



Project Homeless Connect Set for January 30 in Alton

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PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT SET FOR JANUARY 30 IN ALTON

24-Hour Canvas of Homeless in Madison County Also Scheduled

EDWARDSVILLE, January 14, 2013 – On Wednesday, January 30, two important events that benefit homeless men, women and children will be held in Madison County.

From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at The Salvation Army Headquarters, 525 Alby Street in Alton, more than 100 member agencies and individuals which comprise the Madison County Continuum of Care will stage the fifth annual Project Homeless Connect, an outreach event designed to provide a wide-range of services to the homeless in Madison County.

Also on Wednesday, in association with Project Homeless Connect, for a 24-hour period social workers and volunteers will conduct a “Point-In-Time” count of those who are unsheltered -- literally sleeping outside -- on the street, in a car or abandoned building on the night of the canvass. Information collected will provide important data for the plan to end homelessness.

“These are two very important programs that will not only provide immediate assistance to those in need, but will provide long-term help,” stated Madison County Chairman Alan J. Dunstan. “The data collected on the homeless in Madison County will have a significant impact on the grants the county and local agencies use to provide needed services.”

Project Homeless Connect

Project Homeless Connect is designed to provide assistance to more than 200 Madison County citizens who, as a result of economic hardships or other issues, are homeless or

at risk of becoming homeless. The project helps those citizens to find out about help that is available.

“The economic recession has hurt people in many different ways, including homelessness. And we also have others who are homeless due to other issues,” stated David Harrison of Madison County Community Development. “Project Homeless Connect is not going to solve every problem, but it is designed to help. 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.”

More than 100 volunteers and service providers will be present 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 and other social services. Those attending will also have the opportunity to receive medical exams, HIV/AIDS screening and other health services. “And we also have care packages filled with toiletries and other items,” Harrison said.

Harrison said donations for Project Homeless Connect are still being accepted. “If a business or individual has items they would like to donate, we would appreciate their contacting us and we will arrange for a pick-up.”

Point-In-Time Homeless Count

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires local communities to perform the Homeless Street Count every two years to demonstrate federal funding eligibility for many assistance programs, including emergency shelter operations as well as transitional and permanent supportive housing projects.

The last Point-In-Time count, conducted in 2011, showed Madison County with a homeless county of 411, including 205 children. “Although there are some homeless people we have difficulty reaching, it is very important that we obtain an accurate count as possible so we can send a message to HUD that poverty and homelessness are significant problems in Madison County that need to be addressed,” Harrison said.

For additional information on Project Homeless Connect or the Point-In-Time Homeless Count, or to make a donation, contact David Harrison at Madison County Community Development, 618/692-8940.