

A FEW CHOICE WORDS ON THE FIGHT TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS IN DALLAS.

INCLUDING TWO OF OUR FAVORITES:



Photo courtesy of Lynn Blodgett.

In recent years, Dallas embarked on a campaign to end the problem of chronic homelessness in our area by 2014. Not to manage it, not to bring it under control – to end it.

A cornerstone of that campaign is a unique partnership of individuals and institutions representing a range of interests – from shelters, hospitals and caregivers, to faith-based organizations, to government agencies – that collaborate on issues to fight chronic homelessness. And, we're happy to report, the efforts are working.

Since 2004, chronic homelessness in Dallas has decreased by nearly half.

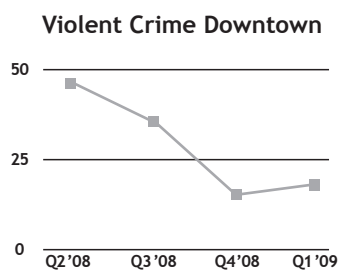
The Dallas Campaign identified three key strategies toward eliminating chronic homelessness: the development of Permanent Supportive Housing, increased mental health and chemical dependency services, and the creation of a multi-service campus called The Bridge.

OUR FIRST STRATEGY: BUILD THE BRIDGE.

Located south of downtown Dallas, The Bridge is an integrated Continuum of Care that provides day and night emergency shelter, transitional shelter, care management, health care, job seeker services and housing seeker services. The product of three years of extensive research and observation of other cities to see what really works, The Bridge has been a remarkable success.

On its first anniversary, The Bridge is proving to be a way back home.

Since it opened just one year ago, The Bridge has found jobs for more than 800 homeless men and women. It has secured permanent housing for over 425 once-homeless individuals. It has provided 90,000 overnight stays – nights which, were it not for The Bridge, would have been spent on Dallas' streets.



Source: Dallas Police Department.
Since The Bridge opened, violent crimes have decreased 40%.

Dallas has seen a significant decrease in crime downtown and 800 fewer days in jail, for a savings to taxpayers conservatively estimated at more than \$3 million. And since oftentimes the homeless are the actual victims of crimes, that means that crimes against homeless individuals have also decreased significantly. Additionally, there has been a three-fold reduction in hospital costs associated with mental health issues.

But there's more to do, and you can help.

Clearly, the services The Bridge provides are working – but we must be able to bring them to more of Dallas' homeless. You can help by

volunteering your time or simply by making a donation. Visit mhdallas.org and click on "Ways to Help".

OUR SECOND STRATEGY: PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING.

National initiatives have shown that the cycle of chronic homelessness is more easily broken when those at risk are immediately provided services leading to Permanent Supportive Housing. People experiencing chronic homelessness regain and maintain control of their lives in Permanent Supportive Housing.

We have a plan. But we need your support.

In January, the City of Dallas authorized an additional 700 units of Permanent Supportive Housing. Unfortunately, many Dallas neighborhoods have been reluctant to approve construction, unaware that national studies have shown that housing actually increases real estate values in communities. Open your arms to those in need by allowing us to talk to your neighborhood association about the benefits Permanent Supportive Housing provides to everyone.

OUR THIRD STRATEGY: INCREASED FUNDING AND AVAILABILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

We were extremely pleased to hear that the efforts of the MDHA have spurred the state legislature to approve public funding to treat mental illness and chemical dependency in Dallas. This is a major breakthrough in the fight to end chronic homelessness. But we must ensure that all homeless individuals can get the treatment and rehabilitation services they so desperately need to live productive lives. Let your state representatives know that continued funding will greatly benefit not just those who suffer from mental illness or chemical dependency, but the entire community as well.

OUR DEEPEST THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE HELPED BRING US SO MUCH CLOSER TO OUR GOAL.

In just a few short years, we've made tremendous progress in the fight to end chronic homelessness in Dallas. And it simply would not have been possible without the many agencies and individuals who have given so generously of their time and resources. We offer our deepest appreciation to the 86 member and partner agencies of the MDHA. Thank you for your help, your determination, your care and understanding. Together, we will end chronic homelessness once and for all by 2014.



A special thank you to The Bridge service provider agencies for their support in our first year of operations:

ABC Behavioral Health Care, ADAPT Community Solutions, AIDS Arms, AIDS Services of Dallas, Association for Persons Affected by Addiction, Austin Street Centre, Brighter Tomorrows, Catholic Charities of Dallas, Central Dallas Ministries, City of Dallas, Community Council of Greater Dallas, Community Dental Care, Crossroads Community Services (First United Methodist Church of Dallas), Dallas County, Dallas Life, DOWNTOWN DALLAS, Family Gateway, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Homeward Bound, Hope's Door, Housing Crisis Center, Interfaith Housing Coalition, Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, LifeNet Community Behavioral Healthcare, LifePath Systems, Metrocare Services, Mosaic Family Services, My Second Chance, New Beginning Center, Nexus Recovery Center, North Texas Behavioral Health Authority, Operation Relief Center, Parkland Health & Hospital System, Promise House, Shared Housing Center, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Solace Counseling, State of Texas, The Family Place, The Salvation Army, The Stewpot (First Presbyterian Church of Dallas), Transicare, Turtle Creek Manor, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Social Security Administration, Union Gospel Mission, Urban League of Greater Dallas, ValueOptions of Texas, Wilkinson Center, WorkForce Solutions Greater Dallas

Special thanks to Schroeffer Wessels Jolesch for creating this message.