

Community Homeless Connect for Marion and Polk
Counties

FINAL REPORT 2009

www.communityhomelessconnect.org



March 26, 2009 - 9am to 4pm
Salem First Baptist Church
395 Marion St.
Salem, Oregon

To be a point of hope that brings our community together with one vision and one focus;
“To Make a Difference One Person at a Time”

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COMMUNITY HOMELESS CONNECT 2009 **DEMOGRAPHICS OF EVENT GUESTS**

Community Homeless Connect of Marion and Polk Counties 2009 took place on Thursday, March 26th from 9:00am – 4:00pm at Salem First Baptist Church located at 395 Marion St. in Salem, Oregon. The event **served *778 guests/families** with the help of **185 community volunteers** and **67 service providers representing nonprofits, faith based, and government agencies and businesses.**

**Based on a compilation of family numbers and estimated count of individuals who did not complete an Intake Form.*

The following are the demographics of the event guests in 2009:

- Gender:
 - Male—297
 - Female—160

- Race/Ethnicity:
 - American Indian/AK Native—24
 - Black/African American—15
 - Asian—2
 - Hawaiian/Pacific Islander—3
 - Hispanic/Latino—70
 - Not Hispanic/Latino—40
 - 2 or More—14
 - White—312
 - Russian—1

- Primary Language:
 - English—356
 - Spanish—56
 - Other: Sign—2; Chamorro—1

- Age:
 - 13-17: 8
 - 18-30: 106
 - 31-50: 229
 - 51-64: 82
 - 65+: 7

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- Household Type:
 - Single—272
 - Two-Parent Family—39
 - Male (single parent)—18
 - Female (single parent)—68
 - Married-No Children—14
 - Co-Habitants—13
 - Extended Family—4
- Dependents:
 - One—72
 - Two—34
 - Three—16
 - Four +—15

Staff and volunteers advertised the Community Homeless Connect Event in a variety of ways. An event brochure was created and distributed to partner non-profit agencies and posted at various food banks, churches and shelters. The City of Salem Police Department distributed fliers to potential event guests about 2 or 3 days prior to the event as a part of their outreach to the community. During our 2009 Homeless Street Count, we also distributed a “Save the Date” flyer to every person each team came in contact with. We asked each guest how they found out about Community Homeless Connect and here are their answers:

- Service Provider—127
- Word of Mouth—164
- News—2
- Advertisement—77
- Other—10
- AA Meeting—2
- Church—13
- Veterans Center—4
- Walk-In—7
- Temp Agency—2
- School—2
- 2009 Homeless Street Count—1

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- How did they get to the event?
 - Bus—86
 - Walked—175
 - Bike—33
 - Vehicle—89
 - Other—4

Community Homeless Connect’s planning team felt it was important to find out exactly where individuals that are homeless sleep at night, as well as, where they turn to for help with food, clothing, money, etc. Here are their answers:

- Where do they live?
 - Salem—301
 - West Salem—12
 - Dallas—3
 - Brooks—2
 - Keizer—22
 - Stayton—2
 - Waterloo—1
 - Monmouth—1
 - Albany—1
 - Lyons—1
 - Polk County—1
 - Other—4
- Where did they sleep last night?
 - Outdoors (street, public building)—71
 - Vehicle (car, van, camper)—16
 - Halfway House/Resident Treatment—10
 - Institution (Psychiatric Hospital, Nursing Home)—0
 - Someone else’s apartment, room, or home (“couch surfing”)—61
 - Hotel, motel, boarding room—2
 - Jail/Correctional Facility—10
 - Short-term shelter—105
 - Own apartment, room, or home—83
 - Women’s Shelter—1
 - Transitional Housing—1
 - Foster Care—1
 - Other—3

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- Where do they turn for help?
 - Family—128
 - Friends—128
 - Religious setting—131
 - Government Agency—60
 - Social Service Agency—104
 - School—5
 - Workplace—3
 - Hope—1
 - Lord/God—1
 - SSI—1
 - Other—22
 - Community Homeless Connect Event—1

On January 28th, 2009, over 80 community volunteers conducted 249 interviews with people who had no permanent place to live in Marion and Polk counties. The interviews were conducted on the street, in parks, under bridges, and in camps. All participants were informed that their names would not be collected and that their participation was completely voluntary.

61% of respondents indicated they were looking for work, a 9% increase over 2008. When asked what could be done to improve their situation, 34% said a job or work opportunities and 27% said having a place to live. The most prevalent source of income for the participants was Social Security/Disability at 21%. 31% of participants made \$500 or less per month (there were a large number of “no response”, 26%, to this question). 27% said that lack of work or loss of work led to their current circumstance, an 8% increase over 2008.

Community Homeless Connect Event guests were asked similar questions and here are the answers they gave:

- Employment Status:
 - Full-Time—6
 - Part-Time—23
 - Day Labor—10
 - Self-Employed—3
 - Disabled—15
 - Retired—5
 - Layoff—1
 - Odd Jobs—2
 - Temp Agency—2
 - Student—4
 - Other—5
 - Unemployed—306

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- Income Sources:
 - Alimony—0
 - Child Support—7
 - Food Stamps—203
 - Pensions/Retirement—7
 - Private Disability Insurance—5
 - SSDI—26
 - SSI—36
 - TANF (Welfare)—18
 - Unemployment Benefits—18
 - Veterans Benefits—4
 - Can Deposits—2
 - WIC—1
 - Other—5

Participants of the 2009 Homeless Street Count were also asked a series of questions related to health and disability. The purpose for asking these questions was to determine how many participants had health problems, disabilities, and how many felt they were at risk for HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis C. 59% indicated they had health problems, 54% dental problems, 60% said they had disability concerns, and 17% indicated they felt they were at risk for HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis C due to their homeless status. 56% of the participants had seen a doctor within the last year.

Community Homeless Connect Event guests were asked similar questions and here are the answers they gave:

- 99 guests did have health insurance.
- 267 guests did not have health insurance.
- 90 guests were enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan.
- 262 guests were either not enrolled or were ineligible to receive Oregon Health Plan.
- 173 guests had health problems they were hoping to have addressed at the Community Homeless Connect Event.
- 194 guests noted that they did not feel they had any health problems that needed to be addressed.

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The goal of Community Homeless Connect is to be a one-day resource event at which service providers come to one location to connect with individuals and families needing resources and referrals. Critical issues addressed at the event could include access to: medical and dental resources; access to information/referrals on available benefits such as food stamps, TANF, social security, veterans benefits/services; information/referrals on housing options to include various shelter and permanent housing opportunities; information on legal aid and human rights; employment & training; early childhood information, parent support, and transportation options. As the needs for individuals may differ from needs for families, having many providers in the same location will provide a type of triage with people connecting quickly to the most appropriate providers and services.

Community Homeless Connect guests were given a list of basic services they would have access to and were asked to check 5 of those services that would help them the most that day. Here are their answers:

- Health Services
 - Dental—160
 - Confidential Testing—26
 - Medical—106
 - Vision—150
 - Medication—98
- Social Services
 - Basic Needs—97
 - Child/Family—13
 - Employment—162
 - Energy Assistance—33
 - Housing Assistance—182
- Benefits
 - Food Stamps—61
 - Oregon Health Plan—119
 - Veterans Benefits—13
 - TANF—9
- Confidential Services
 - Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Legal Aid, or Other—44

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- Miscellaneous
 - Food—168
 - Hair Cut—108
 - Pet Care/Supplies—56
 - Clothing—230
 - Veteran Information—35
 - Social Security Information—2
 - ID Assistance—15
 - Tent—2
 - Bike Parts—3
 - Camping Gear—1
 - Sleeping Bag—4
 - Hygiene Kit/Supplies—22
 - Bedding—10
 - Tax Preparation Assistance—1
 - Shoes—3
 - Back Pack—1
 - Oregon Driver's License Assistance—1
 - GED Information—2
 - Diapers—3
 - Water Pump—1
 - Other—31

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PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS

Honorary Co-Chairs:

Mayor Janet Taylor, City of Salem

Commissioner Janet Carlson, Marion County Board of Commissioners

Co-Chairs:

Herm Boes, Salem Leadership Foundation

Teresa Cox, Community Action Agency

Co-Event Coordinators:

Craig Oviatt , West Salem Foursquare Church

Rachel Washburn, Community Action Agency

Planning Committee:

Cindy Riley, Salvation Army

Bob Fritts, Church Without Walls

Rick Burnette, Shangri-La Corporation

Jack Duncan, Oregon Housing and Community Services

Nahnjie Williams, No-Meth, Not in My Neighborhood

Kat Daniel, Marion-Polk Food Share

Linda Kromer, Marion-Polk Food Share

Rick McKenna, Marion County Drug Court

Verena Wessel, Northwest Human Services/HOAP

Esther Reinecke, Salem Housing Authority,

Peggy Whelden, Department of Human Services/SSP

Annette Jensen, Community Action Agency ARCHES Project

Andrew Lane, Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network

Janeen Baker, YWCA of Salem

Bill Adams, Serving Our Veterans At Home

Dan Sheets, Stitches Cultural Project

Pat Freeman, Department of Human Services

Donna Armstrong, Union Gospel Mission

Al Younger, No-Meth, Not in My Neighborhood

Ruthie Berrell, Northwest Human Services

Sandie Fischer, Northwest Human Services

J.S. "Doc" Campbell, St. Vincent de Paul

Wayne Crowder, Salem Leadership Foundation

Patrick Smith, St. Vincent de Paul

Shari Crawford, St. Vincent de Paul

Justin Timm, St. Vincent de Paul

Karolle Hughes, St. Joseph Shelter

Gloria Sprauer, Department of Human Services

Kimberly Allain, St. Vincent de Paul

Michael Mayes, St. Vincent de Paul

Mikki Trowbridge, United Way of the Mid Willamette Valley, Volunteer & Mentor Center

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SPONSOR, DONORS, AND SUPPORTERS

1 Day Signs
 American Red Cross
 Bomb Shelter Music/Silo Records
 Boys & Girls Club of Salem
 Cascadia Bridgeway Behavioral Healthcare
 Catholic Community Services
 Celebrate Recovery
 Chemeketa Community College
 Church Art Works
 City of Salem
 City Vibe
 Community Action Agency
 ARCHES
 Child Care Information Services
 Energy/Weatherization
 Head Start
 Home Youth and Resource Center
 Congregations Helping People
 Creative Imprints
 Custom Stitch
 Department of Human Services
 Doc's Without Borders
 Family Building Blocks
 First Congregational United Church of Christ
 First United Methodist Church
 Hope Point
 Jesse's On The Go Hair Styling
 K/P Corporation
 KWIP-AM Radio
 Lake Point
 Lions Vision Van
 Marion County Commission on Children and Families
 Marion County Drug Court
 Marion County Health Department
 Marion/Polk Food Share
 Marion/Polk Legal Aid
 MedAssist
 Medical Teams International
 Mid Valley Behavioral Care Network
 Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Center
 No-Meth, Not in My Neighborhood
 Northwest Human Services
 HOST
 HOAP
 Transitional Living Program
 West Salem Medical Clinic
 Oral History
 Oregon Child Development Coalition
 Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles
 Oregon Shots for Tots
 Outward Church
 Personnel Source
 Planned Parenthood
 Polk County Commission on Families and Children
 ROCC-Recovery Outreach Community Center
 Salem Conference Center
 Salem Faith Coalition on Housing
 Salem First Baptist Church
 Salem Hospital
 Salem Housing Authority
 Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network
 Salem Leadership Foundation
 Salem Outreach Shelter
 Salem/Keizer School District
 Salvation Army
 Senior Food Stamp Pilot Program
 Shangri-La Corporation
 Social Security Administration
 SOMA
 SOVAH-Serving Our Veteran's At Home
 St. Joseph Shelter
 St. Vincent de Paul
 Statesman Journal
 Street Team Ministry
 Suncrest
 THINK Magazine
 Union Gospel Mission
 United Way of the Mid-Willamette Valley
 Veterans' Administration
 West Salem Animal Clinic
 West Salem Foursquare Church
 West Salem Recovery of NA
 Willamette Humane Society
 Willamette Noodle Company
 Willamette University
 Willamette Valley Animal Hospital
 West Valley Housing Authority
 WIC of Marion County
 Worksource of Oregon
 Youth Impact
 YWCA of Salem

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HISTORY

Project Homeless Connect began in October 2004, when 278 volunteers surveyed the downtown San Francisco homeless population, which consists of a 60-square block area in the Tenderloin District where 85% of the City's social services currently exist. One year later, San Francisco enlisted more than 2,000 volunteers to connect the homeless to vital services on a bi-monthly basis. To date, more than 10,000 San Franciscans have participated in this innovative program.

Since San Francisco's inaugural PHC, the movement has grown to include more than 200 cities doing similar events as part of the National Project Homeless Connect. Participating cities include Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Miami and San Diego.

Project Homeless Connect works to break down the myth that homeless people do not seek assistance and services and prefer life on the street. Based on data from San Francisco, homeless people are responsive when approached with available resources in a respectful and kind manner.

Community Homeless Connect for Marion and Polk Counties is a local effort to:

- Improve access to services for people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless in Marion and Polk Counties.
- Increase and improve coordination and processes among agencies serving the homeless and those at risk of being homeless.
- Increase community awareness to remove societal stigma about homelessness and to build community support and coordinate responses.
- Create a venue for homeless people to access needed services and to have input into the plan and solutions needed to address homelessness.
- Engage and increase community involvement to work together to provide long term solutions for people that are homeless in Marion and Polk Counties.

Community Homeless Connect for Marion and Polk Counties was conceived by local community leaders who in 2007 began developing a Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Marion and Polk Counties. The plan is the result of the work of a Leadership Team made up of county and city elected officials and representatives from businesses and state agencies. A Core Committee supported the work of the Leadership Team by organizing strategic work teams, collecting data, and synthesizing information into the development of a draft plan. Community Homeless Connect is one of the many efforts that move the Plan forward in hopes of preventing and eliminating homelessness.

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HOMELESSNESS IN MARION AND POLK COUNTIES

Marion and Polk Counties' Definition of Homeless **(results and information from Marion/Polk County 2009 Homeless Count and Marion/Polk Counties Plan to End Homelessness):*

An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence to include the following:

- A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings such as, parks, cars, substandard housing, public places, abandoned buildings, or similar settings;
- Emergency and transitional shelters;
- Doubled-up – Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; and/or
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.

The Picture of the Homeless Population in Marion and Polk Counties

- The total number of homeless individuals counted in Marion and Polk Counties on January 28, 2009 was 3,244. The total number counted on January 30, 2008 was 2,610, an increase of 608 individuals.
- Almost half of individuals counted as homeless for the homelessness count were school-aged children (1,101); and Marion County has somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,120 runaway and homeless youth.
- Poverty affects almost one-fifth of the population in Marion County and one-seventh in Polk County. This is poverty at 100% of the federal poverty level and represents approximately \$21,000 per year income for a family of four.
- Men and women are coming out of our jails into homelessness and that cycle can repeat itself with additional arrests and release.
- Much of the homelessness in our community is hidden by households with two families and/or teens that are couch surfing.
- Families in our communities make up 20% of those interviewed for the homeless count and 38% of those in shelter at the time of the one night count. This trend is expected to be accelerated with the current economic situation.
- Most people surveyed felt that the ability to find affordable housing and jobs were the keys to improve their situation.

Costs:

Marion and Polk Counties receive \$1,504,261.00 each year from Oregon and federal housing agencies to support emergency housing, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and housing stabilization services. This amounts to just over \$500 per year per person counted in the 2008 Homeless Count. In comparison, Head Start programs in Oregon receive almost \$4,000 per year per child for pre-school programs providing three hours per day for nine months per year. These funds, however, do not include other government funding through agencies such as the Oregon Department of Human Services, Marion County Community Corrections, other federal and private grants to non-profit programs, and community fund-raising.

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THE NUMBERS BY AREA

With this being our first year planning and implementing the Community Homeless Connect event, the planning team found areas that need improvement. Data collection was the one area that needs the most improvement. Below is the information that was gathered at this year's event. The planning team is currently working on a new system to show the true numbers of the services that are provided to the guests that attend in the future.

Overview

- 778 guests in attendance.
- 185 community volunteers.
- 67 service providers representing businesses, government agencies, faith based and non-profit service organizations.

Guest Services and Food

- 450 meals for breakfast were prepared.
- 600 meals for lunch/supper were prepared.
- The food that was left over at the end of the event was donated to Community Action Agency ARCHES Project, Union Gospel Mission, and Salvation Army.
- 80 guests received haircuts from Jesse's On the Go Hair Styling Salon.
- 15 cats and dogs were kenneled. Each animal received an exam, flea treatments, nail clipping, and were brought up to date on shots.
- 70 miscellaneous pet supplies and food were given away.
- 30 bikes were valet parked, assessed, and repaired.
- 6 local musical acts provided 4 hours of entertainment in the café.
- 200 people checked their personal belongings for safe keeping while attending the event.

General Services

- 16 people shared their story at an Oral History table.
- 90 people received information about alcohol and drug recovery programs.
- 116 people received information about a crisis hotline.
- 1 person, who was feeling suicidal, was counseled until they were feeling safer and then given a referral for follow up services.
- 66 contacts were made with a faith based organization that helps those in need.

Housing

- 160 people received information and referrals.
- 7 households submitted referral forms.
- 39 contacts were made regarding family services that were offered.
- 17 people received information about a Life Skills program.
- 7 people requested information about volunteer opportunities.

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Family Services

- 30 people received information and referrals.
- 25 people received a parent resource guide for Marion/Polk County. It was available in both English and Spanish.
- 10 children participated in arts and crafts activities.
- 25 large garbage bags full of clothing (socks, underwear, coats, blankets, etc) for children ages newborn-5 were given away.

Women's Services

- 7 emergency cell phones were given away.
- 30 women-friendly hygiene kits were given away.
- 69 people received information and referrals.
- 14 people received advocacy related services.
- 3 women received a free bus pass.

Items Given Away

- 300 hooded sweatshirts
- 400 blankets
- 400 pairs of socks
- 50 coats
- 300 hygiene kits
- 100 hygiene items
- 100 packages of diapers
- 500 miscellaneous clothing items
- 65 books
- 500 apples, granola bars, and bottles of water

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SERVICES OFFERED

All goods and services were provided at no charge to guests

Intake/Exit

- Intake forms completed with assistance of volunteers.
- Guests were escorted to their first service area by event hosts/volunteers.
- Guests received multiple give-away items as they left the event.

Benefits

- Department of Human Services: basic needs, benefits, and food stamps information.
- Senior Food Stamp Pilot Program: pamphlets and information.
- Social Security Administration: help with social security.
- Veteran's Administration: information and resources.
- SOVAH-Serving Our Veteran's At Home: advocacy, information and resources.

Housing

- Community Action Agency ARCHES Project: information, referrals, day shelter and rental assistance.
- Catholic Community Services: information and referrals.
- Community Action Agency Energy/Weatherization Program: low-income energy assistance information.
- Northwest Human Services: information and referrals.
- Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network: family housing information.
- American Red Cross: housing vouchers and emergency services information.
- Salem Housing Authority: housing information, referrals, and applications.
- Salem Outreach Shelter: information and referrals.
- Salvation Army: mobile canteen for guests before the event; served donuts, coffee, and hot chocolate; active military financial assistance information.
- Shangri-La Corporation: information and referrals.
- St. Joseph Shelter: information and referrals.
- Union Gospel Mission: information and referrals.
- West Valley Housing Authority: information and referrals.
- Salem Faith Coalition on Housing: information and referrals.

Employment

- Chemeketa Community College: vocational rehabilitation program information.
- Personnel Source: temporary employment information.
- Worksource of Oregon: information and referrals.

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Medical

- Lions Vision Van: blood sugar testing, hearing and vision screening, referrals.
- MedAssist: information on prescription drug programs.
- Northwest Human Services: checked vital signs, information, and referrals.
- West Salem Medical Clinic: checked vital signs, information, and referrals.
- Salem Hospital: information and referrals.

Pet Services

- Willamette Humane Society: information, referrals, and donations.
- Willamette Valley Animal Hospital: flea treatments, nail clipping, exams, and shots.

Children/Family Services

- Community Action Agency Child Care Information Services: childcare referrals and DHS payment support information.
- Family Building Blocks: information and referrals; donations and activities for children to participate in during the event
- Community Action Agency Head Start: information and referrals; student recruitment.
- Community Action Agency Home Youth and Resource Center: homeless teen outreach.
- Oregon Child Development Coalition: information and referrals; student recruitment for migrant families
- Oregon Shots for Tots: immunization education.
- Salem/Keizer School District: homeless student outreach.
- Youth Impact: youth outreach information.
- WIC of Marion County: information and referrals.

Women's Services

- YWCA of Salem: information and referrals; make-up and feminine hygiene give away items.
- Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Center: advocacy, 911 cell phones, information and referrals

Guest Services and Food

- Marion County Drug Court: backpack check; secure space for guests' bags and backpacks.
- Jesse's On the Go Hair Styling Salon: haircuts.
- Marion-Polk Food Share: secured donations for food provided during the event.
- Willamette Noodle Company: prepared and packaged food for event.
- Salem First Baptist Church: coffee service throughout the day; provided space for event at no charge.

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General Services

- Cascadia Bridgeway Behavioral Healthcare: alcohol and drug counseling information.
- Polk County Commission on Children and Families: information and referrals.
- Oregon Law Center: information and referrals.
- Marion/Polk Legal Aid: information and referrals.
- Congregations Helping People: information and referrals.
- Lake Point: drug and alcohol treatment and resource information.
- West Salem Recovery of NA: information and referrals.
- Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network: information and referrals.
- St. Vincent de Paul: food bank and emergency services information.
- ROCC-Recovery Outreach Community Center: information and referrals.
- Dual Diagnosis Anonymous: information and referrals.
- Celebrate Recovery: information and referrals.
- Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles: information about obtaining an Oregon ID card or driver's license.
- No-Meth, Not in My Neighborhood: security.

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NEXT STEPS

Homelessness has been an ongoing issue. The cycle of homelessness can only be broken through a community-wide approach that offers basic needs services to those in need. Development and implementation of a collaborative plan is essential to helping people avoid homelessness. The following goals have been identified as a part of Marion/Polk Counties Plan to End Homelessness.

- 1. Prevent homelessness whenever possible.**
- 2. Increase the supply of housing options for low-income and very low-income residents to prevent and end homelessness.**
- 3. Increase coordination and processes among agencies serving the homeless and at risk of homelessness population**
- 4. Increase community awareness to remove societal stigma about homelessness and to build community support and coordinate responses.**

Community Homeless Connect encourages community members to take the following steps all year to help end homelessness in our community:

- 1. Volunteer with social service agencies and faith-based programs that work with homeless people.**
- 2. Donate gently used items, such as clothing, sleeping bags, coats, backpacks, and toiletries, to organizations that work with the homeless.**
- 3. Educate people at your place of employment, civic groups, and social networks about the issues faced by homeless families and individuals. Let them know what they can do to help end homelessness.**
- 4. Lead by example.....**

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