

The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations approved the following Resolution, unanimously, at the General Council meeting on Feb. 27, 2008.

HHS-08-1

SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS

WHEREAS, at any one time more than 2,000 persons, many of them children, are homeless in Fairfax County; **whereas** the present public/private service network struggles to care for the County's homeless, and shelters have waiting lists that can take up to four months to place an applicant, while many wait even longer for "transitional housing" or "residential treatment" programs;

WHEREAS, in Fairfax County, the annual cost of an emergency shelter bed is approximately \$13,500, making annualized cost for a family of three more than \$40,000, in comparison with an average subsidy cost of \$10,500 for a two or three bedroom unit through the Housing Choice Voucher program (in 2006);

WHEREAS, beyond cost benefit reasons, a community that cares for those at risk of homelessness by providing effective services will realize great potential benefits, when many who are enabled to recover from economic crisis or treatable mental illness become more independent and productive in the community;

WHEREAS the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, in 2005, adopted as a goal to end to homelessness in ten years and recognized that broad effective planning and cooperation among diverse community resources would be required to accomplish such a goal; **whereas** the County has participated in and provided key staff and communications support for a Community Council on Homelessness with broad representation from public agencies (in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church) as well as from private nonprofit organizations, faith communities, local businesses, and citizen volunteers; and **whereas**, the Community Council has developed, through the work of two large committees, a Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness based on a shared goal and approach, published a "Blueprint" description of effective best-practice strategies that would redirect efforts of both public and private voluntary resources incrementally over ten years, and drafted an "Implementation Plan" for year-by-year milestones, public accountability, and continuing oversight through a structured Community Partnership;

WHEREAS the Community Council's Planning Committee to End Homeless

- has gathered evidence on the causes of homelessness and examined the lessons from programs, locally and in distant cities and counties, that respond effectively;
- has recommended moving beyond present efforts directed at "managing homelessness" to the new public goal of "ending homelessness" by adopting the basic approach of prevention and early intervention widely known as "housing first" (and widely recognized as the fastest track to reducing dependency and building self-sufficiency);
- has explained how this approach can be applied—through four key strategies—to coordinate our local community resources of all kinds much more effectively; and

- has published, with the endorsement of the Board of Supervisors, “Blueprint for Success: Strategic Directions for the Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community” (Dec. 2006) and its summary in a flier, “Strategies to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community” (Jan. 2007), both available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless;

WHEREAS the Community Council’s Implementation Committee to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community has now, at the request of the Board of Supervisors, expanded the Blueprint’s recommendations to describe a more structured Community Partnership that can coordinate the work of private and public resources and that can promote achievable step-by-step actions (many already begun) with annual milestones, shared standards of public accountability, and continuing oversight, in ways that can be adapted to Fairfax County’s governmental jurisdiction (as enabled by the state);

WHEREAS the (Draft) “Ending Homelessness: Implementation Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community”—*as presented to the BOS (Nov. 26, 2007) for review and action in March 2008 and as presented to and reviewed by the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens’ Associations Committee for Health and Human Services (Dec. 3, 2007) and reported in the MVCCA RECORD*—outlines steps during calendar years 2008 and 2009 toward forming a Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness, and **whereas** these steps will require continuing County participation in a governing board and support for public communications and a coordinating Office to End Homelessness, during the County’s Fiscal Year 2009 (starting July 1, 2008):

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens’ Associations supports the goal and strategies of the “Blueprint for Success: Strategic Directions for the Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community” and the (Draft) “Ending Homelessness: Implementation Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MVCCA recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve and endorse “Ending Homelessness: Implementation Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community,” so that the County may play a leading role in forming a Community Partnership, and Office, to Prevent and End Homelessness, during FY2009.

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