

Madison County Project Homeless Connect event will be held Jan. 27 in Madison

January 19 2016 11:55 AM



EDWARDSVILLE – Exactly two weeks after the dreams of riches for three winners were realized with the drawing of six numbered balls in the \$1.5 billion Powerball lottery, the Madison County Partnership To End Homelessness will do what it can to help some people in the county take a step toward their dreams of finding a home and improving their lives.

The eighth annual Madison County *Project Homeless Connect*, a daylong event conducted by the Madison County Partnership To End Homelessness which helps people experiencing or who are at risk of becoming homeless to connect with service providers, will be held from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 27, at the Quad City Community Development Center/Mt. Nebo Complex, 1634 7th Street in Madison, IL.

“On any given night, more than 600,000 Americans are homeless. What makes it worse is that more than 25 percent of the homeless are children who are either too young to understand why they don’t have a home, or not old enough to do anything about their plight,” stated **Madison County Chairman Alan J. Dunstan**. “Unfortunately, some of those people experiencing homelessness, people of all ages, can be found in Madison County.”

Dunstan said the efforts of organizations such as the Madison County Partnership To End Homelessness are essential to help those less fortunate. “As funding from the state and federal governments is reduced, regardless whether it is due to the deplorable financial crisis in Illinois or sequestration enacted by the U.S. Congress, programs to help the homeless are cut. In Madison County, we are fortunate to have a number of charitable organizations which are dedicated to doing whatever they can to end homelessness.”

Project Homeless Connect was previously held at The Salvation Army in Alton and most recently St. John Evangelical United Church of Christ in Collinsville. “Those experiencing homelessness can be found in every area of Madison County,” stated David Harrison of Madison County Community Development, one of the organizers of the event. “Quad City Community Development Center offers an excellent venue for *Project Homeless Connect*, and by holding the event in a different area it helps the service providers and volunteers reach as many of the people who need our help as possible.”

Project Homeless Connect enables needy individuals and families to come and receive valuable services absolutely free of charge in a safe environment. More than 100 volunteers and service providers will be present at the January 27 event to assist in the distribution of food, beverages and clothing. Representatives will also provide a wide-range of services that include substance abuse and mental health counseling, legal services, employment assistance, veteran’s assistance and other social services.

Those attending will also have the opportunity to receive medical exams and other health services, receive care packages of toiletries and other items, and have the chance to get a hot meal, a haircut and warm clothing.

“Madison County is always looking for ways to improve our county, to help improve the lives of every citizen. It is important that we do not forget and do what we can to help those less fortunate,” Dunstan stated. “*Project Homeless Connect* is not going to end homelessness, but it is going to help, and the more people we can get to attend the better. Attending this event could be the first step in the road to recovery.”

“One of the key elements of *Project Homeless Connect* is the specific help those in need receive,” stated Frank Miles, Madison County Community Development Administrator. “Experienced volunteers help the clients who attend the event to determine what services they need and then help them navigate the event to ensure they receive the services that will, hopefully, help them get back on their feet.”

“I would encourage any citizen who knows of an individual or family that could benefit from Wednesday’s *Project Homeless Connect* to let them know about it and help get them to the event,” Miles added.

According to Harrison, there are many reasons for homelessness. “Some are homeless due to mental health issues, others were devastated by the recession and have not been able to recover, and we also have others who are homeless due to other issues,” Harrison said. “*Project Homeless Connect* is designed to help those people. You can’t believe what something as simple as a haircut or a warm winter coat means to the men, women and children who are homeless.”

Donations for *Project Homeless Connect* are still being accepted. Individuals or businesses with items to donate should contact Madison County Community Development at 618/296-8940 or via email at: madcopartnerstoendhomeless@gmail.com

For additional information on *Project Homeless Connect*, or to make a donation, contact David Harrison or Sarah Ray at Madison County Community Development, 618/692-8940.