

## 2012 POINT-IN-TIME/PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT

The Middlesex County Housing Continuum of Care Committee (MCHC<sup>3</sup>) Point-in-Time/Project Homeless Connect sub committee, working jointly with Coming Home of Middlesex County, has been in the process of planning for the annual statewide Point in Time Survey/Project Homeless Connect Event since fall 2011. The event is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, January 25, 2012.

The membership of the MCHC<sup>3</sup> includes non-profit agencies and advocates for the homeless population, along with representatives of the low-income population. All coordination of services provided to these “at risk” populations is initiated through the efforts of the MCHC<sup>3</sup>. Coming Home of Middlesex County, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non profit organization created to execute Middlesex County’s Ten Year Plan.

The Point-in-Time Survey is carried out in compliance with a mandate from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The data collected in the form of surveys from the PIT/PHC event contains relevant information which aids Middlesex County staff in obtaining an accurate “snapshot” of the homeless residents, support requests for funding for both housing and services for this extremely at risk population, and enables planners to close the gaps and obstacles preventing the chronically homeless from achieving housing and/or services

The last count was performed on January 26, 2011. The Point-in-Time is conducted with both a bilingual paper outreach (survey forms are forwarded in advance to specific designated homeless provider agencies) and a bilingual street outreach (teams are sent to specific localities within Middlesex County to search for homeless residents whose residence in the County may not be known).

At the same time, the Point-in-Time/Project Homeless Connect sub committee also schedules Project Homeless Connect on the same date as the Point-in-Time. Project Homeless Connect provides for specific locations to be open where homeless individuals can walk in receive a hot cup of coffee and a snack, fill out surveys, be linked to free community services such as housing, food stamps, etc. (representatives from various community agencies are at each location) and also receive “incentives” such as a free blanket, gloves, etc. as a “thank you”. This year, two sites have been designated for Project Homeless Connect: Elijahs Soup Kitchen (18 Neilson Street, New Brunswick) will be open from 11:00am to 8:00pm and The Salvation Army (433 State Street, Perth Amboy) will remain open from 11:00am to 7:00pm.

The street outreach will begin at approximately 8:00pm and continue until midnight. The street outreach locations are in the process of being scheduled. In addition, several vans will be available for a mobile street outreach.

It is important to be aware that the street outreach and surveying of the homeless individuals are carried out with the help of volunteers. The “incentives” are donated by organizations and private citizens within Middlesex County. For this reason, the Point-in-Time/Project Homeless Committee greatly appreciates it when organizations agree to conduct “drives” or private citizens donate items such blankets, scarves, flashlights, etc. or individuals volunteer to help conducting the surveys.

If you are reading this article and would like to volunteer to help, whether in the form of physically handing out surveys, incentives, putting up flyers etc., or would like to conduct a blanket, sock, glove drive, or even simply donate articles of new or used clothing, please contact Harriet Slonim at (732) 745-4041.

Harriet Slonim  
Middlesex County Human Services Planner