



Connect. Advocate. Empower.

MIDLANDS AREA CONSORTIUM FOR THE HOMELESS

2015

Annual Report



OUR MISSION

The Midlands Area Consortium for the Homeless (MACH) works to end homelessness in South Carolina. MACH was founded in 1994 by a group of dedicated homeless advocates who saw the need to help those individuals who had no other place to turn. Through collaborations and partnerships, MACH has grown to include over 60 partner members throughout 14 counties in the Midlands. For more than 20 years, MACH has been helping individuals identify and obtain housing and obtain the employment and education necessary to become self-sufficient.

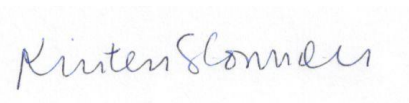
A Message from our Board

DEAR MACH SUPPORTER,

Thank you for your continued involvement in the Midlands Continuum of Care, your loyalty to our programs, and, most importantly, your concern for our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness. The year 2015 proved to be a challenging one for our community, and people who have never needed assistance from MACH providers suddenly found themselves seeking such care. I am extremely honored to lead MACH's effort and would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to those of you who continue to support our mission and values. Homelessness and housing services are a tough business – the hours are long, the work is never done and the funding is scarce. We know the needs far outweigh the valuable resources that our community has to offer. Despite these challenges, MACH membership is strong. Our board is comprised of knowledgeable and experienced community leaders. Our meetings are positive and our relationships genuine. The recipients of our services regularly express gratitude. MACH providers support each other to ensure we are reducing the incidences of homelessness and work hard to help people get back on their feet.

Each MACH member fulfills a specific need in the community that would otherwise be unmet. Our committees work to strengthen programs, study HUD policies and provide valuable membership training. We are pleased to support evidence-based practices and a coordinated entry system. These cutting-edge strategies will enhance our impact on the 14-county region in which we serve.

It is with great pride that I serve alongside my MACH colleagues. I look forward to continuing MACH's good work in 2016 and invite everyone to become involved.



Kristen S. Connors
2016 MACH Chair

I first met 'Michael' in December 2014. At that time he slept on the streets in downtown Columbia. Michael had a long-term history of homelessness due to a diagnosis of bipolar disorder with psychotic features, and he struggled with near-constant auditory hallucinations. After losing his job following a six-month hospitalization, his life began to spiral out of control leading to the end of his marriage, separation from his son and the beginning of his long period of homelessness in the late 1990s.

When I met Michael at the end of 2014 he lacked mental health treatment. He had previously experienced many continuous cycles of starting mental health services, and becoming frustrated, stopping taking his medicine and missing appointments. Due to his extreme anxiety, outreach workers engaged Michael slowly and patiently, one step at a time, to build therapeutic rapport. After he received a bed at a shelter, Michael enrolled in community mental health services and started psychiatric treatment.

By April, Michael entered MIRCI services and moved into an apartment — his first place of his own in 10 years! In less than 40 days, he was approved for SSI benefits and Medicaid using the SOAR model. Now there is one less individual sleeping on a park bench at night or waiting in the early morning for the library to open to seek solace from the weather outside. I encourage you for the next time you drive through downtown Columbia and see human beings lined outside the local soup kitchen, remember that many of them are another Michael waiting for the help they need and deserve.

Submitted by Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc. (MIRCI)

2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

ENDING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH HOUSING

There are three types of housing programs that help transition individuals out of homelessness. These include emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing. With the help from staff at these housing programs, the following results were yielded.

- **3,727** individuals were served in 2015
- **36%** of these individuals are now in a more stable housing situation, including permanent supportive housing, as well as rentals with and without subsidies.

ENDING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH INCREASED INCOME

While at a housing program, case managers work with the residents to find employment opportunities, access entitlement benefits due to disabilities, and find health care coverage. The individuals served at MACH's housing programs have shown significant progress by the time they exited a program. Of the clients served in MACH programs

- **37%** had some form of income (ex. SSI, Earned Income, etc)
- **\$779** was the average monthly income for individuals.
- **36%** received non-cash benefits (ex. SNAP, TANF, etc.)
- **47%** had access to insurance (Medicaid, Medicare, VA healthcare, etc.)

RESEARCH

Each year, MACH partners with the South Carolina Coalition for the Homeless to conduct a statewide Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. Volunteers across the state identify and interview people living in unsheltered locations. MACH uses this data, along with data from agencies participating in HMIS to research the scope of homelessness.

In 2015, the PIT count was conducted on January 28 by county-level volunteer coordinators and over 150 volunteers who canvassed unsheltered locations and other known locations to conduct surveys for our one-day Count. Our heartfelt thanks is extended to our county coordinators and volunteers! For more information and access to the full report, go to <http://www.midlandshomeless.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/SC-PIT-Report-2015.pdf>

MACH has partnered with state agencies on several research projects through the years, including analysis of service usage and costs associated with people who are homeless in South Carolina. In 2015, United Way of the Midlands, MACH's lead agency, released an assessment of Youth in Transition or homeless "unaccompanied youth" in Columbia. Written by Nyssa Snow and Dr. Bret Kloos from the University of South Carolina, the report provided information on youth between 12 to 24 years of age who experience homeless. The assessment also highlighted effective programs utilized in other communities of the Southeast to support "youth in transition." For more information and to access the full report, go to uway.org/reports/youth-transition-assessment.

2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

Securing Resources

In March 2015, HUD announced the Fiscal Year 2014 Federal Continuum of Care Awards supporting homeless housing programs. MACH agencies received **\$2,923,224** supporting 20 programs leveraging an additional **\$5,390,953** in matching resources. With these funds MACH's HUD housing programs were able to serve many individuals to help them transition into stable housing.

- Transitional Housing
 - o Clients Served in 2015 - **449**
 - o Residents who moved to permanent housing - **253**
- Permanent Supportive Housing
 - o Clients Served in 2015 - **505**

NATIONAL HUNGER & HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

- **November 14-22, 2015**, was recognized as National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week across the country. MACH promoted agency and educational events during the week to promote deeper understanding of homeless issues.

Last fall, 'Tyla' thought she was moving to Charleston with her mom and younger brother so her mother could begin a new job. Leaving her friends and hometown behind in Alabama was hard enough, but the situation grew worse when, as they were en route to Charleston, the massive October flood wiped out the business where Tyla's mother was set to start working. The family wound up in Columbia, staying at an emergency shelter before coming to St. Lawrence Place in January.

Despite the hardships of the past several months, Tyla hasn't let life's unexpected events stop her. She has benefitted from the many programs offered for teens at St. Lawrence Place, including Life Skills and Career Development classes as well as one-on-one mentoring. Tyla is currently working with a small group of teens to develop a project combating teen relationship violence, and she spent her spring break working in the St. Lawrence Place Spring Break Camp through a student employment program offered by St. Lawrence Place. On top of all these commitments, Tyla also recently received the highest grade in the class on her Economics exam. While the flood in October 2015 changed many lives, Tyla is someone who has not let the hardships of that event define her.

Submitted by Homeless No More/St. Lawrence Place

2015 Board of Directors

CHAIR

Julie Ann Avin, Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc. (MIRCI)

VICE CHAIR

Kristen Connors, USC School of Medicine/Supportive Housing Services

TREASURER

Donny Supplee, United Way of Kershaw County

SECRETARY

Craig Currey, Midlands Housing Alliance/Transitions

Nancy Barton, Sistercare

Deborah Boone, Richland School District One

Jamila Canty, Lexington County Area Mental Health Center

Jennifer Moore, United Way of the Midlands

Michele Murff, SC Department of Mental Health

Dianne Norris, Palmetto Health

Norah Rogers, Nelson Mullins

Lila Anna Sauls, Homeless No More/St. Lawrence Place

Gregory Sprouse, Central Midlands Council of Governments

Lisa Tindal, Mental Health America of Aiken County

2015 COMMITTEES AND CHAIRS

HUD Priority Committee, Kristen Connors

Advocacy Committee, Craig Currey

Data and Evaluation Committee, Michele Murff

Membership & Training Committee, Donny Supplee

We found out ‘Gloria’ was staying in a run-down trailer in the woods with no electricity or running water. She had no family left and thought she would have to spend the rest of her days in the woods. Then, one day everything changed. Emergency Services picked up Gloria and brought her to Transitions. With the help of Transitions and our various service providers, Gloria is now living in her own apartment. She’s excited to meet new friends her age, join a Bingo group and explore Columbia. She says, “Now, I never have to go back to those woods ever again.”

Gloria is an inspiration to everyone at Transitions and has showed us dreams really can come true.

Submitted by Midlands Housing Alliance/Transitions



MIDLANDS AREA CONSORTIUM FOR THE HOMELESS

**1800 Main Street
Columbia, SC 29201
Follow us @MACHomeless**

Support MACH!

Become a member – Share educational information – Make a financial contribution

midlandshomeless.com

CONNECT - ADVOCATE - EMPOWER