENTION
Housing First’s low-barrier philosophy ensures that a community’s most vulnerable members are housed, first. That means that many people who would not, under the shelter system, have been deemed “housing ready” are now in fact housed. However, that enormous shift, from homeless to housed, is extremely challenging for people who have lived unsheltered for long periods. They don’t know how to handle landlords, neighbors or even steady food supplies; what will eventually feel like privacy can initially feel like isolation. Relatively small or at least resolvable frustrations can lead to a client simply walking away from housing, absent support. CTI ensures that each placement has the highest possibility of succeeding. Thus, as people working in the field of homelessness started adapting a model created by the penal system to help long-term prisoners overcome institutionalization, after release, Bethesda Cares has created a Critical Time Intervention (CTI) Specialist. Time-limited, CTI initially offers a newly-housed client intensive support, to help address any issues that arise, and to connect them to long-term services, such as mental health or food supplies. As the clients adjusts, generally over one year, CTI tapers off and the caseworker associated with the program is able to step in to assist in maintain-

Our CTI Specialist is certified by the Social Security Administration to fast-track disability applications for clients. Meeting the clients during the outreach phase, he participates in searching for housing and arranges for lease signing and move-in. Our partners at Bethesda United Methodist Church through their Welcome Home Ministry collect furniture and household items that they deliver to the client’s home and then set up the furniture and make the place a home. In the first few months of housing, the CTI specialist visits 3-5 times a week as well as is available by phone to make sure the client transitions from street to housing.

Because housing extremely vulnerable clients is new in this field, we are constantly refining how we support these clients. To that end, our CTI specialist recently created a therapeutic recreational club, called “Let’s Go!” providing positive activities and socialization to those who might otherwise battle isolation in their new living situations. The club, in its infancy, is already wildly successful, having included a creative writing workshop, a fishing trip, woodworking and a baseball game.
We housed 11 medically vulnerable individuals, who collectively endured 157 years of homelessness.

The nature of our assistance to the 5 newly-housed Veterans included housing applications, interviewing-skill training, assistance with moving-fees such as deposits and first month rent, housing locator, moving in assistance with moving van, furniture and household items and follow up case management.

Through our Critical Time Intervention work, we ensured that 45 clients, who are extremely medically vulnerable, maintained their housing.

1,268

Our program issued 461 grants, which kept 1,268 people from homelessness or unsafe living conditions, throughout our county.

Eviction and Utility Shut-Off Prevention

Ending Homelessness

ROI:
RETURN ON YOUR INVESTMENT
2016 IMPACT
Thank you!

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2016: FINANCIALS

Revenue

- Community Donations: $261,475
- Government Grants & Contracts: $384,207
- Other Grants: $107,571
- Other Revenue: $28,627
- In Kind Support: $171,668
- Total Revenue: $953,548

Expenses

- Lunch Program: $244,345
- Eviction Prevention Program: $160,910
- Outreach Program: $494,507
- Administrative: $44,022
- Total Expenses: $943,784

Change In Net Assets: $9,764
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