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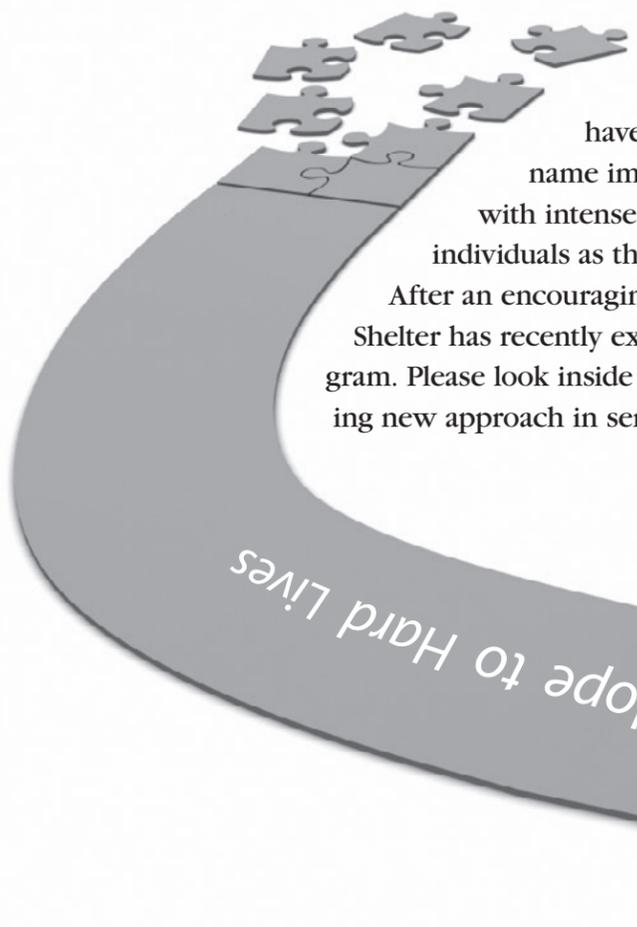
# UNDER OUR ROOF

A Newsletter of the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless • June 2008  
4869 North Broadway, Boulder, CO 80304 • 303-442-4646 • Fax 720-565-3624  
[www.bouldershelter.org](http://www.bouldershelter.org)

## Off the streets, into a home



Traditionally, homeless programs have focused on promoting an individual's stability, such as securing employment or addressing mental health or addiction issues, before permanent housing is procured. While this approach works for many, it does not work for a portion of the population. Ten to twenty percent of the homeless population are considered to be chronically homeless and can spend years cycling between the streets, shelters, jail cells, and emergency rooms. These individuals usually have at least one disability and have little success in traditional programs.



In an attempt to address chronic homelessness, a number of major metropolitan areas have begun to use the Housing First model. As the name implies, Housing First offers permanent housing, with intense case management, to chronically homeless individuals as their first step towards stability. After an encouraging pilot program, The Boulder Shelter has recently expanded its Housing First program. Please look inside for more about this promising new approach in serving the poor.

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## Director's Dialogue

THIS ISSUE OF UNDER OUR ROOF IS DEDICATED TO THE HOUSING FIRST CONCEPT AND THE SHELTER'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS APPROACH TO SERVING THOSE MOST IN NEED.



For 25 years, the Shelter has offered the local homeless population temporary emergency shelter during the coldest winter months. Ten years ago, we began two additional programs, the year-round Transition Program (for those who are clean and sober and working) and our street outreach program, Boulder County Cares. Last year, the Shelter added its fourth program, Housing First.

The Housing First idea is to offer permanent housing, with consistent case management support, to the most chronically homeless adults in our community. A number of major metropolitan areas in the U.S. have been using this approach for several years and have found that for a certain segment of the homeless population, it is a highly effective method for keeping people housed. It not only offers a more humane life for some of our most disadvantaged neighbors, but it is also cost effective.

The goal of this methodology is to keep the chronically homeless in housing. Contrary to other housing programs, Housing First requires only that clients meet the obligations of their lease. Most traditional programs offer housing as the final reward for a series of demonstrated behavioral changes. While this approach works for some, the most chronically homeless have little chance of making it through such an intensive pro-

gram. We have found, however, that significant improvements in mental health stability and abatement in addiction problems are often the byproduct of stabilizing housing for many clients.

Housing First is not a panacea and will not totally eradicate homelessness. It is, however, an additional tool the Shelter now possesses to address the problem of homelessness. Because the homeless population is heterogeneous, no one program or approach works for everyone and the more options we have for clients, the better chance we have of helping people return to stability.

The Shelter partnered with Boulder Housing Partners, the City of Boulder's housing authority, to secure a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to fund this new program. While the Shelter and BHP manage the program, potential clients for Housing First come from agencies across Boulder and Broomfield Counties. Sister agencies such as the OUR Center in Longmont, the Mental Health Center serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties and the Addiction Recovery Center all bring clients to the table for consideration. Homelessness is a regional issue and collaborative, regional approaches, like Housing First, are our best hope of eradicating this social ill.

Greg Harms  
Executive Director

# 25 years of service in our community.

The mission of the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless is to provide safe shelter, food, support services, and an avenue to self-sufficiency for homeless adults in our community.

## Big-hearted giving

Her main focus is the Native Americans on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota. However, as one of her volunteers says, "She helps anyone who comes to her in need." And Marion Clifford has been faithfully helping Shelter residents for 5 years.

Twice a week, on Monday and Friday, Marion packs her car with donated food, drives it to the Shelter and unloads it into the shopping carts that wait for her at the gate. And faithful she is. One of the kitchen staff says he can tell what time of the morning it is on Monday and Friday because, "It must be 10 a.m. if Marion's here."

Before Marion gets to the Shelter, she has already driven from her home to one of the grocery stores in Longmont, where she picks up all the dairy, bakery and other goods they will give her. The store managers know her and save things for her to pick up. Sometimes there's so much to pick up at the stores that Marion will even make two trips to the Shelter in one day. On occasion she has delivered 50 or 60 gallons of milk and 150 eggs at one time.

That's hundreds of miles of driving and eight



Marion delivers big for the Shelter once again.

hours of time she gives the Shelter every week!

Why does she do it? When people ask her about the Shelter's residents she tells them, "You oughta meet some of those people. They're fascinating. There are a lot of nice people there." Of the Shelter staff she says, "Their hearts are in the work."

Marion, now 84, founded the Boulder-based Native American Connection 42 years ago. The organization is dedicated to gathering donations, then distributing them directly to the Native American people, particularly the Cheyenne River reservation in South Dakota. Marion says, "I love the people. They call me 'Big-hearted woman'"

And well they should, Marion. And well they should.

## Make a difference in the lives that follow

Have you ever considered including the Boulder Shelter in your estate plans?

A charitable bequest will help strengthen the Shelter's programs and services well into the future. We would be honored by your support. Please feel free to contact Travis Railey at 303.468.4312, or [travis@bouldershelter.org](mailto:travis@bouldershelter.org) with any questions.

If you have already included the Shelter in your estate plans, but have not previously notified us, we hope you will let us know at this time. We would love to be able to thank you. Of course you may remain anonymous—we understand that your estate plan is a very personal matter.

## WishList

The men and women who come to the Boulder Shelter everyday have many needs. Below are some of the things we require in order to help meet those needs.

Deodorant • razors • toothbrushes • toothpaste • antacids • vitamin C

Please note: Due to limited storage space, the Shelter cannot accept clothing donations. Visit the Shelter website, [www.bouldershelter.org](http://www.bouldershelter.org), for more information and our complete wish list. Thank you for your generosity.

Snapshots from page 6

Amy Edwards' third grade class from Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Boulder made sandwiches for the Shelter as well as donated sandwich meat and cheese for the sandwiches.

Kristin Meyers' Pre-School class from Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Boulder made Valentines for the Shelter and donated sandwich meat, cheese, and baggies for sandwiches.

The Shelter was a beneficiary of the Contemporary5 art event in Boulder, January 25-29, 2008 at the Boulder Municipal Airport.

Americorps members spent 5 hours volunteering at the Shelter doing laundry, cleaning the kitchen, and sorting through donations.

The Leader's Challenge team from Peak to Peak Charter School and Centaurus High School put on a concert that benefited the Shelter.

Avery Brewing Company's Boulder Strong Ale Fest benefited both the Humane Society of Boulder Valley and the Boulder Shelter.

The Shelter received a generous grant from the Broomfield Community Foundation in support of the Emergency Sheltering and Transition programs.



Foothills United Way



shelter snapshots

The Boulder Shelter is honored to be the recipient, in so many ways, of the community's generosity. Thank you for your compassion and support.

Mary Lynn Powell donated \$360 from a Ballet Benefit.

Boulder Country Day School donated socks and toiletries from a drive they held.

Mr. Newby's fourth grade class at Heatherwood Elementary donated 300 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and 100 bags of pretzels.

Boy Scout Troop, Pack 179, Den 3, made 191 sack lunches that were donated to the Shelter.

Special thanks to Rudi's Organic Bakery for donating bread immediately when the Shelter ran out, and to Officer Dick Reznik for making the delivery.

Eisenhower Elementary School donated care packages to the Shelter in February.

The Shelter received special donations from Grace Evangelical Lutheran Congregation from their Mission Fair and Christmas offerings.

Snapshots continues page 7

## We couldn't do it without you...

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it for someone else.  
—Benjamin Franklin

Thank you to all our 2007-2008 Winter Season Volunteers.

We extend our deep appreciation to the hundreds of volunteers who supported the Shelter in countless ways during the winter season. Among the many "chores" our volunteers cheerfully undertook: preparing and serving meals, assisting residents in the storage area, distributing dorm supplies, assisting with intake operations, and donating time and services in our weekly women's groups. Volunteers are a vital resource to the Shelter whose presence not only helps to expand the services that can be offered, but also brings fresh energy and enthusiasm to both our staff and our residents.

A special thank you to our breakfast and dinner groups:

East Boulder Baptist Church, Bryan and Beth Smith's group, Jim Carlson, Ray Toves, Win Franklin, Ginny Strange, Kathy Sumpter, C.S. Lewis House, Christine Bogaerts, Mark Goosman, Mary and Kent Young, Daniel Layton's group, Fairview High School, Jewish Renewal, Har HaShem, Bonai Shalom, St. Mary Magdalene Church, Karen Johnson & Friends, Caplan & Earnest Law Firm, SJTS, Irene Rodriguez & Family, David Powell, Kevin Cochran, Nicole Broida, Stephanie Yoon, Chris Choe, Bethel United Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, 7th Day Adventist Church, Joy Weinstein & Family,



The Bethel United Methodist dinner crew serves up smiles with supper.



The week starts off deliciously at the Shelter when the Monday breakfast group is in the kitchen.

Fairview FCCLA, Shelter Board, Keracik family, Mennonite Church group, Sikh group, Mountain View United Methodist, Unitarian Fellowship, Deborah Davis, Ruth Weinberg, Cindy Divino & Nicholas Quinlan, Christina Bertsch, Mothers Kitchen, Sai Baba group, Mary Ann Tomasko-Perry & Friends, Boulder Meeting of Friends, Phi Sigma Pi, Linda Kuhn's group, Dr. Bob & Family, Terry Grupp, Claudia & Julian Putnam, St. Thomas Aquinas, Christ the Servant, Harsh Reddy and Friends, St. Ambrose Episcopal, Emily Guevara, Andrea & Joelle Salvo, Niwot Methodist Church, Kristi & Justin Denney, Ara Nam, Westview Presbyterian Church, Rancho Rawat & Family, Happy Thursday Community Bike Ride, Hope O'Brien, Angie White, Jon Davis, Cari Chopyak, Mike Baratta, Scott Murray, Del Kreiser, Terri Calvin and Sharna Gross.



Students from Abilene Christian University spent their spring break at the Shelter, preparing dinner and assisting the kitchen staff.

## Valentine's Day of Compassion



Noah helps out the kids from Eisenhower Elementary.

Not only is February one of the coldest months of the year, but research from the National Coalition for the Homeless says that the number of homeless rises significantly in February compared to other times of the year.

This past Valentine's Day, however, some kind folks remembered our residents, bringing special warmth and love to the Shelter and to those who are easily forgotten by society:

- Diana Hoguet brought valentine cookies.
- Colson-Quinn, Attorneys at Law "adopted" the Shelter for the day by bringing cookies and paying for the food and heat for the night.
- Eisenhower Elementary kids brought very special care packages to the residents.

## Thanks for giving

Your gifts are so important to us at the Boulder Shelter because lives have been saved and changed by the programs you have made possible. Thank you.

The Shelter ended its Emergency Sheltering season on April 30. Hundreds of men and women came to our doors this season, seeking a warm bed, hot meals and a safe place to spend the night. Some used the stability and support offered here to take further steps on their progress toward independence and self-sufficiency.

This past winter season the Boulder Shelter supplied 30,952 bed nights and served 65,736 hot meals to 990 unduplicated clients. This was done with the extraordinary help of 600 volunteers who donated 8,000 hours of their time to help the Shelter fulfill its mission.

While the numbers are important, it is the changed lives that tell the real story—like the following that show that real good things are happening in real people's lives. They remind us why we are here and why your support is so vital.

### • Eddie entered the Transition Program with high hopes, but his drinking got in the way.

When he reapplied a year later he seemed ready to approach the program differently. And he did. This time, benefiting from his case manager's support, he did well at the Shelter and, after a few months, obtained housing at the Inn Between in Longmont.

Today his confidence is high and his life is back on track—even his drinking hasn't been a problem for a while. His case manager says, "The Transition Program gave Eddie the space for that to happen by allowing him to 'fail' gracefully and to try again when he was ready. We welcomed him back into the program without a grudge."

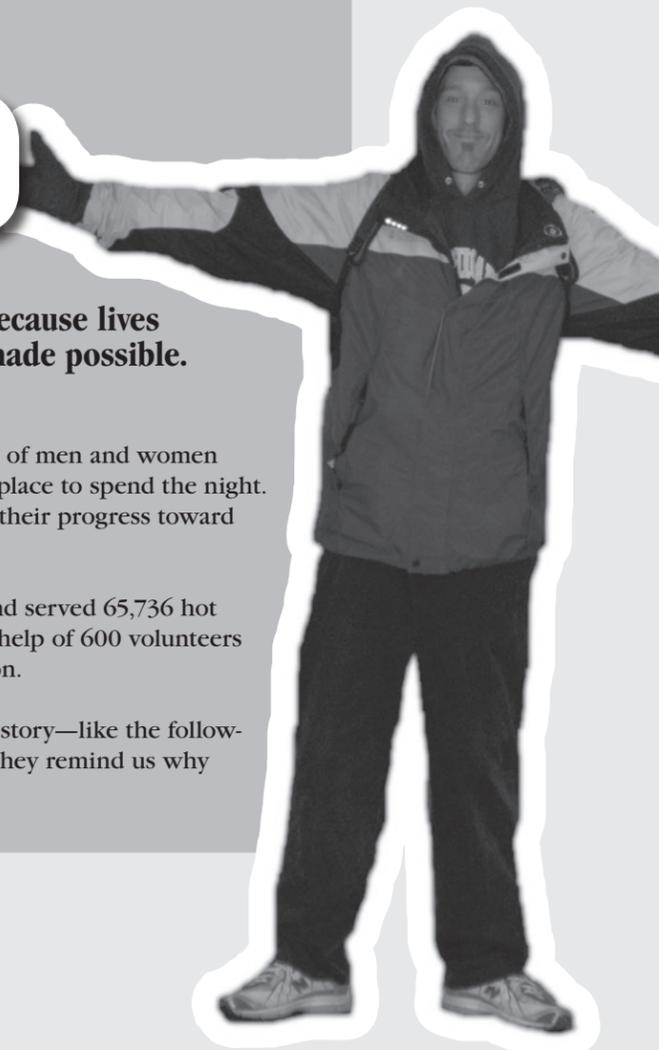


### • Angela was a 58-year old woman, homeless for the first time due to the combined and overwhelming pressures of low wages, high housing costs, poor health and a family rift. After struggling on her own for awhile, she anxiously sought help at the Shelter.

Gradually, in spite of her lack of self-confidence, she trusted her Shelter case manager enough to accept his support and began to work through some of the emotional issues that were hindering her progress.

In time, Angela obtained transitional housing, but continued to work with her Shelter case manager. Sadly, during this time, other health problems ensued—complications that finally took her life.

But the joy in this story is what happened to Angela throughout her year in the Transition Program. Her progress in gaining insight into her personal dilemmas was unmistakable to those around her. She became upbeat, even cheerful. And her attentions were drawn outside herself to those around her and their needs. In short, as her case manager says, she "went far with self-understanding, making peace in her world, and opening up to others. The Transition Program gave her the solid ground she needed to be able to work with her path."



# Winning, this time around

By Chris Byrne, Housing First Case Manager

I have witnessed much tragedy in many people's lives during my time on staff at the Shelter and Boulder County Cares. I have worked with some of the most chronic hardcore homeless men and women in our community, the ones who have slipped (or jumped) through the cracks in our society. Some have been living on the streets for more than 20 years. Whatever the cause of their homelessness—addiction or mental health issues, financial catastrophes, or other personal disasters—most have simply given up.

A.L. lived in the dumpster behind an electronics mega store. It provided pretty good protection from the wind and snow. He stayed there for quite a while. Before that, he lived under an abandoned trailer by the railroad tracks. After staying there for over a year, he was asked to move on. "The place was too damn breezy anyway," he said.

D.B. lived under a bridge (under a very busy street) for a couple of seasons. It offered protection from wind, rain, snow, and kept him virtually invisible (from The Man). But, it was really noisy because of the constant traffic overhead. Ingesting lethal amounts of vodka every day helped him to live with the road noise and the cold weather.

And then came Housing First, a plan designed to remove the barriers and provide access to permanent housing and case management

A.L. has now been in his own apartment for a year and a half. He still struggles with sobriety, but this time around, he is winning. His health has improved greatly and he has even reestablished relationships with family members he hadn't spoken to in over ten years. Today he has a monthly income as well as access to food stamps.

These days, D.B. lives in a quiet apartment building in a quiet neighborhood. True, he had some problems at first. He was, well, kinda loud; yet another consequence of living under bridges under busy streets. But D.B. cleaned up and gained about 30 lbs. He is also discovering that maybe he doesn't need dangerous amounts of vodka every day after all. D.B. has a dream to someday start his own lawn care business.

The Housing First program has made this progress possible for these two people. Giving these clients a sense of stability, support, and hope has made the difference—in keeping them off the street, and out of detox, jail, and the emergency room, and in helping them to set and reach their own previously unattainable goals.

My hope is that Housing First will provide a life-altering opportunity for many more individuals, like A.L. and D.B., who struggle with chronic homelessness.

We have a ways to go, but one day we might just get there.



## Selecting the right clients for the Housing First program is a challenge.

Finding people in great need is not difficult; finding individuals who will likely be successful in the program and who meet the federal definition for chronic homelessness, however, requires significant effort.

The selection process starts with all the Boulder County collaborating organizations selecting clients from their agencies that they believe will meet the criteria and have a good chance of success in this program. Case managers from all the referring agencies gather periodically and present their candidates for consideration. Clients' histories and current situations are discussed and cross-agency information is shared (all agencies have signed confidentiality contracts).

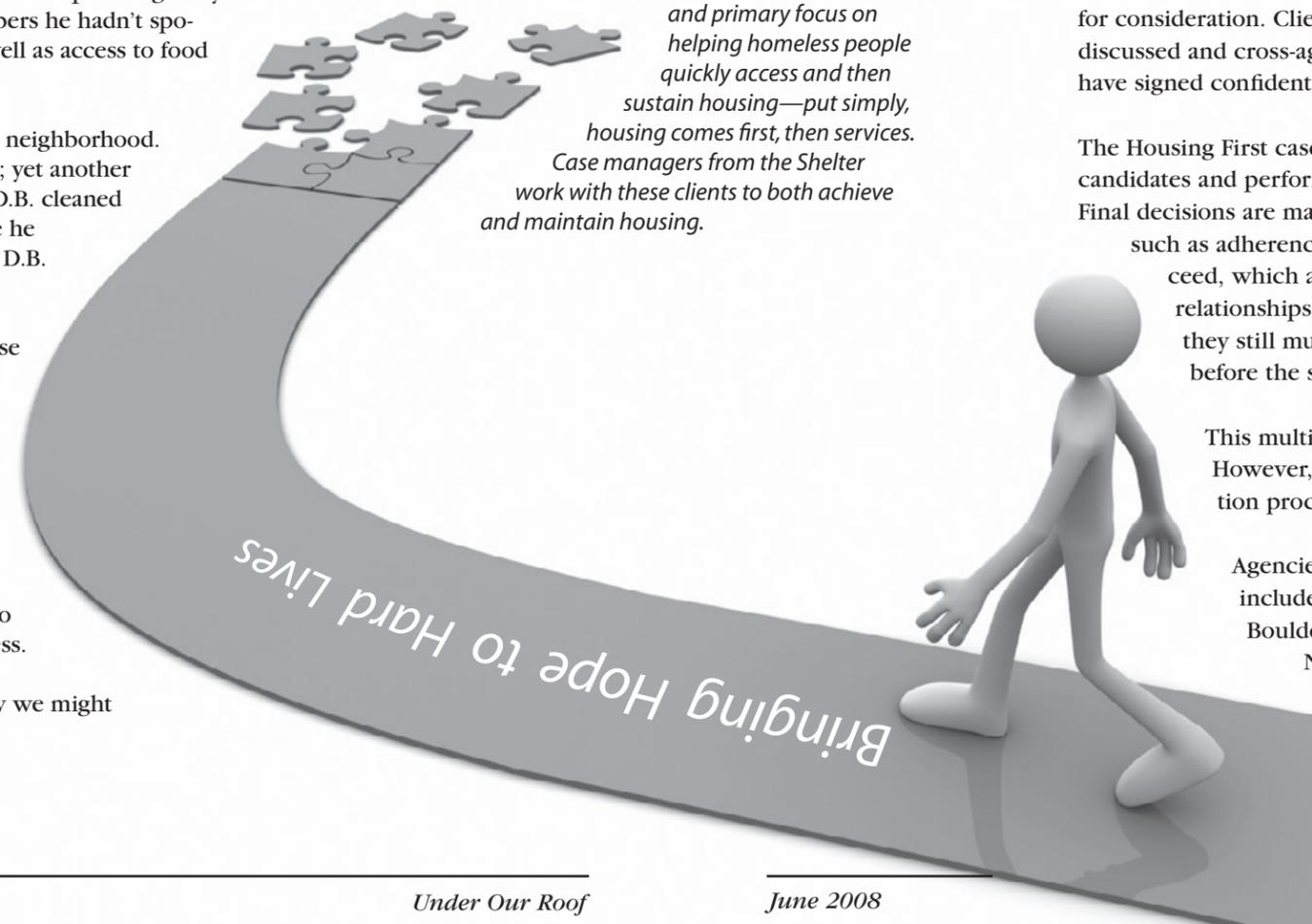
The Housing First case management team then selects the top candidates and performs interviews with these potential clients. Final decisions are made based on the interviews and criteria

such as adherence to federal requirements, which clients are most likely to succeed, which applicants show real desire to join the program, length of agency relationships and ability to locate potential clients. Once clients are selected, they still must pass through Boulder Housing Partners' orientation process before the search for an apartment commences.

This multi-step process may sound onerous, and to a certain extent, it is. However, experience has taught that the more effort exerted in the selection process, the more likely clients will stay housed for the long term.

Agencies who have brought clients to the table for consideration include: The Mental Health Center of Boulder and Broomfield Counties, Boulder County AIDS Project, Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence, The Center for People With Disabilities, The Carriage House, The Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, Boulder Community Hospital, The OUR Center, Adult Protective Services, Longmont United Hospital, and the Addiction Recovery Center.

**Above, Housing First clients are pictured in their own homes.** What differentiates a Housing First approach from traditional emergency sheltering or transitional housing models is the immediate and primary focus on helping homeless people quickly access and then sustain housing—put simply, housing comes first, then services. Case managers from the Shelter work with these clients to both achieve and maintain housing.



A "chronically homeless" person is defined as "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years."  
—U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

