

THE NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

This Work is Hard and We Can Do Hard Things

WRITTEN BY ASHLEY HALLADAY-SCHMANDT

As winter approaches across Northwest Michigan, every year we are reminded of the tragedy that is unsheltered homelessness. Right now, the time between crisp fall nights to when the first snow flies are some of the most unimaginably difficult nights for those who are unsheltered. This time often means wind, rain and some of the coldest nights where you just can't get warm or dry no matter what you do. These are the nights when I leave my house to take my dog outside for the last time that evening where I run as fast as I can back into my safe and warm home. These are also the nights when I am hit so hard by the importance of our work. Nights like these make me wonder, am I doing enough? Are we as a community doing enough? Are we as a Coalition doing enough to make it so that no one is forced to sleep outside on these brutal Autumn nights? The answer is, we are getting closer every day. I know that as long as communities have unsheltered people, in any season, there's more to be done.

Our last report indicated there are more than 100 people who are unsheltered right now in the Greater Grand Traverse Region. That number was provided prior to the opening of Safe Harbor of Traverse City on Halloween night. The number across our other communities is much smaller, however, counties like Wexford, Manistee and Emmet have been hovering around three to seven unsheltered individuals and families each night since March 2020. And even though 3 is much different than 100, let's remember that ONE is too many.

Nights like these remind us that we must do more, we have to do more. Nights like these remind us that this work is really, really, hard. Nights like these remind me that we can do really, really hard things. Nights like these remind us that our work is never over until homelessness truly is rare, brief and one time across Northwest Michigan. So as we enter the worst season of the year for folks experiencing homelessness, and during a global pandemic at that, let's take the time now to remember why we do this work, and recommit ourselves to to doing hard things.

Let's do this.
Ashley



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Highlighting the Work to End Homelessness

ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS AND ENDING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Just over a year ago, planning began on a new and innovative strategy to address youth homelessness across our region. Through listening sessions and focus groups with young people experiencing homelessness, we learned that a comprehensive Host Home program was needed within the Greater Grand Traverse region. So, we did what we know best...we collaborated. Together, partners of the Coalition lifted up the Next Chapter Host Homes program and began implementation in the Spring of 2020. The Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency and Child & Family Services/Third Level both stepped up to provide supportive services.

Since that time, we have hired a Host Homes Coordinator to help us build out the program and recruit, train and support hosts, and to work alongside young people advising the development of this intervention.

In October 2020 we saw our first successful placement into the program and are now gaining momentum around adding more hosts to the program.

The Next Chapter Host Homes program is working to address the housing needs of young adults, ages 16-24, by pairing them with host families and offering temporary safe housing for approximately six months. This important intervention was designed by young people, for young people.



Interested in becoming a host? Contact
Maureen Voss: maureen@nextchapterhh.org



The team at Northwest Michigan Supportive Housing provides permanent supportive housing to those experiencing homelessness and who are struggling with mental illness. These dedicated champions in ending homelessness have **housed 13 households since March 2020!**
They are living proof that we can do hard things.

Since the pandemic, the team has had to pivot in their approach to housing supports, however, adaptability is all part of this work. Jason Arigoni, NMSH Lead Housing Based Case Manager said it was hardest in the beginning of the pandemic when no face to face visits were happening. "We increased our engagement with property managers to make sure things were going well from their perspective, and also worked hard to ensure tenants understood that extra precautions were for their safety." NMSH Case Manager Paul Silbor noted that it was very difficult not being able to go into people's homes in the beginning, and that tenants were upset when case managers could not see them face to face for several months. Clients being *upset* at the inability of case managers to see them in their homes really is a testament to how great the team at NMSH is at building relationships, which is critical when helping people maintain their housing.

Although there were difficult days, the team at NMSH didn't let it stop them from providing housing to our communities' most vulnerable citizens. But they can't do it alone says Jason. "I want to say thank you to our Coalition partners, specifically Street Outreach, as they continued to provide transportation and meet with people on the streets to discuss rental applications, potential rentals, etc." Paul also noted that community partners came together and really worked to know who we are and what we're doing to serve folks so it made the work during this time easier.

Accomplishing hard things is just what the staff at NMSH does. It's what so many of you across the Coalition do, and it's a humbling experience to work alongside such dedicated people. Thank you for continuing the mission to end homelessness NMSH.

The Work Ahead: Workgroup Updates

NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS

WORKING GROUPS TO END HOMELESSNESS



OUTREACH AND IDENTIFICATION

Focusing on building system capacity around our outreach efforts to find and engage individuals experiencing homelessness. Help organize community outreach projects as well as the Point in Time Count.

SHELTER AND DIVERSION

Work to increase system capacity around shelter services and implement innovative solutions around shelter and homeless diversion. Activities may include data analysis of System Performance Measures for shelters, innovative initiatives to increase capacity and quality of service delivery, and establish a community of best practices for the NWCEH shelter operators.



COORDINATED ENTRY

Focusing efforts on increasing system access and coordinating services. The Workgroup will monitor the NWCEH system access points, including the Call Center, to ensure proper coordination of access and services across all service providers.



HOUSING AND RESOURCES

Work to increase available housing inventories by exploring innovative initiatives to increase the number of units available for NWCEH program participants. Also contribute to a collaborative approach to ensuring consistent implementation of Housing Based Case Management across the region.



PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Establish short-term and long-term goals for the NWCEH, evaluate service gaps in our communities to anticipate shifts in Coalition emphasis, and expand the Coalition's ability to form critical partnerships throughout our 10 county service area.

VISIT
WWW.ENDHOMELESSNESSMI.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION



TO GET INVOLVED
CONTACT DAVE RANSOM, ASST. DIRECTOR
dave@endhomelessnessmi.org

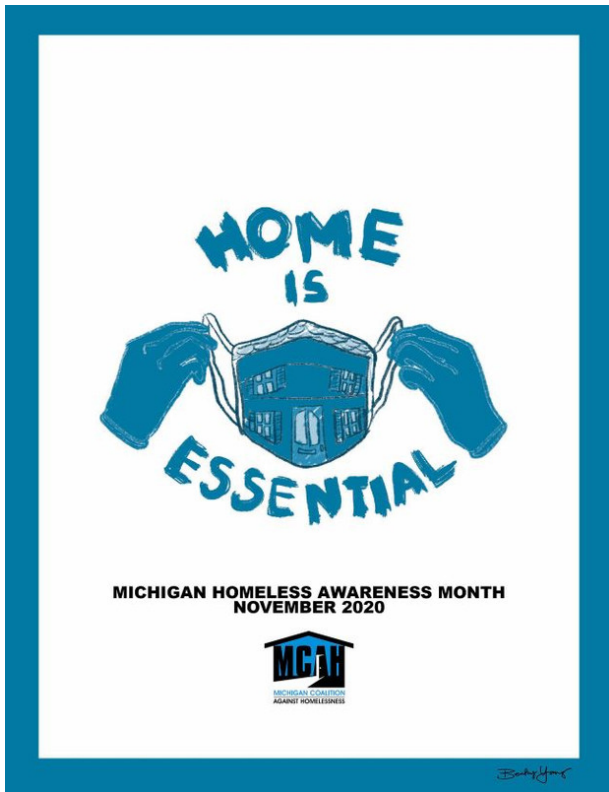
Over the past month, the working groups to end homelessness have kicked off. Most groups have now met virtually at least once and are starting to assign chairs and develop action steps for the coming months.

Remember to visit our website to register to become part of a workgroup. [Click here to find out more!](#)



Click on the update icon above to watch a message from Ashley on the Workgroup updates.

Homelessness Awareness Month



Click on the poster above to learn more about Homeless Awareness Month and activities across the state.

Where will you sleep tonight?

You're 67 years old. You've been receiving care in a nursing home for a lengthy illness, causing you to leave a long-term rental. You're improving, but now have no home to return to. **What do you do?**

Please Call
(844) 900-0500



November is Homeless Awareness Month

Click on the poster above to download awareness posts to share on your agency's social media page.

Data Driven Decision Making

In an effort to create greater collaboration, and accountability, we need to hear from YOU around what data is important to see each month. The world of data is vast, and in order to drill down into specific shareable metrics that make sense for this audience, please reach out to Dave or Ashley to request data you would like to see. More coming soon. It's been a busy 30 days.

