

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

ISSUE: Homeless and Homeless Prevention

- The Bozeman Continuum of Care was formed in 2007 to discuss community issues as they relate to our homeless populations. Topics include affordable housing, single adult homeless persons falling through the “safety nets,” veterans as homeless, teen hunger and teen housing, parolee housing, domestic violence, mental illness, family hunger, and the cost of drug prescriptions. The Continuum has begun tracking available services and identifying the biggest gaps.
- The Bozeman Continuum of Care meets monthly with its network of providers, the faith community and community members interested in how our homeless populations might be served and to help prioritize and target available resources for the most impact.
- Paul Thomas, a member of the Bozeman Continuum of Care, founded HIS Soup Mobile Soup Kitchen. He provides meals to our homeless and transient populations. Paul will shortly launch HIS SOUP Rescue Mission, (near K Mart) providing meals, laundry services, showers, limited overnight beds and guidance to those who are struggling. In addition, the Salvation Army and area churches sometimes pay for hotel stays.
- Family Promise, a member of the Bozeman Continuum of Care, provides shelter and comprehensive supportive services to families currently without any housing. It worked with 13 families during 2008, 10 of which were local, to secure permanent housing, gain employment and find a higher level of self-sufficiency.
- HRDC, a member of the Bozeman Continuum of Care, has worked within this network to restructure its Emergency Rental Assistance Program into a more comprehensive approach to housing and family stability, thereby preventing homelessness in the first place. The new program couples case management with tiered rental assistance and transitional housing approaches. The restructured program is a partnership among area service providers and uses a holistic approach to addressing a family’s needs. The cost to some communities to care for homeless families can be as much as \$40,000 annually. The estimated cost of providing services to one household with this new program is \$2,000-\$3,000.
- Other Continuum of Care partners are making exciting advances. Greater Gallatin United Way, the Gilhausen Family Foundation, the Gallatin Mental Health Center and others are providing resources to address more of the gaps including a drop-in day center and transitional housing units for our homeless or potentially homeless populations facing mental health issues.

By: Carol Townsend, Greater Gallatin United Way and Heather Grenier, HRDC

Progress to date is a great indication of what can happen when a community comes together.

GIVE

- Good used baby clothing to Love Inc’s Clothing Pantry, 103 E. Main, Belgrade, Saturdays, 1p.m.-4 p.m. It will be distributed for free.
- Monetary donations and/or food can be given

ADVOCATE

Champion the cause.

- Be informed and get involved. Continuum of Care meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 11:30 a.m. at the Bozeman Job Service. Exception: Next meeting is March 5.

VOLUNTEER

Share your time.

- Put your skills to use to benefit a local organization. A few hours a week or a month can make a lasting contribution. Visit www.volunteermt.org for a list of