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May 22, 2014



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**NEW LONDON COUNTY FUND TO END HOMELESSNESS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES SECOND YEAR,  
RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE**



*Members of the Southeastern Connecticut Funders Collaborative gather with partners from the New London County Fund to End Homelessness. Managed by United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, the Fund supports a regional effort by nonprofit service providers to implement rapid rehousing and shelter diversion as means of ending homelessness, rather than simply placing people in homeless shelters. Left to right: Cathy Zall, New London Homeless Hospitality Center; Brian Orenstein, Charter Oak Federal Credit Union; Lisa Shippee, TVCCA; Virginia Mason, United Way of Southeastern CT; Lee-Ann Gomes, Norwich Human Services; Sue Murphy; State Senator Andrew Maynard; Nancy Bulkeley, Dominion Resources; Sarah Blendermann, Pfizer; Dee Sullivan and Diane Papadakos, Dime Bank; Paulette Barrett, CT Department of Housing; Denise Collins, Mystic Area Shelter and Hospitality; Kathryn Lord and Joel Suisman, Edward and Mary Lord Foundation; Jennifer O'Brien, Community Foundation of Eastern CT; State Representative Betsy Ritter.*

GALES FERRY, CT—Partners in the New London County Fund to End Homelessness reported today that as it nears its second year of operation, the fund has provided rapid rehousing and shelter diversion services for a total of 204 households in the county—including 140 families with 286 children. This news was reported today at a legislative briefing and press conference held by United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, the fund's fiscal agent. At the event, a collaborative grant of \$33,500 was presented to the fund from the Southeastern Connecticut Funders Collaborative, an alliance of eight corporate and philanthropic funders in the region.

The fund was created in 2012 with a state grant of \$250,000, and received an additional \$250,000 from the Connecticut Department of Housing in 2013, thanks to the leadership of State Senator Andrew Maynard and the support of other legislators from Southeastern Connecticut. United Way of Southeastern Connecticut serves as the grantee, sub-contracting with local nonprofit service providers to implement rapid rehousing and shelter diversion services for homeless individuals and families in the region using a comprehensive online management system created by the agency. The providers include Mystic Area Shelter and Hospitality (MASH), the New London Homeless Hospitality Center, Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA), Covenant Shelter of New London, and Norwich Human Services.

“The rapid rehousing and shelter diversion strategies being employed by the partners in the New London County Fund to End Homelessness exemplify the best practices being implemented nationally,” said Lee-Ann Gomes, assistant human services director, City of Norwich. “Housing people in the community actually costs less than admitting them into the shelter system, and yields better results for them over the long term. New London County has created a model that other regions of the state are now working to emulate.”

The partners in the Fund have developed a coordinated intake system that a homeless individual or family can access using the state’s United Way 211 Infoline as a portal. Once someone accesses the system, the partners work cooperatively to determine which provider is best equipped to offer services, and an assessment is performed to determine the best available solution. This may be shelter diversion, in which the provider assists the client in finding an alternative housing situation, such as staying with relatives or friends; rapid rehousing, in which the provider helps to place the client in an apartment, using monies from the Fund to pay the security deposit, first month’s rent, or other necessary expenses; or admission to an emergency shelter.

“We view emergency shelter as a last resort, especially for families,” said Denise Collins, executive director of MASH, which focuses its services on homeless families. “One of the best predictors



*Sue Murphy, executive director of the Liberty Bank Foundation, holds aloft a facsimile check representing a collaborative grant of \$33,500 from the Southeastern CT Funders Collaborative to the New London County Fund to End Homelessness.*

for becoming homeless as an adult is time spent in a shelter as a child, so our priority is helping families to return to stable housing as quickly as possible.” She added that one study revealed an incremental cost of \$40,000 per year for each homeless child.

Cathy Zall, executive director of the New London Homeless Hospitality Center, noted that the single adults served by her agency had seen significant success with the rapid rehousing model. “Our research shows that well over 80% of our rehoused clients don’t return to the shelter,” she said. “Getting even modest help to access stable housing gives people a foundation from which they are able to take the steps needed to retain housing.”

Sue Murphy, executive director of the Liberty Bank Foundation, made the formal announcement of the \$33,500 collaborative grant from the Southeastern Connecticut Funders Collaborative. “We decided to make this grant to the New London County Fund to End Homelessness because we all believe it’s a good investment, in both human and economic terms,” she said. “There is a sea change taking place in the way we address the problem of homelessness in our region. Instead of putting people into shelters—a temporary solution at best—the Fund partners are implementing permanent solutions like rapid rehousing and shelter diversion, which provide people with the foundation to get back on their feet and take care of themselves. It’s a no-brainer.”

Another Collaborative representative, Nancy Bulkeley of Dominion Resources, pointed out the important role played in the Fund by United Way of Southeastern Connecticut. “As the fiscal agent for the Fund, United Way is the glue that holds the partners together,” she said. “Without United Way’s capacity to manage, disburse, and account for the funds, that state funding would not be possible. With them as the ‘backbone’ organization, the whole partnership operates like a well-oiled machine.”

Virginia Mason, president and CEO of United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, shared the news that the Fund has just been awarded an additional \$250,000 state grant for fiscal year 2015. “That’s fantastic news, because it means that this important work that is yielding such terrific results will be able to continue and serve more of our neighbors next year and advance the common good for all of us in Southeastern Connecticut.”

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