

LOCAL GROUPS COLLABORATE TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS, MENTAL ILLNESS, ADDICTION

Centerstone and Thrive Alliance have joined forces to lead organizations in six Indiana counties in creating a new supportive housing model designed to help those who experience extended homelessness secure permanent, stable housing

COLUMBUS, IN (MARCH 7, 2017) – Centerstone and Thrive Alliance have come together in a new initiative aimed at reducing homelessness in Bartholomew, Johnson, Shelby, Decatur, Jackson, Brown, and Jennings Counties. Their goal is to partner with local organizations to develop a plan that will drive the creation of permanent, stable housing for those coping with untreated mental illness and substance use disorders who are homeless for extended periods of time.

“The City of Columbus is happy to participate in this collaborative effort to provide additional permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless, which is the next issue we need to address to reduce drug addiction and mental health issues in our region,” said Columbus Mayor Jim Lienhoop. “This is a complex issue, and we look forward to being a part of this team and assist individuals with housing so they can begin to get their lives back on track.”

As part of their collaboration, Centerstone and Thrive Alliance will receive six months of intense training through the 2017 Indiana Supportive Housing Institute sponsored by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) with technical assistance provided by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and its staff in Indiana.

They will work through the Institute’s targeted trainings and group exercises with the goal of creating a supportive housing model in the region that combines affordable housing with wraparound services designed to help people change their lives. Technical assistance and pre-development financing opportunities also will be presented by IHCDA and CSH.

“The opioid-heroin epidemic is increasing long-term homelessness in Bartholomew and surrounding counties, and supportive housing is a critical need right now,” said Wayne Fancher, Assistant Manager, Supportive Housing Services at Centerstone. “There are currently six supportive housing units in the area, but recent surveys show we need 75 more to adequately address the need.”

Centerstone and Thrive Alliance will engage local agencies in the initiative to create the new supportive housing model. The Institute will culminate with a finale in the fall of 2017 at which the Centerstone/Thrive team will present their plans to a group of public and private investors interested in investing in supportive housing.

“This program is about more than just creating homes. It’s about addressing the mental and behavioral health issues that often contribute to or exacerbate homelessness,” said Mark Lindenlaub, Executive Director of Thrive Alliance. “By working together to bring stable housing to those who are facing countless challenges, we can end homelessness.”

In addition to ending long-term homelessness, evidence suggests supportive housing breaks a costly cycle that forces those living on the streets to over-rely on expensive medical care and crisis services. This reliance can create financial burden for Indiana hospitals, detox centers, jails and other public institutions.

Studies have shown that supportive housing cuts healthcare and incarceration expenses by 50 to 75 percent.

“The opioid crisis destroys lives and adds considerable burden to taxpayers as law enforcement and healthcare providers try to combat the fallout,” said Bartholomew County Sheriff Matthew A. Myers. “I support any effort that helps people find a path to reconstruct their lives, and I believe that getting a roof over their heads is a critical first step.”

“It is clear that better health – including mental and behavioral health – is directly tied to whether or not a person is housed,” said Lori Phillips-Steele, Director of the CSH office in Indiana. “A person who is in supportive housing also receives the recovery services that keep them off the streets and healthy, which is what drives down overall costs.”

ABOUT CENTERSTONE

Centerstone, a not-for-profit organization, has provided a wide range of mental health, substance abuse, education and integrated health services to Indiana residents for 60 years. Through more than 60 facilities in 17 Indiana counties, Centerstone serves approximately 25,000 children, adolescents, adults and seniors each year. It is accredited by CARF International. For more information about Centerstone, please call 800-344-8802 or visit www.centerstone.org

ABOUT THRIVE ALLIANCE

Thrive Alliance works through a partnership of local supporters to provide affordable housing to individuals in Brown, Decatur, Jackson, Jennings, and Bartholomew counties. Services also focus on helping older adults and individuals with disabilities remain safe and independent in their own home as long as possible.

ABOUT THE INDIANA SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INSTITUTE

Since the initiative began, seven classes of teams have graduated, resulting in over 1,400 supportive housing units added or under development in the state. This has helped to contribute to a significant (38%) reduction in chronic homelessness in Indiana. Supportive housing, also known as housing first, also provides support services for individuals suffering from drug addiction and mental illness.

ABOUT THE CORPORATION FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (CSH)

CSH looks to advance solutions that use housing as a platform for services to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people, maximize public resources and build healthy communities. In Indiana, CSH works closely with the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority to stimulate the creation of supportive housing for fragile individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. <http://www.csh.org/>.

ABOUT THE INDIANA HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (IHCD)

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCD), chaired by Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, provides housing opportunities, promotes self-sufficiency and strengthens communities in order to build an Indiana with a sustainable quality of life for all Hoosiers in the community of their choice.

For more information, visit www.ihcda.in.gov or www.in.gov/myihcda.