

## 2013 Annual City of Lawrence Homeless Outreach Summary

The City of Lawrence Homeless Outreach Team consists of three full time case managers hired through Bert Nash Mental Health Center. They assist adults and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and work closely with the PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) case manager, whose position is paid for by a federal grant designating funds for community based outreach and case management for people experiencing a severe and persistent mental illness. Referrals come from the Lawrence Community Shelter, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Bert Nash as well as many other community providers that encounter people experiencing homelessness.

This year the team worked with 183 new individuals (compared to 195 last year) and 29 families (compared to last year's 41). The outreach team was successful this year in helping 58 individuals and 19 families go from homeless to housed. They also assisted 33 households maintain their housing, thus avoid homelessness. The Pastor's fund and the flex funds provided through the City Outreach Grant assist individuals and families obtain as well as maintain housing by helping with utilities and rent in order to avoid eviction. Each year the team runs out of flex funds before the end of the year, usually around October.

This year the Lawrence Homeless Shelter moved to a new location and was able to hold more individuals and families than their previous building would allow. This may be the reason there has been a noticeable increase in people wanting to come to the shelter from other areas when they are discharged from the state psychiatric facilities like Osawatomie State Hospital and Rainbow Hospital. This has been a challenge for both the Shelter and Bert Nash as these people are in need of more immediate services. The Shelter and Bert Nash have worked together to improve communication between these facilities in order for a smooth transition to occur.

The team continues to collaborate with other area agencies providing services to homeless individuals and families. One initiative we are working on is partnering with the Salvation Army to provide supportive services as part of their request for funds to provide permanent supportive housing to homeless individuals with a mental health disability. We look forward to the opportunity to provide more housing options for our clients next year.