

Building Momentum

The year ahead.

Dear Partner,

The Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness has had an exciting year. It was filled with many opportunities and challenges as we continue to collectively move forward in preventing and ending homelessness. Although we have built a tremendous amount of momentum with notable accomplishments this year, we still identified and served 2,982 individuals in FY 2011 who were homeless. Our partnership of nonprofit, government, faith and business entities is more critical than ever. We have a remarkable group of community partners and leaders who decided and then clearly acted to alter their individual organizational priorities in favor of a collective approach to preventing and ending homelessness. I am more convinced than ever that together we can do amazing things!

Many nonprofit and county agency leaders in our community who help to prevent and end homelessness have recognized that fixing several key points on the homeless services continuum — our shelter system, prevention and diversion efforts and other efforts — wouldn't have as much impact without strengthening all of the continuum parts. We have been making numerous changes to our system that are necessary to be successful this year and in the coming years. No single organization, however innovative or effective, could accomplish this alone. Instead, participating organizations have agreed to collectively refine their priorities to coordinate enhancements at every stage of our continuum. This

has brought about huge changes in implementing a Housing First approach through rapid-rehousing and prevention. All of these changes have enriched services and accelerated progress toward reaching our 10-year plan goals.

This year's Community Snapshot highlights a lot of areas of progress preventing homelessness in our community, including our ability to identify and secure appropriate safe and affordable housing. We have made enormous strides to increase the number of individuals moving from emergency shelters, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing into permanent housing. The total permanent housing placements grew from 482 in FY 2010 to 714 in FY 2011, which shortens the length of homelessness. However, our collective ability to continue to identify and move individuals and families into housing quickly will become more challenging if possible federal housing funding reductions occur. Your continued assistance and commitment to help us identify and secure appropriate and safe affordable housing will be even more important.

Our partnership has emphasized the value of strong collaborations among nonprofits, government, business and faith-based organizations, along with The Office to Prevent and End Homelessness's centralized infrastructure that provides a dedicated staff and direction to set a common agenda, share data and outcomes measurements, coordinate systemwide communications and mutually reinforce activities among all key stakeholders. As we did last year, we are now setting baseline data points

to measure against, which are critical for us to develop, then assess and finally use to make better and more informed decisions. Due to data limitations, we have never known until recently our systemwide recidivism rates — those who after being placed into permanent housing return to homelessness. We can now report that of those who entered homelessness this year, 118 people were placed into permanent housing within the previous 24 months. We are assessing more fully how we can limit the number of people returning to homelessness after being assisted by someone in our homeless delivery system.

For our Community Partnership to prioritize and embrace our collective goals through the 10-Year Plan requires increased transparency, data reporting and analysis of the progress we make each year. The level of commitment from the 19 organizations and 120 programs that agreed to participate in collecting, validating and sharing data and outcomes is thrilling. We hope our Community Snapshot 2011 will provide the community with tools to better understand our progress, challenges and see where they might engage to help us achieve our goals.

I extend my special thanks for all you have done and thank you in advance for helping to make this coming year a tremendous success.

Dean H. Klein

Director of the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness



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