

Leading the Way to Ending Homelessness!

After her mother was killed by her father, Donna was bounced from relatives to foster care to group homes and more. Now, more than 35 years later, she continues to struggle. Although she earned a certificate in Office Automation (networking, fixing printers, faxes and copiers) in 2004, Donna's life still hasn't gotten fully on track. She says she prefers to live on her own instead of in shelters. An RV without electricity or running water is Donna's present home. She's been cutting and splitting wood in an attempt to earn an income.

United Way of Greater Battle Creek is joining with several local organizations to help people like Donna by supporting the Homeless Coalition's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness for Calhoun County. United Way's Board of Directors approved a grant of \$90,000 for the 10 Year Plan during its June 21, 2007 board meeting.

The predominant goal of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness is to create a community focus centered on long-term, permanent solutions to homelessness. In order to accomplish this overarching goal, the coalition built the following goals into the 10 Year Plan:

- Engage community leaders to work together to end homelessness
- Foster collaboration among stakeholders
- Align funding approaches in order to pursue permanent solutions
- Provide access to permanent housing solutions for people in need
- Devise a strategy which provides ready access to prevention services such as emergency response, housing referral, eviction prevention and substance abuse and mental health treatment
- Provide access to permanent employment and education opportunities

The Homeless Coalition's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in Calhoun County is supported by a number of organizations, and thus, falls under United Way's Project Impact Fund, Joint-funded Projects priority area. The Project Impact Fund addresses need in three priority areas: Emergencies, Community Projects and Joint-funded Projects. These priority areas attend to changing and diverse community needs by assisting with unforeseeable emergencies, one-time community projects and projects involving collaboration among various community partners. The fund will provide \$30,000 annually for the next three years to support the Homeless Coalition's plan. Other current contributors to the project are the Corporation for Supportive Housing and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Battle Creek

Community Foundation are currently reviewing the plan for possible future funding contributions.