

Knoxville's Plan to Address Homelessness

Annual Report 2014-2015

City of Knoxville Office on Homelessness

Overview

In April of 2014, City Council adopted *Knoxville's Plan to Address Homelessness*. This plan was created as a roadmap for a coordinated community effort to pursue a shared aspiration that in Knoxville, we should prevent homelessness whenever possible, reduce the depth and duration of anyone's experience with homelessness, and ultimately get as close as we can to ending homelessness altogether in our community. The intent of the plan is to remain grounded and practical as we nonetheless work towards a challenging ideal.

At the center of this effort is the simple idea that homelessness is not an acceptable circumstance for anyone in our community. This compels us not to resign ourselves to the thought that homelessness is inevitable, but to instead work together to find the resources and make the changes that move toward that goal. It pushes us to seek accountability in all directions – accountability toward the individuals and families who need help, accountability toward the taxpayers and donors who provide needed funding and resources, and accountability toward each other as each agency, ministry, organization and individual takes action.

Replacing an earlier effort that was focused primarily on the issue of chronic homelessness, *Knoxville's Plan to Address Homelessness* broadened the scope, looking at ways to prevent, reduce and end homelessness for anyone at-risk of or experiencing homelessness in Knoxville. To manage and implement the Plan, Mayor Madeline Rogero regularly convened the Mayor's Roundtable on Homelessness, bringing together the leadership of community agencies and organizations that work on the issue. The City's Office on Homelessness coordinates the ongoing effort to implement the plan's strategies. Mayor Rogero and City Council also included funding in the City's budget to provide for activities in support of the plan's implementation.

Accomplishments and challenges

There is no way, in a short document, to describe all the work being done to address this issue, but in this report, we will highlight some of the accomplishments and some of the continuing challenges experienced during the first year of the new plan's implementation. Homelessness is a complicated social and economic issue, and the realism built into the plan combines high expectations and greater accountability with a practical recognition that if the problem were simple, it would have been solved a long time ago.

As we review these accomplishments and challenges, it is important to remember that while the Office on Homelessness plays a key role in coordination and collaboration, it does not seek to claim for itself the accomplishments of others. This is a community-wide effort, and it stands on the work of many dedicated partner organizations and individuals. This is just the point of it. The solution to homelessness in Knoxville lies in the combined efforts of all of us.

This is about human beings

First and foremost, we must remember that this is about human beings. We are talking here about the lives of individual men and women, and of families and children. Circumstances of economics, education, mental and physical health, addictions, personal relationships and individual choices have led these individuals and families to difficult and undesirable points in their lives, and homelessness or being at significant risk of becoming homeless is one glaring symptom of those circumstances.

Homelessness itself is uncomfortable, not only for those experiencing it, but also for those who just see it or think about it. It evokes for some feelings of sadness or sympathy and others anger or even disdain. Rather than starting with numbers and statistics, we should look first at some individual, human stories that show not only the difficulties and challenges that real people can face, but that also demonstrate that these problems are not inevitable or insurmountable. People can and do find their way out of these circumstances.

Flenniken 'eviction party'

Tommy, a formerly homeless resident of Flenniken Landing recently celebrated an 'eviction' from his apartment there, and this was actually a *good* thing. Flenniken Landing is a 48-unit apartment building, operated by Southeastern Housing Foundation, which is a part of Knoxville Leadership Foundation. Flenniken is a formerly abandoned elementary school building which in 2011 was renovated into permanent supportive housing for individuals who have been chronically homeless. At Flenniken, people who have previously been unable to break the cycle of homelessness and life on the streets gain the stability of a permanent place to live, their own apartment, combined with onsite case management and social services. This concept, called "Housing First," has proven successful here in Knoxville and across the country in effectively ending chronic homelessness. For people who have struggled with chronic homelessness, the stability of permanent housing is the key to successfully addressing the underlying issues that had caused their homelessness in the first place.

Each person's needs and abilities are different, but the intent at Flenniken is for each resident to improve their lives and circumstances to the greatest extent they are able. One way this is achieved at Flenniken is through a collaboration with East Tennessee Technology Access Center, or ETTAC. Literally just around the corner from Flenniken Landing, ETTAC helps people with disabilities gain access to adaptive technologies, which in turn help people to pursue personal goals, gain education and

employment and generally to lead more fulfilling, productive lives.

This brings us to Tommy. Again, the whole point of Flenniken Landing is that it is *permanent* housing. It's not a shelter, and it's not a transitional program, where after six months or a year you have to leave, because the program is done. For Tommy, it was that permanent place to live along with case management and support services that helped him rebuild his confidence, his faith, and his life. After moving into his apartment at Flenniken, he began to work – just a little bit – at ETTAC. Eventually, he was working half-time at ETTAC, doing work to help others, and then finally, he was hired on for a full-time job, with benefits. For Tommy, his success meant that he had outgrown his need for the apartment at Flenniken. Income from a good, full-time job meant he exceeded the guidelines for housing assistance, and he was ready to move out and find greater independence at his own place to live. In this case, his leaving truly was a good thing that he celebrated with an 'eviction party' with his friends and support team at Flenniken.

[David and Volunteer Ministry Center's Resource Center](#)

David had known DyrI Higdon, a case manager at Volunteer Ministry Center, for the last ten years, when David started coming in for meals back when VMC was still at the corner of Gay Street and Jackson Avenue. David had worked as a window washer for tall buildings, working in a harness or on a platform, hanging from cables, hundreds of feet in the air.

Unfortunately, that came to an end when David began having seizures, making it too dangerous to continue in his job. The seizures were related to a diagnosed but untreated mental illness. David tried to mask the problems with alcohol, and ended up in a downward spiral of diminished health and self-worth. He left town for a period to be with family, but returned a few years ago. Although he had qualified for disability income, he was still struggling with alcohol, living on the streets, and building up an arrest record for public intoxication.

DyrI had maintained contact with David, occasionally reminding him of options for housing and improving his situation. Finally, David had hit a low point when DyrI spoke to him again, and he was ready to make a change. DyrI invited him to take advantage of VMC's Resource Center. There, it's precisely that commitment to change that is the key. The commitment then becomes an agreement to work with a VMC case manager to tackle the immediate barriers to gaining permanent housing, and then once a place to live is obtained, to maintain that relationship with the case manager to address the issues that caused homelessness in the first place. Again, this is the "Housing First" concept that has proven so successful for people who have struggled with long-term, chronic homelessness.

For David, this meant he developed a plan with DyrI, worked hard to implement it, and moved into his own apartment in May of this year. DyrI says the change has been dramatic. David quit abusing alcohol, and began earnestly taking care of his health, both mental and physical. He finds himself in

a much better place, literally and figuratively, and he has gone from being dysfunctional and disconnected to being someone who has a positive outlook and gives back to his community.

[Veteran makes the journey from homelessness to homeowner](#)

Eight years ago, Dewey Snapp was a homeless veteran living under a bridge in Knoxville. This summer, thanks to assistance from Veterans Affairs and Knoxville's Community Development Corporation, the 65-year-old Snapp became the first veteran in East Tennessee to achieve home ownership through the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher program.

"If I hadn't had this help, I wouldn't even be alive today," Snapp said. "I'm tickled to have my own house and have my freedom. My story proves that if you watch your p's and q's and you apply yourself a little bit, you can make something out of nothing."

Snapp took advantage of a voucher program via Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) to earn the keys to his new East Knoxville home.

Snapp is originally from Sevier County and served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1965 to 1971, including a tour in Vietnam. After he left the military, Snapp became a master electrician and worked in construction across the country.

"About eight years ago, I lost everything I had before, and I had nothing," Snapp said. "I was nearly dead when I was in that situation."

While recuperating from cancer treatment, Snapp ended up on the street. He found a temporary placement for six months at Samaritan Place, a shelter for homeless seniors run through Catholic Charities of East Tennessee. At a local Veterans Affairs (VA) meeting, Snapp heard about VASH, a subsidized rental assistance program that provides Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers to homeless veterans.

"When President Obama first became president, I heard him give a speech that promised no homeless veterans," Snapp said. "I got lucky, and I was the fourth person to sign up for a VASH voucher in Knoxville."

In 2010, Snapp received his voucher and moved into an apartment. The VASH program is a priority for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Obama administration issued a challenge to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. Since 2010, veteran homelessness has been reduced by 24 percent. More than 69,000 vouchers have been awarded nationwide, including 140 in Knoxville.

"One of the goals of *Knoxville's Plan to Address Homelessness* is to support KCDC and the VA's efforts to apply for and receive vouchers to house homeless veterans," said KCDC Executive Director and CEO Art Cate. "We recently received word that our application for 30 more vouchers has been approved. These vouchers will help us join with our national partners to do our part to eliminate veteran homelessness across the country."

In 2011, Snapp began working with Knoxville's Community Development

Corporation (KCDC) to move toward becoming “mortgage-ready.”

The Section 8 Home Ownership program, managed locally by KCDC, allows participants to use vouchers to supplement payments toward a 15- to 30-year mortgage. The participants must have had a Section 8 rental voucher for at least one year; be employed for at least one year at a qualifying income-level or on disability; not in debt with a housing agency; complete HUD-certified homebuyer education; and have a good credit score and adequate savings.

Snapp completed a four-class Financial Fitness Education series and one-day Homebuyer Education course through HomeSource East Tennessee to qualify for the program. At the beginning, Snapp had virtually no credit and spent four years establishing credit and saving money.

“I’m very proud of Dewey becoming the first VASH voucher holder to become a homeowner in East Tennessee,” said Jennifer Bell, Section 8 homeownership coordinator at KCDC. “He knew what he wanted and what needed to be done. Getting in a financial position to purchase a home can take time, and Dewey stuck with it and accomplished it in under five years.”

The Section 8 Homeownership voucher helps pay a portion of Snapp’s mortgage, while all maintenance and utility costs are Snapp’s responsibility. When presenting Snapp with the keys to his home, KCDC also gave Dewey a gift card to Home Depot for \$50. Snapp said he will complete maintenance and upgrades on the home

using his experience in construction and electrical work. He wants to plant a garden in the backyard and expand his lawnmower repair business.

“Dewey has promised me tomatoes from his garden next year, and I’m excited for that,” Bell said. “We were delighted to help Dewey achieve his goals and become more self-sufficient. KCDC will continue to work with Dewey as he pays off his mortgage and make sure he has the tools to manage his new home.”

[A return to housing and family](#)

Doug Banister is the pastor for All Souls Church in Knoxville, and is also an occasional columnist for the *Knoxville News Sentinel*. It’s in this second capacity that he came to write a column in May about homelessness in Knoxville. He wrote in the column about the community’s current efforts, as well as the longer history of the issue, and about the work of a number of organizations here. He also focused on the experiences of Gus, a homeless man who had sought help from Knox Area Rescue Ministries.

Gus had moved to Knoxville as a young man, after cutting short his college education in Colorado. He worked in construction in Knoxville for three and a half decades, and had raised a family here during that time, but after fourteen years had gotten divorced and eventually even lost touch with his family. Also during all that time, he had struggled with addictions that began all the way back in college. Banister wrote about how three years ago, Gus had lost control of his drinking, tried a stint in rehab, but ultimately ended up homeless. Finally, Gus had

enrolled in a new program at KARM called LaunchPoint.

This program is designed to help enrollees regain a sense of hope for themselves as they develop a structured plan for spiritual and personal development. While learning needed life skills, LaunchPoint participants develop individualized plans for taking manageable steps to finding employment, housing and community resources to rebuild their lives. In his article, Bannister writes about KARM's work to create LaunchPoint to help the people who might otherwise find themselves 'stuck' at KARM to instead create for themselves the needed forward momentum to improve their lives.

Banister's article concluded on a hopeful note, with Gus in his own home, beginning to rebuild his life, and grateful for the help he had received in getting off the streets and to this better place. That's not where the story ends, however. Within a few days of the publication of Banister's article, all three of Gus's sons had seen it, and reached out to their father wishing to reconnect with him after all these years. Banister wrote a second column for Father's Day to tell this story of a father and his sons finding each other again rekindling family ties that had been lost, but not broken.

So when we say that homelessness is not an acceptable circumstance, this is why. We cannot allow ourselves to accept something as hopeless or inevitable, when it simply doesn't have to be. Each person is an individual human being with their own story, and the stereotypes often don't hold when you begin to hear those stories.

In this report, we have the data to show the big picture for what's working and where the challenges remain. Likewise, we will note some of the overall successes and challenges with initiatives and programs that are being carried out by partner organizations in this community. It's important, however, to keep in mind that this is not just about numbers and programs, but about real people and families who are facing some of the biggest challenges of their lives, and in an increasing number of cases, achieving some of the most important successes as well.

Homeless Management Information System Data

The human stories above are vital to understanding the complexity of the issue of homelessness and also why we as a community have elected to work together to improve our response to it. Also fundamental to understanding this issue is gathering and using the hard data. By Operating the Knoxville Homeless Management Information System (KnoxHMIS), the University of Tennessee's College of Social Work plays the ever-important central role in collecting, managing, and interpreting data on homelessness in the Knoxville community.

The Executive Summary to KnoxHMIS's annual report is attached to this document, and the full report is available online, at the websites of both the Office on Homelessness and of KnoxHMIS. In the coming year, KnoxHMIS will be developing a "Community Dashboard Report" that will offer a regular snapshot of our current standing with regard

to basic statistics on homelessness in our community, as well as outcomes and progress towards the objectives of *Knoxville's Plan to Address Homelessness*.

KnoxHMIS records the number of people active in the system, meaning they have received at least one point of assistance during the year. The KnoxHMIS executive summary indicates a 5.6% decrease from the previous year in the overall number of people active in the system as compared to the previous year. The number of people new to the system was nearly even, with a slight 2.3% drop from last year. The annual 'point-in-time' count conducted for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development was conducted in January, and indicated a 13.3% drop from the previous year's figure. While this is good, our community clearly has a lot of work still ahead of us in order to more sharply bend the curve downward consistently over time. Our objective is not just to find some statistical definition of 'zero homelessness,' declare victory, and move on. Rather it is to show consistent improvement over time, as we prevent homelessness more often, and more quickly and stably re-house those who do find themselves homeless in Knoxville. HMIS data will continue to be critical for understanding how we are doing, what's working, and what may need to be changed to yield better results.

Accomplishments and challenges
Knoxville's Plan to Address Homelessness is structured around five broad goals. Some of the accomplishments and challenges of the

plan's first year are discussed below in the context of each of these goals.

Provide leadership, collaboration, and civic engagement.

The first success in this area is simply the establishment of the city's Office on Homelessness and Mayor Rogero's continued commitment to the Roundtable on Homelessness, and the ongoing implementation of this plan. Those accomplishments are only meaningful, of course, because of the commitment of Knoxville's community partners continuing participation in this effort. The effort belongs to the entire community, not just city government. The Mayor's Roundtable met quarterly, with consistent participation from partner agencies. These meetings provided the opportunity for the leadership of all these community partners to check in and discuss ongoing efforts and challenges.

Representatives of the Homeless Coalition presented an overview of the challenges of matching resources to needs in addressing family homelessness. The group was able to coordinate advocacy to (successfully) encourage the state government to preserve TennCare funding for community mental health case management, something critical to preventing homelessness for those struggling with mental illness in our community.

Beginning in January, OOH coordinator Michael Dunthorn was invited to represent the Knoxville area on the newly re-formed Tennessee Interagency Council on Homelessness. This group is charged with creating a homelessness plan for the State of Tennessee, in order to better coordinate

state agencies responses to this issue, and to make state resources more responsive to strategies identified in local plans to address homelessness, like Knoxville's.

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the Roundtable asked the Homeless Coalition to develop a set of standards of care, particularly for outreach, case management, and housing placement. The Coalition responded to this by creating a task force which developed a draft set of standards. This was presented back to the Roundtable at the end of the fiscal year. This draft offered simple but meaningful standards for each of these areas. The intent is to assure a basic level of quality services for people experiencing homelessness in our community, and to assure that each partner organization has the same understanding of these things, so that referrals can be made with clarity and with confidence that each agency is accountable in providing services that will yield the positive results we all are striving for. This will also provide public and private funders of current and prospective service providers with consistent benchmarks for what to expect from organizations receiving funding. Adoption of a final version of these standards is expected during the first part of the 2015-16 year.

[Improve the crisis response system.](#)

Knox Area Rescue Ministries has been implementing LaunchPoint, a structured four-week program designed to help men and women coming into their emergency shelter and the Crossroads Welcome Center move from the crisis situations that brought them there to solutions, and a personal plan to end their homelessness. To supplement

this program, KARM opened a new 44-unit transitional housing program within their existing building. Some of the graduates of the LaunchPoint program can move out of the emergency shelter into this facility, which provides the opportunity to do the focused work of implementing the plan developed during LaunchPoint, and then move on from there into permanent housing, educational opportunities and employment.

Knoxville-Knox County CAC began implementation of a new HUD-funded "Rapid Re-Housing" program, which helps families quickly clear barriers and move back into permanent housing, diminishing the compounding challenges of more extended bouts of homelessness.

Family Promise moved into their new location on Middlebrook Pike at the end of 2014. This move helped them expand their level of service for homeless families with children, and begin efforts to grow their base of support from area congregations even further.

Family Promise's expansion is a response to the critical challenge noted in a report from the Homeless Coalition this year. Family homelessness continues to be an extremely pressing need in our community, and significant challenges exist in providing emergency and transitional services for families as they are. Families with two parents, a single father, or with teenage male children present unique challenges for many existing services and shelters. For facilities that cannot shelter families in secure, separate units, there is risk in mixing families with adolescents and adults of

different genders, particularly in cases where some may be there specifically because they are escaping circumstances of domestic abuse. As a result, even when limited family shelter space is available, families are put in difficult situations where they must choose between keeping a family unit together and remaining homeless, or receiving shelter and assistance while being separated from each other. Meeting this challenge remains ahead of us as we work to implement the community homelessness plan.

Early in 2015, Mayor Rogero signed on to the “Mayors’ Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.” In response to this and other related national initiatives to end veteran homelessness, providers in Knoxville have partnered with the regional Tennessee Valley Coalition to End Homelessness to develop “Operation: HOME,” a collaborative effort to reach out and identify every homeless veteran in the area and connect them with the housing and resources needed to end their homelessness. Like the national effort, the initiative is geared toward ending veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. Many veterans are indeed being housed through these efforts. No matter what number is reached by the end of December, we are placing an even greater emphasis on using this collaborative opportunity to improve our long-term response to finding and housing homeless veterans throughout the region. This is in keeping with the principles of *Knoxville’s Plan to Address Homelessness*. We owe a special debt to those who have served, and we are committed to finding the long-term

solutions to prevent and end veteran homelessness.

Helen Ross McNabb Center restructured its runaway youth program this year. When McNabb merged with Child and Family Tennessee, they took on CFT’s runaway shelter. Eventually, they found that the costs for running the program in that configuration were not sustainable. With funding support from Knox County, McNabb replaced the shelter with a network of trained host families, who will be able to take in runaway youth if attempts to reunite runaways with their families are not successful. McNabb is continuing its existing outreach and intake services for this population.

[Create and maintain access to a variety of decent, appropriate, affordable permanent housing.](#)

During the year, Helen Ross McNabb Center opened 21 units of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless military veterans. Seven units were opened in December 2014, and fourteen at a second location in the spring of 2015. Each location has an additional unit for an onsite resident manager. These apartments were developed with funding and assistance from HUD, Knox County, the City of Knoxville, The Veterans Administration and the United Way.

Also in collaboration with KCDC, HUD, and the VA, Knoxville applied for and received an additional 30 “HUD-VASH” vouchers, which combine HUD rental assistance with VA case management to provide veterans with permanent supportive housing, at locations like those just opened by McNabb, or in housing throughout the community, as

chosen by the veterans themselves. This brings Knoxville to 140 total HUD-VASH vouchers, a primary tool for ending veteran homelessness.

Increase economic opportunities.

Green means economic stability

The City's Sustainability Office has been leading the Smarter Cities Challenge, an initiative that combines that office's mission to increase energy efficiency in Knoxville with goals of Community Development and the Office on Homelessness: improving housing affordability and preventing homelessness. Public programs and private charities spend millions of dollars each year paying utility bills for low- and moderate-income households in Knoxville. In many cases, while the rent or mortgage may be affordable for these households, their homes or apartments are extremely energy inefficient, and the utility bills are unsustainable. As a result, these individuals and families need help paying utility bills just to keep the power on, to avoid losing their housing. In some cases, assistance with old unpaid bills from the same sort of circumstances must be cleared up before a homeless person or family can move back into housing and get the power turned on.

The Sustainability Office took a hard look at this problem of millions spent each year to pay utility bills in energy inefficient housing that still remains energy inefficient. Working with many community partners, they came up with better options. First out of the gate was the Knoxville Utilities Board's *Round It Up* program, in cooperation with CAC. KUB ratepayers are asked to pay their utility bills rounded up to the nearest dollar, with that

few cents extra going into a pool to pay for weatherization of low- and moderate-income homes. Ratepayers can opt out of the program if they wish, but most are choosing to contribute. This will provide hundreds of thousands of dollars in an ongoing program to support CAC's weatherization services. Next, a community outreach and education program is being created to provide renters and homeowners with information on simple things that they can do themselves to decrease their utilities. Finally, Knoxville was awarded a TVA grant, initially at \$7 million (later announced to be more than twice that), to ramp up weatherization services in Knoxville over a two-year period. These resources will not only serve the energy efficiency objectives of the Sustainability Office, but will also have a significant impact in housing affordability and will profoundly affect the lives of those who will be prevented from every facing the crisis of losing their place to live.

SOAR

Helen Ross McNabb Center continues to work with other partner agencies to provide training in the SOAR initiative. This program trains case managers and others working with the homeless to follow a procedure to expedite the applications of eligible homeless persons for SSI or SSDI disability income. A case manager works with the client to gather relevant medical information and other documentation that will demonstrate the individual's disability, which makes them eligible for Social Security income. Because the case manager makes sure all of the necessary information is compiled and completed before it is submitted, the Social Security

Administration's contact for the program is able to quickly verify the information and issue the acceptance. In this way, disabled homeless individuals are able to gain access to income and healthcare, which makes finding stable, affordable housing possible.

Future Story Project

The Compassion Coalition continued and grew its "Future Story Project," a faith-based initiative to help those struggling with poverty to better understand their situation and how to improve it. The initiative also helps those in the middle- and upper-income classes better understand the different rules that affect the poor, and how to better relate to them and help them create opportunities for success. These initiatives when combined help build bridges and close the gaps between people from different economic backgrounds, and to build relationships that help all concerned to build better lives.

Improve health and stability.

Cherokee Health Systems applied for and received a grant from Trinity Health Foundation to develop a respite care program to serve homeless individuals who have been hospitalized and are ready for discharged, but still need a lower level of care in order to more fully recover. Normally, a person would be discharged to recover at home. For those without a home, post-hospitalization recover is more challenging. Shelters do not typically have beds available during the day, nor do they have the skilled staffing needed to provide the appropriate level of care in such a situation. Hospitals struggle with this issue, often keeping patients in hospital beds longer, which is expensive, and the higher level of care is not truly needed, and

eventually must discharge the patient into less than ideal circumstances, which increases the chances that the patient won't recover properly, and may in fact require re-admission, due to subsequent complications.

Cherokee is proposing a program to create that needed step down, where the appropriate level of medical is available at a lower cost, and is coupled with efforts to help the patient address longer-term housing and service needs. Once the details are developed, Cherokee will seek funding from Trinity Foundation to establish the program and develop ongoing, sustainable funding to continue to provide this service in the community.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, through coordinated advocacy to the state government, TennCare funding for Level II mental health case management services was preserved in the state budget. These services provide case management support for individuals with mental illness to help them maintain basic living requirements that are needed to remain stable and stably housed. The proposed cut of \$10 million in state funds would have left another \$20 million in federal matching funds on the table. Roundtable partners, the Homeless Coalition, the Mayor and others advocated to the state government and the Governor's Office that these services are critical to preventing homelessness among the target population, and that maintaining the availability of these services are implicit in the promises made to East Tennesseans that the provision of community-based mental health care services would assure that the

closure of Lakeshore Mental Health Institute would not be a net loss to East Tennessee. For this year, at least, our coordinated advocacy preserved this needed resource.

Limited primary and behavioral healthcare resources continue to be a challenge for Knoxville, and remain a significant barrier to preventing, reducing and ending homelessness. The Governor's "Insure Tennessee" proposal to meet the objective of Medicare expansion in the Affordable Care Act was rejected by the legislature. As a result, there still remains a gap in resources to pay for primary and behavioral health care for the very poor. This has a direct, negative effect on individuals and families who are homeless or at significant risk of becoming homeless.

Conclusion

A lot of hard work was done by the dedicated professionals and volunteers who strive every day to create opportunities and improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The accomplishments and challenges described in this document are in no way exhaustive of everything being done to address homelessness in Knoxville. Through the activities of the Mayor's Roundtable on Homelessness, we are working toward and meeting objectives identified in *Knoxville's Plan to Address Homelessness*. We have more accountability and better cooperation. We are seeing positive outcomes for more and more people: people like David, who found housing and hope for the future; and Gus, who not only found a place to live but also reconnected with his sons; people like

Tommy, who found supportive housing, employment and then a more independent life, while giving back to those still in need; and people like Dewey, the veteran who came off of the streets, first into an apartment, and then finally bought his own home. There is an enormous amount of work still ahead of us, but it is the very real human stories like these that remind us that the guiding principal behind our plan is right: homelessness is not an acceptable circumstance for anyone in our community. When we refuse to believe that homelessness is unavoidable or inevitable, we can and will make positive changes for our community and we can change lives for the better.

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