

SMOC South Middlesex Opportunity Council
Organizing Resources for Social Change and Economic Independence

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South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Annual Report
2005

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President's Message

Bruce S. Hulme, President, SMOC Board of Directors

On behalf of the South Middlesex Opportunity Council's Board of Directors and Staff, I'm once again pleased to present our Annual Report of the programs and services which we have been providing to the greater MetroWest area for the past 39 years.

SMOC was founded almost forty years ago in 1965 as a part of the Federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. We continue to offer a broad range of services that includes such programs as Child Care, Women's Protective Services, Substance Abuse, Energy and Financial Assistance programs, Shelter programs, Economic Development and Advocacy, Mental Health Services, Women Infants & Children and Elderly Nutrition. The Non-Profit Housing Corporation has continued to provide the excellent leadership necessary to support the housing for our programs. We have invested millions of dollars in the acquisition and physical improvement of distressed properties in our service area towns while working to provide an essential economic safety net to all of our citizens. Over the years we've seen the economy cycle through its highs and lows but it seems that in the past few years many more individuals and families from many different backgrounds and walks of life have come very close to slipping through the safety net. It seems that instead of our services becoming obsolete, the demand continues and we find ourselves facing many more and different challenges.

A year and a half ago we added the People in Peril in the city of Worcester to our list of programs and with it we find ourselves faced with new economic and community challenges. We are encountering challenges to our programs from some local officials and neighbors and we must work harder to educate the community about the great success that we have had in assisting them to move to becoming self sufficient, responsible and contributing members of our society. Housing prices and health care costs have continued their upward spiral and the lack of affordable housing has become a major hotbed of discussion in the service area of our surrounding communities. Despite what I consider to be a lack of understanding on the part of these groups and a lack of leadership in some of our communities about the role that social service agencies in general play for the welfare of their citizens, SMOC will continue to provide the tools and services that will help us to attain our goal of more self sufficiency, independence and dignified living conditions for the people of the greater MetroWest area and fulfill our vision of "Organizing Resources For Social Change And Economic Independence".

I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members and the SMOC staff and volunteers for all the time and work they have contributed to making our mission a reality. You have all shown a great deal of courage this year in particular, for honoring your convictions in the face of some often times disturbing comments and even personal attacks. Without your continued efforts we would not have been able to continue with our stated mission: "To improve the quality of life of low-income and disadvantaged individuals and families by advocating for their needs and rights; providing services; educating the community; building a community of support; participating in coalitions with other advocates and searching for new resources and partnerships."

Executive Director's Message

Jim Cuddy, Executive Director

Greetings! Last year's message was lengthy. This year's will be briefer. In keeping with the spirit of the 40th Anniversary of the War on Poverty, last year's message wrapped our work in some broader themes and then went on to recognize some of the key accomplishments and events that transpired, moved to thank the Board and staff, and concluded with a wish.

This year I would like to thank those most closely associated with our organization: the Board of Directors, for their continued passionate involvement and wisdom in governance of our organization and all the staff from senior management to direct line staff for their commitment, hard work and dedication. The organization's identity and reputation rest on the work that each of you does every single day. During the past year, a group of staff came together to work on the Vision, Values and Functions Statement. That statement is included in this Annual Report and is highlighted on our web page. It is a clear statement of who we are, what we believe in and what we do.

Last year's statement concluded with a wish that the upcoming year would see peace abroad and better conditions for the poor and disadvantaged at home. The past year brought neither. Our country is still at war. Hurricane Katrina exposed the seamier side of our culture in a way that has not been evident in several decades. The Kerner Commission's (1968) report following urban civil unrest prophesized that our country was moving toward two separate and unequal societies. The prescience of that prediction was displayed for the whole world to see in New Orleans six weeks ago.

During the past year our organization continued to expand its service and geographical base in an effort to help individuals and families achieve greater economic and social self-sufficiency. Our work with this country's most disadvantaged residents, the "poorest of the poor," homeless single adults, continues. How can we as a country ever alleviate poverty if we do not end the suffering of homeless single adults? Homelessness needs to be abolished by creating housing, not managed by building shelters and creating service programs.

This past year has been a difficult year for our organization. Our efforts to end homelessness by creating housing have put us into direct conflict with the communities of Framingham and Worcester. Questions, comments and concerns by neighbors about our plans are always welcome and can be understood and resolved by respectful discourse, but cannot be addressed by anger, hostility, political maneuvering and anti-SMOC websites that cross the line and border on hate speech. We know from those individuals and organizations that have experienced it in the past, that when anger and hostility cross the line, they need to be responded to, firmly, honestly and forcefully. We have attempted to do this.

So let me end by simply stating that what we do may not be the easy thing to do, but it is the right thing to do.

SMOC'S MISSION

SMOC's mission is to improve the quality of life of low-income and disadvantaged individuals and families by advocating for their needs and rights; providing services; educating the community; building a community of support; participating in coalitions with other advocates and searching for new resources and partnerships.

As we examined our mission statement, we determined that we would extend it to include a concise summary of our agency functions to provide additional clarity for the Board, staff and the community at large.

SMOC'S FUNCTION STATEMENTS

Community Resources

- SMOC organizes, represents and advocates for low-income and disadvantaged people to attack and eradicate the causes of poverty.
- SMOC provides information and referral services that allow people to advocate for themselves, develop problem solving skills and community connections. Through self-advocacy, people obtain needed resources and information to improve the quality of their lives.
- SMOC provides community education, advocacy and outreach for newcomers to Massachusetts to help them meet their basic needs.
- SMOC provides advocacy for social and economic change that will bring quality, accessible health care to all.
- SMOC provides opportunities for community volunteers, interns and donors to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.
- SMOC empowers individuals and families to become self-sufficient.

Family & Nutrition Services

- SMOC provides Early Education and Childcare Services in the form of Childcare and Head Start to income-eligible and disadvantaged children and their families.
- SMOC provides nutrition education and checks for healthy food to pregnant and parenting mothers, infants and children.
- SMOC operates a mobile clinic that provides nutrition education and checks for healthy food to prenatal and postpartum women, infants and children as well as basic medical services to uninsured and under-insured individuals.
- SMOC provides congregate meals to senior citizens and delivers meals to homebound or frail elders.
- SMOC secures and re-distributes food to people in need through partnerships with restaurants, caterers, farmers, food banks and food pantries.
- SMOC provides a comprehensive set of services, including emergency shelter, to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

- SMOC provides comprehensive services, including clinical, residential, day treatment, employment and community support, to individuals suffering from chronic and severe mental illness and co-occurring disorders.
- SMOC provides treatment for individuals convicted of driving under the influence.
- SMOC provides clinical services to individuals and families who are consumers of the organization's other service programs.
- SMOC provides medication management and support for people with severe mental illness.

Housing and Homelessness Services

- SMOC acquires, develops, rehabilitates, manages and maintains properties used for affordable housing for low and moderate-income individuals and families.
- SMOC provides emergency shelter for homeless individuals in the City of Worcester and MetroWest area.
- SMOC provides emergency shelter for homeless families in the Greater MetroWest area.
- SMOC provides a residential treatment program for homeless families grappling with substance abuse issues.
- SMOC provides a residential treatment program for women struggling with substance abuse issues.
- SMOC operates a Housing Continuum for formerly homeless single adults in recovery in the MetroWest, Worcester County, Hampden County and Hampshire County.
- SMOC provides a residential housing program for individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS.
- SMOC provides housing assistance services to prevent family homelessness.
- SMOC provides housing search services for individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS.
- SMOC operates and administers financial assistance programs aimed at preventing individual and family homelessness.
- SMOC operates a Home Center that provides First Time Homebuyer classes and other services aimed at helping people become homeowners.

Energy & Financial Assistance

- SMOC provides fuel assistance to eligible low-income people to heat their homes in winter months.
- SMOC provides energy and weatherization services to reduce the cost of utilities and to help maintain health and safety.
- SMOC is a regional housing authority, administering Section 8 Rental Subsidy Certificates for income-eligible families and individuals.

Economic Development Services

- SMOC provides housing and employment search services for homeless individuals living in shelters on a statewide basis.
- SMOC provides housing assistance for individuals exiting the criminal justice system who are at risk of homelessness on a statewide basis.
- SMOC provides comprehensive services for women exiting the criminal justice system, primarily from MCI Framingham.
- SMOC provides a loan program for homeowners to make their home physically accessible to disabled family members and/or tenants.
- SMOC provides education classes for young parents to help them attain their high school equivalence degree, post-secondary education and permanent employment.

- SMOC operates a self-directed Career Center open to the general public that offers workshops, career counseling, and access to a computer facility.
- SMOC provides daytime basic education classes to adult clients from other SMOC programs to earn their high school equivalency degrees.

Administration & Finance

- SMOC administration and finance provides professional services in accordance with governmental, accounting and non-profit standards in support of SMOC's mission and to ensure effective and efficient operation of SMOC's programs.

Program Reports

Behavioral Health Services

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) has many successes to report while dealing with a period of major change in staffing and direction. BHS has been restructured to focus on provision of services within a silo model. The silos include Adult Mental Health Services, Child and Family Clinical Services, Integration and Forensics Services (which provides addiction services primarily to the SMOC housing continuum), BHS Administration, and Mental Health Residential Services.

The current model has a Director of Clinical Services, Richard Curtiss, who supervises the Adult Mental Health Services as well as providing clinical oversight to all of the other BHS silos. The position Director of Elder Services was eliminated and replaced with the position of Elder Services Coordinator, a role filled by the same individual, Lesli Overstreet, but with less management responsibilities and more focus on the provision of services to the elder population. Elder Services are now delivered as a part of the Adult Mental Health Services silo.

The Child and Family Clinical Services silo, directed by Gail Carey, was organized as a separate component financially, and Ms. Carey reports directly to the BHS Director. The Director of Addictions was expanded to include forensic services and renamed Director of Integration and Forensic Services. This role was created to ensure that BHS was developing a cohesive relationship with the SMOC Housing Programs (shelters, sober housing, scattered site, etc).

In June 2005, Ellen Bruder-Moore was appointed Director of BHS. Ms. Bruder-Moore had been working for SMOC BHS as a consultant redesigning the Mental Health Residential component. Once the residential restructuring was completed the position of Director of Residential Services was eliminated and the residential program directors report directly to the BHS Director.

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) has been focused on many initiatives over the past year that have a major effect on the overall agency:

1) Integration of BHS and Housing Services:

The relationship between BHS and Housing has grown stronger and therefore more beneficial to the clients we both serve. BHS meets regularly with Housing Directors at:

a) The weekly integration meeting where we review the need for BHS Intakes for shelter guests; b) the weekly Marlboro Clinic Team Meeting, where we review particular client issues; and c) BI-weekly the Director and Clinical Director of BHS meet with the two Directors of Housing to review how our Divisions are providing a seamless service system within our own agency. BHS has also been providing training to House Managers in the areas of working with difficult clients, understanding mental illness, and crisis intervention.

The first process is to assure that clients are seen as quickly as possible for an Intake to determine the behavioral health needs of each client. BHS conducts a variety of groups (see attached) for an individual in our shelter system as well as within many of the Housing Programs SMOC operates. Clients are assigned clinicians on an individual basis, which is determined by a Multi-Disciplinary team (MDT) who assures clients are receiving appropriate services. Our Medical team, which is headed by the newly hired Dr. Ed Rolde, has been working closely to evaluate our current services and where we can improve the type of medical services we provide. Our Clinical Director, Richard Curtiss is in the process of redesigning the MDT process, the model of supervision of clinicians, as well the re-creation of team meetings in the Framingham Clinic, all with the purpose of increasing the quality of services we provide.

A new Director of Integration and Forensic Services was recently hired. Dr. Irene Durand Bryan brings a wealth of experience to this position, with a strong focus on forensic issues, serious mental illness and addiction issues, and is a Spanish speaking psychologist which will add to the capacity of BHS in provision of more diverse services.

2) Child and Family Clinical Services:

The Director of BHS Child and Family Clinical Services, Gail Carey is involved in a number of initiatives in the local community addressing the needs of children. Ms. Carey is working with community agencies and the Framingham School system discussing unmet needs and designing services targeting Middle school substance abuse prevention and high school prevention and treatment. She is also participating on an Early childhood mental health committee with other community providers addressing mental health issues and treatment of young children. Additionally, a consortium of providers including the Framingham Public Schools, SMOC, Advocates, and Wayside are designing a mental health resource book to guide parents in their understanding of mental illness and how to access the appropriate services for their children.

3) Driver Awareness Education (DAE)

The redesign of this program is underway by first conducting an evaluation of the current policies and procedures. A new policy manual has since been developed and finalized. A marketing plan has begun where the new Director of Integration and Forensic Services along with SMOC's DAE Administrator, Donna Castagno Cruz, have been meeting with the probation officers at the courts in our surrounding area to review our new policy and procedures which are much more aligned with the expectations of the courts.

4) Residential

The Mental Health Residential Programs have completed a restructuring that was designed to assure both the treatment and rehabilitation needs of clients were being appropriately met, as well as the focus on operational issues was handled in a more effective way. There continues to be a struggle with hiring and maintaining staff as a result of the low pay the contracts can afford to provide. This is a statewide

issue that has been raised with DMH as a crisis, resulting in the use of temporary staff or the hiring of staff who have a difficult time meeting the expectations of the job which include medication administration and a very stringent paperwork process. We will continue to focus on this area internally and with our funders over the coming months.

5) BHS Administration

BHS Administrative staff, under the guidance of the Business Office Director, Sepp Bergschneider, have worked hard to implement the ever-changing requirements and guidelines of insurers, Licensing Agents, and HIPAA regulations. They have implemented many new procedures in this past year, each requiring a great amount of clinical and administrative team work and skill to create, monitor, and change the procedures as needed, to make it occur while maintaining the day to day operations of the clinic.

6) Collaboration with Great Brook Valley/Framingham Health Services

BHS has been working closely with the Great Brook Valley/Framingham Health Center staff to provide integrated behavior health and physical health services for BHS clients. We feel this will enhance the opportunity to support our clients to improve their physical health, which has become a great concern in the mental health community. Recent studies have shown that individuals with serious mental illness have a life expectancy of 55 as a result of poor health care in addition to the difficulties of taking medications and living with a mental illness. Our plan is to allow one of the Framingham Health Center Doctors to conduct health assessments on BHS clients onsite of our clinic with the goal of having them become more connected to their healthcare provider and to provide a seamless service system.

Families in Need

No Family Left Behind

Recently I was at a SMOC congregate family shelter, where I was to see two young women who had asked for mental health services. I found myself quite moved by their personal histories as they were similar in some ways, yet very different in others. One young mother had lifelong difficulties that included abuse and neglect as a young child and many disruptions in placement and in caregivers throughout her development. The second young mother had very different childhood experience. She spoke of a very supportive family where her needs were met in a loving manner. She indicated that she continues to find strength from her family, however that she is presently homeless as her family is now not in a position to provide her with housing, but is still there for her emotionally. In any event, both young ladies were quite distraught to find themselves homeless with their young children.

Both women had impressive parenting skills and their children behaved in a way that made me believe that despite their hardships, these young women were meeting the needs of their children and providing them with the love and care that are essential. I met young women who have almost lost their dreams of education and steady work and hopes of finding a way to get back to the homes that were in their hearts, where they belonged. I saw young mothers who had suffered tremendous losses and who felt overwhelmed by what they perceived it would take to bring about the changes they so desired in their lives. I saw incredible potential for both, yet also an intense vulnerability due to their circumstances and states of mind.

Recent events related to the disaster of hurricanes Katrina and Rita have awakened and mobilized ordinary citizens across our country. People from all walks of life have stepped up and provided support, homes, furnishings clothing, food and other essentials to the families that had suffered severe losses due to those events. I find myself sitting across from young mothers who have had experiences that are every bit horrific as the survivors of those fierce storms, and perhaps far worse. There are systems in place to assist the homeless and those in need, however our communities do not always make a place at the table and step up with such vigor and conviction. The young women I met at the shelter were every bit as deserving as anyone of such support. They deserve to have hope that their efforts will make a difference for themselves and their children. They need the community to care and to provide them with a place at the table where they can have a voice and belong. – Gail Carey, Director of Child and Family Clinical Services

Rehabilitation

There is much documented about Psychiatric Rehabilitation and much of it is well written. Practitioners will talk about relationships, understanding a person's ethnicity, recognizing the healthy and positive things about clients. Treating people with dignity and respect. Supporting people to take risks and navigate change. However, what does that look like in a community residence. What does it feel like, is it something someone innately has, can it be taught? How do you practice psychiatric rehabilitation on a daily basis? How and when does it become the fabric of who you are? In my 20 years of working in the Mental Health Field in my observation the best practitioners are the people who could not do anything else, it's a calling as is any true vocation. For those people it is not about handing out medication and money.

Last April I was offered a position as Program Manager with SMOC to run two residences and 13 supported housing slots, a total of 24 people. There had been a lot of staff turnover and very little communication and connection between the staff and the residents. Most of the staff was from a temporary agency and the 3 or 4 full time staff between both houses were working as hard as they could to keep their heads above water. Since April we have hired 2 additional staff with psychiatric rehabilitation experience.

At first the residents were distant and not trusting. They would not make eye contact, respond when we talked to them and no one laughed. No one ate meals together or socialized together. No one participated in community events.

The first thing we did was to "clean" up the houses and make them look more like a home. Still the residents' eyeballed us. We began to shop with them at the grocery store and made special attempts to buy food for particular diets. We celebrate everyone's birthday. We began to see small smiles. Another staff person, the Supported Housing Coordinator and myself began preparing home cooked meals and set the table for everyone to eat together. The smiles came more frequently. We would sit and talk with them about the Red Sox, about there day program, about wanting to work, we talked to them about there physical health and now have two people walking with pedometer's. Now the smiles appeared as soon as they see us. They ask us to go shopping. The trust is starting to build and the relationships are getting stronger. We have helped with SSI issues, Medicare eligibility, and Dr. appointments. This summer one of the staff from the Watertown residence drove one of the residences to his family down the cape, they have gone to Red Sox baseball games, Celtics games, concerts, and beach outings. Two weeks ago a couple of the "guys" were sitting on the front porch as we were leaving for the night, it was a Friday night and all three of them leaned over the railing to ask if we were coming back on

Monday. We responded yes and all three of them gave us a big smile. I think we have just reached the threshold of psychiatric rehabilitation and we have miles to go before we sleep.
- Linda Nardella, Director of the East Residential Cluster

Community Development

South Middlesex Non-Profit Housing Corporation

SMOC's Housing Corporation was established to address the need for safe, decent and affordable housing for low-income households, homeless residents and disabled adults. The chief mission of the Housing Corporation is to preserve and improve the existing affordable housing stock and to develop new housing choices for low-and-moderate income residents and the disability community.

Goals:

The primary goals of the SMOC Housing Corporation are to:

- own, develop and manage the agency's real estate portfolio;
- expand the supply of affordable housing for individuals, families and disabled residents;
- provide tenants and program participants education and training for homeownership and job training, facilitating them in achieving economic and personal self-sufficiency;
- and, promote community economic development initiatives and neighborhood revitalization.

Property and Asset Management:

- The South Middlesex Non-Profit Housing Corporation currently owns, develops and manages the agency's real estate portfolio including all owned and leased residential and commercial properties. The SMOC Housing Corporation has been involved in a wide variety of community initiatives over the past 19 years and this portfolio activity includes the acquisition, rehabilitation and development of properties, managing leased properties and creating new homeownership opportunities for first time homebuyers. The resulting investment has yielded over 1,200 new housing opportunities since the inception of the Housing Corporation by producing new permanent housing for residents throughout a broad spectrum of housing activities and needs. SMOC Housing has employed an integrated development model that directly links the agency's program population and services to its housing agenda that has included program-enriched units, supported housing units, sober housing, homeownership opportunities, permanent rental housing and preservation efforts.

FY2005 Housing Operations, Property and Asset Management Highlights:

- SMOC Housing's activities throughout FY2005 were significant. Our property and programmatic initiatives extend our operations statewide throughout the Commonwealth. The Housing Corporation has successfully and directly partnered with organizations and municipalities to address the acute shortage of affordable housing and service-enriched facilities. This included the acquisition and development of new properties in Worcester County, Western Massachusetts and in the MetroWest region.

- The SMOC Housing Corporation made a substantial investment in the replacement of the organization's property management software system. SMOC Housing purchased and installed a new property management system called TIMBERLINE Software, which is widely recognized as a software industry leader in property management and affordable housing management. This new system will position the Housing team to more fully utilize a property management software system that supports improved property services and accommodates the portfolio growth that the Housing Corporation has experienced over the past three fiscal years. We are pleased to be utilizing a product that facilitates more efficient information sharing, capital planning and performance-based property data that will inform the management team for optimal decision-making.
- The agency's Continuum of Housing and Care for Single Adults received a significant investment by having an agency-wide program model review to identify areas to strengthen program linkages, accelerate more timely participant flow and implement outcome measures to track evidence-based program performance data. This evaluation included all critical elements that are embedded in the SMOC Continuum of Housing and Care including Education, Behavioral Health, Employment, Health Care, Housing and Self-Sufficiency Planning. It is our expectation that by re-tooling the program model components, SMOC will increase the effectiveness of the agency's wrap-around services for residents and will reach more people in need as we creatively utilize our resources to meet our mission and adopt solutions to end homelessness.
- SMOC Housing's commitment to providing housing and shelter for homeless individuals and families is a driving component that is incorporated centrally into our development strategy and core organizational mission. It is our goal to transform the agency's shelter continuum to truly serve as a temporary triage program and expedite the placement of shelter guests into appropriate housing. With a diverse network of program-enriched and supported housing units, it is possible for us to substantially reduce the homeless population and accelerate their ability to secure safe, decent and affordable housing.

FY2005 Development Highlights:

The Housing Corporation's activities covered an extensive array of existing and potential community development initiatives throughout FY05. This included many diverse projects. Given the complexity and multiple financing partners, many of SMOC Housing's projects span over two fiscal periods to successfully complete an integrated development model to meet a variety of community needs. Here are a few highlights of projects completed or launched in FY2005:

- **14-16 Gordon Street, Framingham:** - This property located in the heart of downtown Framingham experienced serious fire damage in late Fiscal Year 2004. The development team assembled a complete reconstruction plan and worked closely with the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) to redevelop this site to create 16 new units of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) for formerly homeless single adults. The Framingham Housing Authority, a long-standing partner with the Housing Corporation, administers 12 units of project-based rental assistance within the development. The building was filled promptly upon securing a new certificate of occupancy.
- **Public Inebriate Program (PIP), Inc., Worcester** - The integration of the PIP affiliate, a not-for-profit organization based in the City of Worcester, into the SMOC Housing management structure and portfolio was completed in Fiscal Year 2005. This includes PIP's four-story building on Main Street in Worcester, Sober Housing units and Ed's Place, the unique farming initiative situated in Oakham, Massachusetts. It is our expectation that new development projects and our

regional housing strategy will meet the unmet community needs and begin to create a dedicated supported housing network to serve the residents throughout Worcester County.

- **Pax Center for Women, Worcester** - The agency purchased this property in the City of Worcester to create a safe, respectful and affordable supported housing development for women. The development will target formerly homeless women and provide intensive services to facilitate permanent housing, education, employment and self-sufficiency. The Housing Corporation was awarded a Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston's Affordable Housing Program (AHP) grant and subsidized loan to purchase and rehabilitate the property.
- **Worcester Continuum of Housing & Care:** The Housing Corporation has advanced a regional strategy and the agency's first efforts to create a supported housing network to serve homeless, formerly homeless and disabled single adults in the City of Worcester and throughout Worcester County. The Housing Corporation currently has four properties under Purchase & Sale Agreement that will provide an appropriate continuum of housing choices for this target tenant population. All properties will have educational, employment and stabilization services available to the residents.
- **Easthampton Lodging House, 75 Oliver Street, Easthampton:** SMOC was approached by the City of Easthampton to respond to the City's Request for Proposals to undertake the professional management and property improvements of the last remaining town-owned lodging house in the Commonwealth. Historically, the City utilized this 20-unit property for the disabled and residents unable to secure other housing. It has also been used as an emergency housing resource for local residents that may have become victims of disaster or other housing emergencies. SMOC has assumed the management of the facility and is working closely with the City of Easthampton to preserve this housing resource as a valuable housing choice for the area's neediest residents. SMOC signed a 10-year lease to manage this historic property.
- **Senior Affordable Housing Initiatives** – SMOC Development has been working with local communities to address the growing shortage of affordable housing for our Senior Citizens. We are currently working with several communities to plan and produce new housing choices for our elderly residents as the housing needs change over time. We have also been working with the Towns of Ashland, Palmer and Framingham to identify and design new ways to create new affordable housing for elderly residents and Senior Citizens.
- **46 Pratt Street, Framingham** – SMOC Housing purchased this 10-unit lodging house with financing from the Framingham Co-operative Bank and a Supported Housing Program (SHP) grant from Federal Agency of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This property targets formerly homeless single adults who will be required to participate in the Sober Housing Program and begin pursuing a blueprint for self-sufficiency.
- **Scudder House, Framingham** – SMOC was awarded a Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program (AHP) grant to partner with the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) to design and develop a housing solution for formerly homeless women. The Scudder House is located on the UCC campus and will provide a beautiful site for 12 new housing units. All program participants will be required to be part of the Sober Housing Program including education, training, stabilization services and participation in an Individual Service Plan (ISP) to achieve economic self-reliance.

Fiscal Year 2005 was another successful year and one of significant change for the Housing Corporation. The dedicated staff continued to perform professionally with compassion and resilient energy to address the area's housing needs and close the affordability gap for our neediest residents. SMOC Housing will continue in FY 2006 to identify new ways to meet our mission and address the growing demand for more affordable housing for area residents. It is our goal that we continue to strengthen the households we serve through the Housing Corporation. We will promote and advance our development agenda to revitalize and stabilize the neighborhoods where we have invested our efforts. The SMOC Housing Corporation is committed to expanding our community development partners continuing our mission of providing and creating fundamental economic, community and individual opportunity.

Housing Continuum

Substance Abuse Residential Programs

The Family Shelter Residential Substance Abuse programs were redesigned this year. The Bureau of Substance Abuse Services awarded SMOC a contract that required the expansion of the **Sage Program** to 11-15 families. The recovery program currently serves 7-8 families. Several new staff have joined the Sage House team and clinical services will be provided on site. The program will continue to provide substance abuse treatment, counseling and supportive services for homeless families who participate in the program for 9 to 12 months. The families will receive a variety of supports including relapse prevention groups, group and individual counseling, parenting support and vocational training. Sage House was a transitional home to 17 families (23 adults and 29 children) during the last year.

Serenity House is a six-month residential substance abuse treatment program for women. The program has capacity for up to 35 women including 4 pregnant and postpartum women. Serenity House served 61 women last year. Thirty-six women graduated and 35 maintained their sobriety through their most recent follow-up.

Young Adult Supportive Case Management Program

As part of the continuum of services offered by SMOC, the Young Adult Supportive Case Management Program (YASCM) provides structured, sober housing for young adults between the ages of 18 –24 who are living in recovery from substance abuse. The program offers a structure in which residents learn practical skills for leading a healthy, sober lifestyle.

YASCM served 51 people between 18-24 years old in FY 05. The program provides supportive case management services to young adults in recovery. The program structure includes a Peer Council that meets with SMOC BHS and Housing staff weekly to address residents concerns and issues. The Peer Council is made up of three of the senior residents, one appointed by staff and two elected by the program residents. Two of the program graduates from the first year of operations were hired by the SMOC in the last year.

Our goal is to make the tools of recovery accessible and productive while at the same time laying the foundation for future independence and success. Case Managers assist members in achieving their goals by means of individual and group meetings. Referrals may be made to other support services such as SMOC's Career Center for job placement, college exploration or GED preparation. Counseling and psychiatric services are available through the Outpatient Service of SMOC's BHS.

New Beginnings is a 12 bed supportive housing program for formerly homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Twenty-one individuals lived at New Beginnings during the last year and 8 of the 9 who left the program moved to their own independent housing. At any given time throughout the year 95% of the residents were involved in vocational, educational, or community activities. This year the residents have faced increasing challenges with regards to their overall health. Some residents have battled cancer and Hepatitis C. Others are experiencing a new resistance to medications that were one helpful. New Beginnings staff have worked diligently to stay abreast of medical resources and developments for the residents.

RUN

I no longer have to Run away I can stay on solid ground I have worked so hard to get this far	I am free and no longer in fear, Fear that wants me to forget how far I have come
Sometimes the fear that enters me wants me to go back to my past	It wants me to run But I stay I have changed
Run, run, run far away!	I look forward to whatever is next in my life
I no longer have to remember the pain I loved and the loved ones I hurt	I run No more.
Today the running has stopped and my life has begun I am different I am alive I am no longer alone I have you.	-Shelly

Single Adult Programs

The Meadows Program is a residential program with eight beds. The program is targeted at women leaving the correctional system and participation in the program lasts six months. During the past year, 36 women participated in the program. Seven of the ten graduates moved into SMOC Sober Housing and continue to stay in touch with the program. The program also has a strong vocational component with women attending the SMOC Career Center programs as a requirement of the program. All of the graduates were assisted in getting jobs as they prepared to transition to more independent living.

Shadows is a homeless shelter for up to 10 women. In addition to safe shelter, the women in the program receive case management services designed to assist them in moving on to more independent living. The shelter served 95 women last year, 81% of whom moved directly from the shelter into sober housing or treatment programs. Surprisingly, at 58% Shadows had the highest percentage of chronically homeless guests of any of the SMOC shelters. The shelter continued to serve many women from MCI Framingham, either on parole or probation. Shadows staff work closely with the Case Managers from

the SMOC CRC program to provide additional services in assisting these women in finding jobs and housing.

Turning Point is an 18-bed emergency program for single adult men. Turning Point was a transitional home to 122 individuals, 23% of whom were chronically homeless. Forty-six percent of the guests moved from the shelter to more stable housing or treatment. The program also began a housing component this year with 10 beds on the second floor set aside as transitional housing for folks not quite ready for Sober Housing.

Marlboro Shelter is an emergency program serving up to 18 men and women. The Shelter served 195 men and women last year. There were 121 positive exits from the shelter including 60 who moved into sober housing and 29 who entered substance abuse treatment programs.

Roland Simoneau- A Tribute

A homeless man froze to death in Hudson in 1986 which prompted a meeting between then City Counselor Roland Simoneau and the Marlboro-Hudson Interfaith Clergy. They vowed to do something to ensure that no one else would suffer the same fate because there was no place for them to sleep on a cold winter night. The original Marlboro-Hudson Community Shelter was located in the basement of a Marlboro municipal building. There were no showers, no paid staff, and the shelter operated only during evening and overnight hours.

In the late 80's Roland and his wife Joan worked with a small committee to hold a fundraiser at Madonna Hall at St. Matthias Church to benefit the shelter. These events continued for a few years and raised a few thousand dollars each year for the shelter. In 1990 the event was deemed *The Evening of Giving* and was moved to the Holiday Inn in Marlboro to accommodate a larger crowd. About 700 people attended that initial event. After several years as the event's popularity increased, the crowd grew, and the Evening of Giving was moved to the Best Western Crowne Plaza Hotel in Marlboro where it continues to draw over 1200 people each year.

Through Roland's efforts, he and *The Evening of Giving* committee have raised approximately half a million dollars on behalf of the Marlboro Shelter. Over the years those proceeds have helped improve the shelter through the addition of a new heating system, new windows, new floors, and kitchen and bathroom remodeling. The funds have also paid 100% of the food costs many years and have helped us to maintain the staffing levels necessary to effectively operate the shelter. Roland is truly one man who has made a great difference in the lives of many people he did not even know. Sadly, Roland passed away in July 2005. His spirit will always be alive and remembered by many people in Marlboro, particularly in the preparation and celebration of *The Evening of Giving*.

The Lincoln Street Supported Housing Program is an 8-bed housing program for formerly homeless individuals who are diagnosed with both substance abuse and mental health concerns. Clients are referred to the program by homeless shelters and by Department of Mental Health case managers. The program served 12 individuals last year. Nine of the participants achieved their goals related to working and job training.

Crossroads is a Post-Detox Program for homeless individuals with chronic relapse histories. The program has ten beds and in the last year served 68 individuals. Fifty percent of the clients completed the program and 72% moved on to Sober Housing and 21% went on to further substance abuse treatment.

Nicolas is a 59 year old male. He was referred to Crossroads by Leonard Morse hospital in Natick. When he entered the program he was uncertain about succeeding due to his long-term dependence on alcohol. He was anti-social and suffered from depression. The staff worked with him closely, offering support and guidance and he soon came out of his shell. One of the most important aspects of his treatment plan was for him to get involved in the AA/NA meetings in the Framingham community. Nicolas was a little reluctant but through support from his peers he was soon actively involved in a meeting downtown. He took pride in his membership at this meeting and took on the coffee-making responsibility. His next goal was to get a job. While he looked for work he helped with the upkeep of the house and cooked meals for other clients who were working. Today Nicolas has 12 months of recovery, a full-time job, attends individual counseling and lives in sober housing. He now provides support and encouragement to those just beginning their recovery.

The Common Ground Emergency Shelter served 437 men and 133 women during the last year. The loss of a detox in our area continues to create obstacles for clients seeking treatment. The staff worked closely with SMOC's Behavioral Health Services team to provide outpatient counseling to 200 individuals throughout the year. Fifty-six of the program exits were to SMOC transitional housing programs, 36 to Sober Housing, 11 to treatment, and 37 to detox facilities. The Framingham Community Health Center began providing on-site services at the shelter during the year. A doctor or nurse practitioner has regular visits once a week and provides health education, blood pressure checks, and referrals for follow up for more serious medical issues.

Especially since the closure of the Detox, the Social Recovery Day Program (SRSP) funded by the MetroWest Healthcare Foundation, fills a critical need for clients in early recovery who are struggling to stay sober within the active environment of the Overflow Shelter. In the past year, the program served 200 men and women and had 117 positive outcomes. Case management is provided to assist clients in achieving goals related to enhanced self-sufficiency. Sixty percent of the participants moved from the program into Sober Shelters, Sober Housing or treatment programs. Ninety-two referrals were made to the Career Center, 61 were referred to MassHealth, and 100% were referred to DTA for food stamps. Twenty-five of the participants relapsed and were referred to detox. Ten of those folks went to detox and were readmitted upon completion.

Family Residential Programs

Family residential programs experienced several changes this year. Last summer the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) set a goal to no longer use hotels to shelter families and to move families out of hotels and into shelter or housing on a statewide basis. Twelve families from the Boston and North Shore area hotels moved to our Scattered Site Program. These expedited shelter placements became the norm throughout the year for all of the Family Shelter Programs. Several new resources were also made available to assist in homeless prevention and expedited placement for homeless families. These resources impacted the family shelters, making movement into and out of the programs much more frequent. In the spring, DTA amended the occupancy rate expectations for shelters statewide from 92% to 70%. Each of our programs met or exceeded these expectations with Pathways at 94%, Medway at 92%, and Scattered Sites at 75%.

The Scattered Sites Shelter Program expanded from 30 to 40 units this year and provided emergency shelter to 80 families. Sixty-six percent of the families who exited moved into permanent housing. The Medway Family Shelter provided shelter to 47 families during the 2004-2005 fiscal year. Twelve of the

37 exits were to permanent housing. Pathways Family Shelter (PFS) housed a total of 57 families, 50% of those who exited the shelter moved to permanent housing.

The Housing Assistance Program (HAP) provided housing search services to 429 (245 prevention and 184 homeless) families during the last year. The new DTA financial assistance resources became important and effective tools for the staff to assist families. DTA created an innovative way to get shelter residents into permanent housing, and to offer financial help to Emergency Assistance eligible families by creating a new program called the "ToolBox". This resource was made available to all HAP providers with the intention of helping homeless and nearly homeless clients to find housing or to avoid eviction and entrance into the shelter system. The program started at the end of February 2005, and the HAP staff utilized the ToolBox on behalf of 45 families during the fiscal year. Toolbox money was used for rent arrearage, first and last months rent and security deposits.

The Shelter-to-Housing (S2H) Program, a DTA program that provided families residing in our shelter system with a shallow subsidy to help them lease an apartment was a success for most of the families who participated. At the year's end, of the 31 families who moved out of shelter through S2H, 27 remained housed or obtained subsidized housing or Section 8 Choice Vouchers.

Residential Assistance to Families in Transition (RAFT) is a new resource through DTA that provides eligible families with financial assistance to secure and maintain housing. SMOC Housing Search staff assisted 220 households in accessing this program with an average amount of assistance of \$1,200.00

The Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC) provided services to 1106 clients including homeowner, tenants, landlords and first time homebuyers. Ninety people received education services and were certified as first-time homebuyers. Five foreclosures were prevented utilizing RAFT funding and 4 others through foreclosure counseling, which assists families and individuals in finding ways to avoid foreclosure.

Foreclosure prevention was critical for the Smith family of Framingham. They fell behind with their mortgage payments while in the process of divorce. HCEC staff connected them with Consumer Credit Counseling Services who assisted them in re-negotiating the interest rate of their mortgage. HCEC provided financial assistance for them to catch up on their payments through RAFT. Once the payments were current their mortgage company was willing to refinance the loan at lower rate, making their monthly payments more affordable.

The Housing Opportunity for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) provides housing information and placement services to individuals and families living with HIV/ AIDS. The HOPWA Program is no longer administered through the City of Cambridge for our region. The City of Lowell is our new partner since the Department of Housing & Urban Development reconfigured the Metropolitan Statistical Areas in Massachusetts. During the year 54 families and individuals received HOPWA services. Twenty consumers were placed into permanent housing and 15 other consumers had their tenancies preserved through financial grants and mediation. Five clients also received Section 8 Choice Vouchers when the screening for subsidies resumed during the fiscal year.

Economic Development

The Economic Development component plays a critical role in SMOC's overall continuum of services designed to help low-income individuals move beyond subsistence programming toward greater economic independence and self-sufficiency.

The component currently has fifteen different programs funded by twelve different sources that provide services to a variety of target populations. These valuable programs provide assistance to individuals in the areas of Employment, Education, Skills Development, Housing and Case Management. The two primary goals of the Economic Development component is to provide the individuals we serve with an opportunity to increase their earnings/income potential and helping them to secure permanent affordable housing.

While the 2005 Annual Report will focus primarily on the broad scope of services offered by the Economic Development component and the overall numbers of clients served, it is important for the reader to also get a sense of the impact that these services can have on an individual's life.

The following are Economic Development program highlights for 2005:

After School Program: Funded by the Department of Youth Services (DYS), this program provides computer training and job-readiness classes to youthful offenders who are living in DYS facilities or in the community. Students participate in a six-week after school program and receive a certificate upon completion of the class. SMOC served 34 youthful offenders through this program during 2005.

CSBG Scholarship Program: The Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Scholarship Program is funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and provides scholarships of up to \$1,000 to SMOC clients who meet income eligibility and are enrolled in post-secondary education. The CSBG Scholarship Program helped 14 low-income individuals to pursue their educational goals during 2005.

Financial Fitness: Funded with a grant from TD Banknorth, this program offers practical, hands on approach to money management, as well as one-on-one credit counseling. We offered workshops on understanding, building, and restoring credit, developing a spending plan, the need of savings and basic banking. These workshops were taught by TDBanknorth employees and the American Consumer Credit Counseling. During the past year the program served 30 clients.

Fresh Start Program: New to the agency this year, the Fresh Start program is a housing search and placement program for individuals who are under supervision by the Massachusetts Parole Board. The mission of the program is to prevent homelessness and promote public safety by providing short-term housing subsidies to parolees. The program provides rental subsidies for 20 beds for up to 4 months serving Worcester, Framingham and Lawrence.

Home Modification Loan Program: A collaborative effort between two state agencies, Massachusetts rehabilitation Commission and Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation, the Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP) provides low-interest and no-interest loans of up to \$25,000 to individuals with disabilities to make necessary accessibility modifications to their homes (ramps, handrails, widening of doorways, modifications of bathrooms). The HMLP provided loans to 14 individuals with disabilities during 2005.

Sometimes two steps are what keep someone that has a disability homebound. That was Mary's case. Mary is a 57 year-old, long time Framingham resident diagnosed with Progressive Multiple Sclerosis. Due to the progress of the disease, she is no longer able to walk and she needed an electrical wheelchair. Because of 2 steps she could not get out of her house not even into the deck without help. An electrical wheelchair would be given to her if she could store it in a safe place. Through the Home Modification Loan Program, her home now has an enclosed deck where she can store her wheelchair and an elevator so she can get in and out of her house. The Home Modification Loan Program has enabled Mary to continue to live in her own home improving the quality of her life. Mary can once again feel that she is a productive part of the community.

Joan Brack Adult Learning Center: Funded by a generous grant from the Brack Family Foundation, (JBALC) the Foundation provides free GED classes to low-income individuals who wish to pursue their high school equivalency diploma. The JBALC classes are specifically designed to meet the needs of adult learners who have been unsuccessful in a traditional classroom setting. This valuable program served more than 40 students during 2005, with 6 students earning their High School Equivalency Diploma.

The Joan Brack Adult Learning Center at SMOC serves a diverse population of adults, young students, and young parents to prepare for and pass the GED examination. It takes a student's true desire to learn and stick with it to successfully complete the program and pass the GED test.

Chantel Villa is an example of just this type of determined and focused student. Pregnant in high school, Chantel left school during the tenth grade to have her son, Tyler. Although receiving support from her family, Chantel quickly recognized that her life and that of her son would be greatly improved by her own education. She knew she needed to get her GED to begin to build the life she wanted.

Chantel signed up for classes at SMOC in the Young Parents (GED) Program and attended regularly. With daycare covered by the program, Chantel was free to apply herself to her studies and she did so with gusto- finishing her studies in several months and passing the GED examination on her first try! Chantel participated in the Joan Brack Adult Learning Center Graduation ceremonies in June, 2005 and her picture can be seen on the Learning Center bulletin board, smiling proudly in her cap and gown with son Tyler in her arms.

With that success under her belt, Chantel and the Young Parents Program Coordinator began to focus on getting her closer to her true passion- owning and running her own daycare. She reviewed various college programs and courses of study before finally deciding to apply to Mass Bay Community College for the Early Childhood Education program.

What has happened to Chantel since? Well, the good news is that Chantel has been accepted into college and will begin her classes in January of 2006! She is excited, nervous, and ready to begin classes and the next phase of her life. We wish her the best of luck!

Keha Program: Funded by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Keha Program is a social day program for adults with serious mental illnesses. Program participants have lived much of their lives in an institutional setting and are learning valuable social competencies in the safe and supportive environment of the Keha Program. Social skills are an important part of being a successful member of the community and enhance employability and earning potential. Participants who complete

the program attend college and obtain employment. The Keha Program served 19 individual during 2005.

MetroWest Career Center: The Career Center is open to the public and provides self-serve access to Job Search resources for walk-ins. However, its primary users are clients that are participants of the broad group of programming that composes the services provided by Economic Development. The MetroWest Career Center is a valuable resource to many downtown residents. During 2005, the Career Center provided services to more than 600 individuals.

The Metro Suburban Art Show

In May 2005, The Metrowest Career Center sponsored the first Metro Suburban Art Show, located upstairs at 300 Howard Street. The Metro Suburban Art Show, affectionately titled “Artists Realizing Their Dreams,” produced a great turn out of local talent. The show featured artwork from about 25 individuals who are involved in programs funded by the Department of Mental Health, such as SMOC’s SEE and KEHA program.

One such contributing artist, whose preferred medium is watercolor, states that he finds “painting to be relaxing and a great way to express his creativity.” He modestly admits that he has a pretty good eye for color. As painting is more of a hobby, he was thrilled that one of his pieces was selected for purchase at the show.

His watercolor of blue and purple flowers was selected, along with a dozen other pieces, and purchased by SMOC in order to be displayed through out the building. The artist was proud to see his work matted, framed, and on display in the stairway leading up to the Career Center. He commented on how professional his picture looked in the new frame. He considered this a “valuable experience”.



Mobile Resource Team: Funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Mobile Resource Team provides Housing and Employment Specialists to work with homeless shelters across the state. Last year this program served 1014 homeless individuals and helped 368 individuals to obtain permanent housing, 369 to obtain jobs and 90 to obtain skills training. The program has won a HUD “Best Practice” award and is used as a model for other programs.

Mobile Stabilization Team: Also funded by HUD, the Mobile Stabilization Team provides after placement supports for homeless individuals with disabilities who have obtained housing in the MetroWest area. The Stabilization Specialist provides valuable training and supports to help previously homeless individuals develop the skills they need to be responsible tenants and maintain their housing (financial literacy, housekeeping, conflict resolution, etc.). The MST served 49 previously homeless individuals this year.

The Norfolk County Sheriff’s Office Reentry Program, located at the Dedham Alternative Center, provides a variety of classes and individualized counseling to assist residents of the DAC make a successful transition back to community living. In its first year of operations the program served a total of 58 men and 25 women.

Office Skills Training Program: Funded by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), the Office Skills Training Program provided 80 hours of instruction in Job Search, Job Readiness, Customer Service, and Microsoft Office to 50 women recovering from addictions during 2005.

SEE Program: Funded by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH), the SEE (Services for Education and Employment) program helps adults with serious mental illness to enroll in college and obtain employment. Our Education and Employment Specialists assisted 158 people to complete 63 college classes and obtain 47 jobs during 2005.

Reentry Housing Program: The Re-Entry Housing Program (RHP) is a new program funded by the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC). Modeled after SMOC’s MRT Program, this progressive program assists inmates who are at risk of homelessness to obtain housing prior to their release from prison. Studies indicate that offenders are at the highest risk of re-offending during the first 72 hours after release from prison. Our Housing Specialists work with inmates to ensure that they have a safe place to live and job search and support services upon release. The primary goals of the program are to promote public safety and prevent homelessness. The RHP served 344 inmates releasing from Massachusetts correctional facilities during 2005.

Women’s Transition Program: The Women’s Transition Program (WTP) is a new program funded by the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC). The WTP assists women who are released from correctional facilities to make a successful transition to living back in the community. This progressive new program provides in-reach to the prisons. Case Managers meet with female inmates prior to release and develop an individual service plan to address housing, employment, treatment, childcare, education, and public assistance needs. Case Managers are sensitive to the particular needs of the female offender and continue to meet with individuals for up to a year following release. In its first year of operation, the WTP served 182 women.

On January 11, 2005 I met with a client at MCI to do the initial intake for case management. She was unsure that she even wanted the program. After release she went to reside at the Shadows Program for two months. We began the job search process a week after release. Feeling

overwhelmed after job searching for a month and no results, my client's self esteem began to fade. One day she happened to be out having lunch with family and noticed the help wanted sign. She applied for the waitress position and had an on the spot interview. To her surprise she got the job. After working for a month full time, my client was able to save money to transition from Shadows Shelter into SMOC sober housing. I consider her a success because she is still employed full time, and is the manager at the restaurant she applied to nine months ago. Not only is she employed but she also continues to maintain sobriety. Now that's success within itself. – Joy Moody, WTP

The "Y Initiative funds 47 beds statewide in three Massachusetts communities. Focused on the goal of self-sufficiency the program targets individuals who are in recovery by providing subsidized rents for up to one year. Program participants are required to be employed within the first 60 days of the program and participate in a variety of program services including an Individual Development Account. During the past year the program housed 114 individuals.

Young Parents Program: The Young Parents Program is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). It provides GED instruction to teen parents who have not completed high school. The program also provides case management, parenting classes, assistance with college admission and job placement. The program served 10 teen parents during 2005.

Energy & Financial Assistance Programs

Financial Assistance Programs

SMOC Fuel Assistance Program: SMOC Fuel Assistance provides financial heating aid to low-income households in 37 communities. Payments are made to heating vendors on behalf of income-eligible households. We are in our 27th year of operation.

At the close of intake staff had processed 5,600 applications with 290 of those households in an emergency status. Over 4,150 households were deemed eligible and received payment. Included in those were 2,600 households who had an elderly or disabled family member. The program expended 2.2 million dollars to area fuel vendors.

SMOC Fuel Assistance also provided 140 referrals to Citizens Energy Corp. for those clients who had exhausted their benefits or who were otherwise ineligible for Fuel Assistance.

SMOC Rental Assistance Programs: SMOC Rental Assistance provides rental subsidy payments to area landlords on behalf of eligible tenants. The amount of subsidy payment is based on household income.

The first half of the FY05 was a period of subsidy attrition. The program atmosphere was one of fear and uncertainty for tenants and applicants. Our actual subsidy base had eroded to 1,049 units. Mixed messages from HUD exacerbated the on-going statewide problem of being over-leased. Federal funding scenarios changed monthly. On many levels the program was in turmoil.

During the second half of the fiscal year things began to trend more positively for the Rental Assistance Program. SMOC RAP was given a two-month window for selecting applicant families from its waiting lists. By the close of the fiscal year 225 families had received a Section 8 vouchers from SMOC. Included in this expansion were 30 new long term Project Based Section 8 contracts. SMOC Rental Assistance had grown by 21%, and closed the fiscal year with a portfolio of 1,275 subsidies.

Milestone Note: In 1990 SMOC began operating the Rental Assistance Program with a portfolio of 425 subsidies.

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program is operated under SMOC Rental Assistance. The goal of FSS is to help clients assess their life skills, determine what steps are necessary for the client to become self-sufficient and to assist the client in taking each step forward to self sufficiency.

SMOC's Family Self- Sufficiency Program was redefined and strengthened during this past fiscal year through the hard work of our new Coordinator. Eight new participants joined FSS, most of who became aware of the program through word of mouth. There was one graduate from the program who finished with a \$15,000 escrow disbursement.

The FSS Program also experienced growth through collaborating with other programs. The SMOC FSS Coordinator coupled with the Framingham and Norwood Housing Authority FSS Program Coordinators for join monthly meetings and participation in various statewide trade association subcommittees on transportation and resource development for program participants. The FSS Program also worked closely with the Housing Consumer Education Center through their focus on first-time homeowner opportunities. Communicating consistently with the Home Center proved to be a great way for inter-departmental expansion.

The FSS Coordinator became involved with community groups in Natick and Framingham that brought in an exchange of resources and ideas such as job coaching, grant-writing, basic utility rights, employment and higher educational opportunities. This reinforced the integrity of the FSS Program and the demonstrated the extent of how much it can offer participants.

ML joined the Family Self- Sufficiency Program not exactly sure of what direction she wanted to go other than that she knew she needed to move forward. She already had her Bachelor's Degree so her main goal throughout her time in the FSS program was to pursue a Master's Degree. Struggling to find the right career, she attempted to enter the criminal justice field and found it was not for her. During her search for the right master's degree program, she was employed as a substitute teacher for various public schools. This provided a consistent income and allowed for the growth of her escrow account. In addition, this position helped her to realize that a career in education was her calling. Last year she became a fulltime substitute teacher and excelled in this position. Her students rewarded her teaching skills by nominating ML for a teacher appreciation award! During the same year, she enrolled in Curry College to pursue her Master's Degree in Education. She completed her first semester with A's and B's, and continued with classes through the summer. While she finishes her evening classes, she maintains employment as an assistant teacher during the day. She graduated from FSS with over \$7,000 in her escrow account. Even though she has completed a First Time Homebuyer's Program, she will wait on purchasing a home and save the money. The escrow will also help her with funding the remainder of her education. Kudos to ML for a job well-done on FSS!

In FY05 SMOC RAP began operating the RAFT program, (Rental Assistance for Families in Transition). RAFT was designed to pay up to \$3,000 for housing related expenses to ensure that families sustain their housing, or to assist families moving from shelter with payments for housing related expenses.

The program was jointly staffed with employees from the HAP/HCEC staff. This collaboration in staffing and cost sharing alleviated the need for hiring additional staff and afforded SMOC the opportunity to serve 250 families in need within the initial six months of program operation.

Energy Services Programs

SMOC Energy Services (SES) provides low-income renters and homeowners the opportunity to access either at no cost or low cost, modifications that translate into real long-term energy savings. These modifications can include insulation improvements, weather stripping, new or retrofitted heating systems, energy efficient appliances, and energy efficient light bulbs to name the most common interventions. As part of the SMOC continuum, SES markets its services to low-income Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire residents that may already be recipients of state and federal assistance. For people struggling to make ends meet, the prospects of reducing their energy costs allows them to divert limited income to other costs like childcare, transportation, housing, food, and medical care. In this way the services provided by SMOC Energy Services is a key element to the agency's continuum of care.

SES consists of two DHCD funded programs, our DOEWAP and HEARTWAP program, both weatherization programs; one provides residential conservation services while the second provides heating system repair and replacement. Our DOEWAP program serves 246 households annually while the HEARTWAP program provides heating system repair or replacement for as many as 243 homes. In addition, we run a refrigeration program that replaces 12 year or older refrigerators with Energy Star units and serves approximately 4000 units a year. Finally, we run single family and large multifamily conservation programs funded by the major utilities. Again the focus is on introducing measures that improve the energy usage in these properties. The number of families and individuals varies depending on the size of the multifamily unit but on average we serve close to 750 clients a year.

Family and Nutrition Services

Voices against Violence

Voices Against Violence (Voices) is dedicated to empowering battered women, men and sexual assault survivors to create safety and stability in themselves and their children's lives. The program has two primary goals. The first goal is to empower survivors to help themselves and their children. Voices works with domestic violence and rape survivors to ensure their safety, create stable home environments, gain independence, and develop personal and economic self-sufficiency. The second goal is to work toward elimination of violence against women, men and children on a societal level through community education and increasing public awareness.

First established in 1977, the program provides free, confidential services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Services are provided in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Services include: 24 hour toll free hotline counseling, information and referral, counseling, advocacy (police based legal, medical, and court), support groups, safety planning, crisis intervention, case management, community education, and outreach, emergency housing for battered women and their children.

Our emergency shelter system operates a Safe Home program, which offers up to a 14-day stay, and a 90-day Shelter program. The 90-day program can shelter five families and up to 13 children. Our Safe Home program can shelter 2 families and up to 5 children. It is the only battered women's Shelter/Safe Home in the Metro West Area and is one of the few handicapped accessible shelters in Massachusetts.

FY 2005 saw service levels rebound from prior cuts to state funding. We:

- * Sheltered 200 families, including 94 children;
- * Provided comprehensive advocacy and counseling to 100 survivors of rape and sexual assault;
- * Provided for one-on-one counseling in our community-based domestic violence unit for 390 individuals;
- * Made 1254 calls on behalf of clients;
- * Held 93 support group sessions;
- * Conducted 82 educational presentations, and
- * Provided 293 individuals with legal advocacy at our Lawyer for the Day program at Marlborough District Court.

The Transition to Independent Living (TIL) and Transition to Home (THP) programs, homeless intercept programs for families who have experienced domestic violence, which remained strong and served 61 families, 44 receiving cash assistance.

In April, Voices hosted “Take Back the Night” silent March and Rally in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Approximately 75 participants from the community joined Voices and SMOC staff as we walked from 300 Howard Street to Town Hall, where we met several dynamic guest speakers. Their powerful words remind us that there is always hope.

Voices was honored to have a very special 16 year old volunteer with us this year. She, her mom, and little brother stayed at our confidential shelter when she was only 3. While in our shelter, mom took full advantage of SMOC services including WIC and the Career Center. Mon was able to find housing, a good job, and they have moved on with their lives. She and her family have always credited Voices with “saving their lives”, and for as long as she can remember, she has been waiting to volunteer with us. So finally, on her 16th birthday she was able to join us as a very special volunteer.

MetroWest Harvest Food Initiatives

The MetroWest Harvest Food Initiatives program (MWHFI) is a food distribution organization that is comprised of The Elderly Nutrition Program, MetroWest Harvest, the HOPE Food Pantry, Greater Boston Food Bank Drop Site and the Summer Food Program for Kids. MetroWest Harvest Food Initiatives and the programs it supports have been providing critical nutritional support and education to persons of all ages and circumstances including low income, children, the homeless and the elderly. MWHFI continues its evolution to ensure that all participating programs have continuous access to food resources.

In the past year the Elderly Nutrition Program has provided 143,065 home delivered and congregate meals to over 2600 individuals. We have seen a nearly 6% increase in total meals served over last year with the majority of these new meals going to home-bound seniors. We continue to provide educational opportunities to the seniors we serve through three newsletters and two Nutritional Education Programs run by our registered dietician. This year our nutrition education talks focused on the use of dietary supplements, diabetes and the importance of fiber. In addition, each of our monthly menus includes a brief nutrition article relevant to seniors.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our mission. All volunteers and staff are exceptionally dedicated to the people they serve and often go above and beyond the delivery of a meal, as was the case this past particularly difficult winter. It is our normal policy to close when schools close.

On one very wintry morning, Sue Underdah, one of many dedicated site managers requested that we remain open, as she was concerned for the welfare of her homebound clients who had endured more than the normal number of cancellations due to the harsh winter. Early that morning, despite the snowy conditions, all staff and volunteers arrived and delivered 140 meals while providing a friendly safety check on their senior neighbors.

It is this program's great fortune to have such exemplary staff and volunteers. Our program abounds with such tales of dedication and commitment. The grateful son of a long-time Meals on Wheels recipient says it best in a recent letter to us. *"The daily deliveries have meant that someone would see her each day...In addition to bringing a nutritional meal, the person making the delivery was a friendly face to someone who rarely ventured out of her home. They also went above and beyond to bring Holiday meals if they thought she would be alone; and there were cards, visits from their families, and hand-made gifts from their children. I'm pretty sure these are not part of the program but these actions show the high caliber of people involved with serving seniors and I'm extremely grateful and impressed by them."*

We have grown our Nutritional Supplementation Program, which now provides daily nutritional supplements to over 60 at-risk seniors. It is always satisfying when we hear from seniors who tell us that they are gaining much needed weight due to this special program. We are very pleased to have begun our Therapeutic Meals program. Meals on Wheels now offers special therapeutic meals designed to address those that require meal modifications. We now provide Cardiac, Renal, Lactose Free, and three varieties of modified texture meals to those that qualify. We exceeded our goals in providing Farmer's Market Produce to homebound elders by delivering to nine communities.

One highlight of our year involved our participation in the national "March for Meals" event. The goal of "March for Meals" is to increase the visibility of Meals on Wheels programs. We hosted a breakfast designed around the new Food Guide Pyramid for Seniors and our nutritionist gave a very informative talk explaining the new pyramid. We were assisted by the MASSPIRG organization of Framingham State College who also, along with several local dignitaries, delivered meals at the close of the event. It was a wonderfully educational, informational and cross-generational event.

The MetroWest Harvest (MWH) Food Recovery Program has had yet another successful year. The program continues to expand through hard work, creativity and a strong relationship within the community. The program recovered and delivered over 250,000 pounds of perishable and non-perishable foods. We had eleven Le Chef programs with a few minor changes. The food was prepared at the Rohn Haas corporate kitchen in Marlboro and delivered hot at mealtime by MWH volunteers to various shelters to include; Turning Point, Shadows, Crossroads, Bridge House, Serenity House, Reed Academy, Brandon Residential Facility, and Medway House. The Le Chef program produced and delivered over 2000 individually chef prepared meals this past year. Further, as the result of a successful DHCD grant where we proposed two major "off-season" food drives, MWH participated in Hunger Awareness Day, a grass roots movement designed to raise awareness about the solvable problem of hunger in the United States. We far exceeded our stated goals by holding ten food drives in collaboration with local businesses, neighborhood groups and individuals. Through our work with Genzyme, I.D.G., Raytheon, Bowditch & Dewey, Framingham Libraries, two neighborhood groups and Healthy Bones, we collected approximately two tons of non-perishable food all of which benefited the

HOPE Food Pantry for Kids. Hunger Awareness Day is held the first Tuesday of June. These off-season food drives went a long way in offsetting traditional seasonal shortages and continue to play a major role in keeping the HOPE Pantry shelves full thus allowing us to continue serving 400 families per month. During the past year the program has added two new donors to our growing list – Hormel Foods in Franklin and the Framingham and Marlboro Olive Garden Restaurants. We are especially proud to report that Mr. Dan Keohane, a volunteer who has been with us virtually since the inception of MetroWest Harvest sixteen years ago, was selected as the 2005 Man of the Year in Natick. He was honored at a local dinner and received local and state recognition for his numerous volunteer activities. We are so fortunate to have Mr. Keohane and all the dedicated volunteers and donors that assist us in our mission to end Hunger.

Greater Boston Food Bank Drop Site: The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) is now hosted twice a month by Boston Scientific in Natick. This replacement site has been a great help and convenience to those participating in the program. We are now servicing 30 pantries with both frozen and non-perishable foods with four truckloads of food each month averaging over 70,000 pounds of food to area pantries. This is a doubling of use over last year indicating that area pantries are better utilizing the services of GBFB. We extend a grateful thank you to Boston Scientific for their strong community support in our mission to end hunger.

Hope Pantry for Kids: HOPE has experienced a substantial increase in the need for their services. In fact, this year we have an increase in the number of families served in excess of 10% and roughly a 30% increase in the number of individuals receiving food resources. This means that more and larger families are receiving food from the pantry. Our most recent data show that we are feeding more than 450 families per month (close to 1200 individuals) with approximately 57 new clients every month. The MassCan Truck continues to be available for twice monthly pickups at the Greater Boston Food Bank. The Mother's Day Mail Carrier's Drive was slightly different this year but still exceptionally successful. The Mail Carriers held their food drive the weekend *after* Mother's Day so they could be home on the holiday to celebrate with their families. The Mail Carrier's brought in a whopping 14,000 pounds of food, which was enormously beneficial to the pantry. A newly formed neighborhood group called Healthy Bones was founded by Lisa Trischitta and Kathy Stefanini with their children. Flyers are sent out to neighborhood homes requesting specific food items needed in the pantry. On Saturday all the children and their little red wagons collect the donations, package them together and deliver them to the food pantry. Healthy Bones began with 18 families and have grown to 36 families with plans for expansion. We estimate that the Healthy Bones organization provides a minimum of 500 pounds of food per month. They have been a wonderful addition to our food pantry and we applaud these young people in their community service. In fact, they are the recent recipients of the Nally Award presented by the Greater Boston Food Bank. As mentioned previously, the HOPE Pantry was the recipient of ten major food drives coordinated by MetroWest Harvest resulting in over two tons of food. For the last several years the HOPE Food Pantry has been providing complete Thanksgiving packages, which includes a sizeable turkey and all the fixings. One of this year's highlights was our ability to provide more than 300 families with complete Thanksgiving dinners. Finally, as the result of a successful DCHD grant we have created an informational brochure outlining the new food guide pyramid and listing area food pantries. The brochure has been translated into Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. The HOPE Food Pantry is an all-volunteer operation. Every single volunteer has a genuinely caring heart and spirit as they graciously serve those families in need.

Summer Food Service Program: We managed the Summer Food Service Program for the eighth year on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Education and Department of Agriculture. This year we

operated daily at three locations and served over 12,053 meals. Accolades to Chris Hannah who once again supervised this successful program.

Community Resource Centers

Immigrant Outreach Program: The Immigrant Outreach Program is funded by a CDBG grant from the Town of Framingham. The Program provided 31 low-income Framingham residents with assistance and advocacy in the areas of housing, health care, and referrals to community resources. The program has served many diverse communities including Haitians, Brazilians, Russians and Central Americans.

Organization of Portuguese Immigrants: The Organization of Portuguese Immigrants Newcomers Assistance Program known as OPAI, has been a program of SMOC since 2001. OPAI provides translation services, advocacy, education, information and referral services, and assistance with assimilation to this country to low-income Portuguese speaking newcomers in the Marlborough/Hudson area. OPAI provided case management services to 518 newcomers and medical translation services to 750 clients at the Marlborough Hospital. In addition, written and oral translation services were also provided at a free medical clinic in Marlborough. The OPAI program experienced a greater demand for financial assistance than in previous years due to higher costs for home heating oil, gasoline and housing. . As a result, OPAI increased its referrals to food pantries and to the fuel assistance program in addition to other community resources.

Russian Outreach Project: The Russian Outreach Project assisted 538 immigrants in the region to assimilate into the area by providing access to food pantries and clothing, affordable housing, and translation assistance. The Project continues to assist the Elderly Nutrition Program distribute Farmer's Market coupons for fresh, local produce.

This year, the Russian Outreach Project worker visited the Ukraine, formerly part of the Soviet to gain first hand insights into some of the concerns Russian newcomers face when they relocate to the Metrowest. She stayed with several families and received first hand experience of the struggles of the many Ukrainians face each and every day.

Health Care Access Project: The Health Care Access project is funded through the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation. This program provides pre and post-enrollment services to homeless individuals, and shelter residents in the MetroWest region. We provided services to over 100 clients that included application assistance, choosing a doctor and or health plan, prescription drug assistance, and membership education.

This was a challenging year because the MassHealth Essential Program reached its cap and no longer accepted new applicants for most of the year. Homeless individuals were put on a waiting list and were eligible only for the Uncompensated Care Pool. We were able to work with the MetroWest Medical Center, Framingham Community Health Center, and Sudbury Free Clinic to assure that our clients received the care that they needed. In addition, a drug program located in Natick and run by the Visiting Nurses Association was able to provide assistance with prescription drug coverage in the interim.

Tax Preparation Program: The Tax Preparation Program provides free income tax services to low-income individuals and families and the elderly in the Metrowest community. This program is a collaboration between area volunteers and AARP. AARP provides the training and supervision of the volunteers and SMOC provides the location as well as the referral of clients in the community.

We served 176 clients from the community. For the first time, the program filed tax returns electronically, achieving faster returns for clients. The IRS was pleased with the program's success following their site visit to observe client interaction, monitor the computer program, and e-filing procedures.

Intern/Volunteer Program: The Student Internship Program provides high school and college students with the opportunity to explore a career in the human service field. Student interns learn how low-income individuals and families, the elderly, people with disabilities and immigrants in the MetroWest area live and work. They are exposed to programs within the agency such as health care, fuel assistance, food and nutrition, victims rights protection, childcare, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, and affordable housing. In addition, they receive training on issues such as boundaries, confidentiality, and communication skills and conflict resolution.

We had eight interns from Mass Bay Community College, Framingham Campus, Framingham High School, Lawrence Academy, Holliston High School and the University College Cork located in Ireland. Interns worked in Fuel Assistance, Head Start, the Common Ground Shelter, Weatherization, and the Resource Center.

Family and Friends for Life Program: Completing its second year in operation, the Family and Friends for Life Program, provided 18 adults re-entering the community with a nurturing support system including guidance in basic skill development, employment/career paths, parenting skills, cultural awareness, spiritual development and community leadership. Clients in SMOC programs were matched with mentors from the Greater Framingham Community Church.

After initial training, mentors continued to receive further training in the areas of substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence and sexual assault and boundary setting. The focus this year was to strengthen existing relationships and identify community resources. We also linked the mentees with other SMOC programs such as the Holiday Cheer Program and Thanksgiving baskets.

Both the Church and SMOC have continued to work in partnership to provide mutual clients with services that have empowered them to a better way of living addressing both financial as well as spiritual needs.

MetroWest Helpline: The MetroWest Helpline helped callers access community resources and services. We received approximately 2450 calls with majority of calls for food pantry referrals, emergency assistance, financial assistance, parenting support, legal services, mental health and childcare/head start. The Resource Centers continue to operate the Back to School Program and Holiday Cheer Program. These programs offer critical assistance to help single adults and families meet urgent needs and ameliorate the devastating effects of poverty and homelessness.

Framingham/Waltham Women Infants and Children (WIC)

WIC served over 3,200 participants at permanent locations in Framingham, Marlboro, Maynard and Waltham. Specifically, WIC staff provided personalized nutrition consultations and education on topics such as eating well to improve health, meal planning, healthy recipes, grocery shopping on a budget, maintaining a healthy weight and caring for a new baby. In addition, WIC provided checks to buy free, healthy food and infant formula, immunization screenings, breastfeeding support and referrals for medical and dental care, housing, fuel assistance, childcare and other needed services to a monthly average of 1,260 program participants.

WIC's goal is to keep women and their families healthy and the commitment to this mission by our staff is very real. For example, we enrolled a young woman onto our program who was far along in her pregnancy. She had not yet seen an obstetrician, was underweight, had no appetite and was not taking any prenatal vitamins. One of our nutrition staff members took it upon herself to continuously follow-up with this client to make sure she had found a doctor and the assistance she needed so that she ultimately delivered a healthy infant.

Program participation expanded due to the consistent outreach efforts of our WIC Community Coordinator. Her collaboration with the Framingham Community Health Center increased the number of prenatal referrals into our program. She also worked intensely with local health care providers, daycares, school systems and businesses and participated in numerous health fairs and community events.

Special projects included the development and presentation of a community lecture about childhood obesity, the provision of nutrition education classes to prenatal and postpartum inmates at MCI Framingham Prison and the administration of the Farmers' Market Coupon Program so as to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to our program participants and support local farmers.

Our WIC on Wheels (WOW) van provided WIC and basic medical services to 150 program participants at seven mobile locations in Chestnut Hill, Dedham, Hudson, Natick, Newtonville, Wellesley and Westboro. In addition, the van team provided WIC enrollment and other nutritional and medical services to guests at Sandra's Lodge, a homeless shelter in Waltham and to residents of Riverside Community Care, a low-income community in Wellesley, on a monthly basis.

Child Care and Head Start Services

Child Care and Head Start provided services during the past year to approximately 750 children each day in the communities of Framingham, Marlboro, Natick, Ashland, Hudson, Medway, Milford, Northbridge, and Grafton. We continued to operate 10 different sites and to work with over 35 family child care providers in these 9 communities providing services to children ranging from 4 weeks of age through the 5th grade.

We provided services primarily to children from families with special needs in our communities. These included children living in our family homeless shelters, children from families that are involved with the Department of Social Services because of abuse and neglect issues, children from recently immigrated families and children with special education disabilities.

In addition to providing low-income, working families with appropriate child care for their children, our program staff worked closely with many of our families, providing case management supports and referrals for services as well as crisis intervention services when they were needed. Parent participation remained a strong area for our programs and many parents/caretakers were able to volunteer in our classrooms, assist us with school field trips, participate with their children in various special program events, serve on our Parent's Policy Council and other various advisory groups and/or assist with various fund-raising activities.

People in Peril (PIP) Program – Worcester

It has been almost eighteen months since the PIP Program became a part of SMOC. Our vision, with full support of the PIP advisory board and SMOC Board of Directors, was to introduce a long-term three-phased plan to find a solution to homelessness in Central Massachusetts. Briefly the three phases were:

Phase I

- ❖ *Create a safer, more respectful, and secure environment*
- ❖ *Improve staff capabilities and performance*
- ❖ *Continue efforts to expedite guest movement by implementing placement of clients*

Phase II

- ❖ *Facilitate the "Continuum of Care" to focus on treatment and transition*
- ❖ *Create a structured day program*
- ❖ *Form a women's program focusing on gender specific needs assessment*
- ❖ *Enhance the coordination of regional social service providers*
- ❖ *Engage city officials and departments to improve communication and coordination*

Phase III

- ❖ **Goal – Enhance our ability to move shelter clients into appropriate regional housing options by:**
 - *Identifying and establishing supportive housing facilities for individuals who have committed to sobriety and self-sufficiency*
 - *Empowering clients to become independent and productive members of society*
 - *Obtaining the active and collaborative support of city and state officials, community leaders and SMOC's service provider partners to mutually resolve the homelessness challenge facing the region*

SMOC and the PIP are pleased to report, that we have largely completed the first two phases of our shared mission. The last phase is underway. We have continued our outreach to the area community and have begun the acquisition and siting process for supportive housing programs to help reduce the census at the PIP. This engenders hope to our guests of a safer more supportive environment to help them achieve their own personal goals and also assists our overall commitment to the community to move towards ending homelessness. We are confident that the answer to homelessness is to produce safe, decent housing as we continue to fulfill our mission.

2005 Statistics

Meals Served – 131,453	Detox referrals - 88	Veteran referrals - 28
Day Program units – 3200	Housing referrals - 222	Mental Health referrals – 140
Physician referrals - 522	Employment referrals - 356	
Medications dispensed - 3686	Case management - 1188	

Kureczka entered the People In Peril Shelter in 2003 when she had hit “rock bottom”. Due to a raging addiction, she had “lost everything”; her job, her home and her self respect. She was suicidal and the PIP was the last hope.

Within one day of entering the PIP she was referred for medical assistance, detox and psychiatric care with two of our collaborative agencies. She was hospitalized and began her climb back to sobriety and personal dignity.

After a short stay in a rehab facility, Linda took up residence at the Aurora Hotel, a PIP affiliated supportive housing program. While there she began a community service project with George Orcutt at the PIP kitchen enhancing her culinary arts skills. With those acquired skills and past job history she found part time employment that evolved into her current role as Kitchen Manger at Abby's House in Worcester. She now manages a kitchen serving meals daily to 50 adult women that are on the same journey she began two years previously. She mentors them now. She is the voice of sanity and experience. She now gives hope to women that struggle with the concept of hope and a life free of addiction.

Linda just celebrated the two-year mark of her sobriety. She is fully employed, living in her own home and eternally grateful to the program and committed PIP staff who, in her words, "saved my life".

Awards

Frederick Rubin Board Member of the Year Award

PAMULA ZICKO

Pam Zicko has served on the SMOC Board since 1994, when she was appointed as the representative of the Head Start Policy Council. Currently, Pam represents the Holliston Business Association in the Private Organization Sector of the Board. Pam has also served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors since 1998. Pam is an active, engaged and dedicated Board member whose contributions are greatly valued by the Executive Committee, the full Board and the staff of the organization. Pam brings a knowledge of SMOC's programs coupled with a human service background which is invaluable to the process of governing the organization. Pam resides in Holliston with her husband and son. She is a small business owner. The Board of Directors is fortunate to have an individual such as Pam make a long-term volunteer commitment to the governance of the organization.

Employees of the Year

SUSIE RICH & DELIA WEDDLETON

Susie Rich holds the position of Tenant Selection Coordinator for the Rental Assistance Program. Susie has been employed by the agency for 14 years. She is a model employee who is dependable, compassionate and honest in all her relations with staff and clients. Her experience makes her one of the most valuable employees in the Rental Assistance Program. The quality of her work is always excellent. Susie's commitment to the Rental Assistance Program has allowed the Program Director to cross-train her and move her from position to position whenever a staff crisis or staff absence occurs. This has made her the model example of a cross-trained team player. In addition to her outstanding work in the department, Susie has also gone the extra mile and has volunteered to work on the agency's Golf Tournament, Fun Day and the Holiday Party. Susie Rich is an outstanding employee in all aspects of the job.

Delia Weddleton holds the position of Tri-lingual Family Advocate in the Child Care and Head Start component. She has been employed by the agency for 5 years. Delia is a highly motivated employee

who often works beyond the required hours. Her enthusiasm for her work constantly spreads to co-workers within the Family Services component of Child Care and Head Start. Delia is especially skilled in using her interpersonal skills and knowledge of community resources to assist families in need. Delia is always willing to “go the extra mile” and assume the role of team player, whether it be the Holiday Assistance Drive, the Policy Council Fundraiser Cookbook, or as a leader in the “Dad’s Group” or Family Literacy Parent Workshop. Her work with the “Dad’s Group” has been outstanding. Delia is a professional, sincere and hard-working individual who is an asset to our organization.

Managers of the Year

LAURA BECKER and ANN MARIE CUMMINGS

Ann Marie Cummings holds the position of Family Child Care Director in our Child Care/Head Start component. Ann Marie has worked for the agency for 29 years. She is a dedicated, high-energy manager who displays professionalism coupled with excellent analytical and problem-solving skills. Ann Marie does an excellent job in supporting staff and providers while maintaining accountability. Ann Marie works extremely well with her staff and our Family Child Care providers. She is able to balance respect for their experience and skills with the need to adhere to agency and state regulations and expectations. She has a close relationship with her staff and they view her as very knowledgeable and supportive and always there for them. Ann Marie understands the “big picture” and is always able to articulate this to her staff and providers. She is particularly skilled at gaining cooperation among the various team players to insure the delivery of high-quality services. Her dedication and devotion to her job and to the organization has never wavered during her long career with our organization.

Laura Becker holds the position of Director of Grants & Contracts in our Administration & Finance Division. Laura has worked for the agency for 21 years. Laura is the definitive expert on all administrative matters relating to grants and contracts. She consistently goes out of her way to help Component Directors with any and all administrative matters. The Program Directors rely greatly on her expertise to help manage their programs. Laura maintains excellent relationships with the state budget officials who oversee the contracts from our funders. She also maintains an excellent rapport with the staff she directly supervises. In addition, she frequently goes beyond the direct scope of her job responsibilities to help solve other problems in the A&F department, such as computer issues and accounts payable issues. In addition to “going the extra mile” within the A&F department, she also “goes the extra mile” in terms of her work with the agency. Over the years, Laura has frequently played a leadership role in various agency activities, such as fundraisers and morale functions. These activities have included Holiday Parties, Fun Days and Golf Tournaments. She also has worked to encourage her staff to participate and volunteer in these events. This has led to events that are fun and raise the morale and spirit of everyone in the agency. Laura is an outstanding example of what it means to be a manager within our organization.

Isabel Harrison Volunteer of the Year Award

RUTH HIBBARD

Ruth Hibbard is an energetic, highly motivated individual who continues to volunteer her time and talents in many ways not only at SMOC, but also in the greater community.

At SMOC Head Start, Ruth (a Head Start past parent) is completing her second and final year as our Head Start Policy Council Chairperson, also faithfully serving on the SMOC Board of Directors as the PC representative. During the past year at Head Start, Ruth assisted in interviewing new hires, attended the annual Lobby Day in Boston, was an active team member in our Self-Assessment process and volunteered to address all new parents at our annual Parent/Child Orientation at SAC. Ruth also supported SMOC's WIC program by attending the quarterly advisory council meetings held in Boston at the Department of Public Health.

In the Framingham community, Ruth serves on her parish's religious education committee and also works in their "victory over hunger" garden, delivering fresh produce to SMOC shelters.

In addition to raising a family with three school-age children, Ruth continues to be a full-time student at Framingham State College, having earned several scholarships and majoring in mathematics. Her goal is to teach high school math. She has volunteered to be the secretary of the FSC Student Math Club during the past year.

We are pleased to honor the dedication and hard work that Ruth has brought to her efforts to help make the Head Start program the great success that it is by presenting her with this year's Isabel Harrison "Volunteer of the Year" award.

SMOC Board of Directors

A thirty-member Board of Directors governs SMOC. The members are drawn from a broad cross section of the community, including both the public and private sectors in addition to individuals representing the recipients of our services. An eight-member Executive/Finance Committee appointed by the Board meets regularly between scheduled monthly Board meetings.

Bruce Hulme, President

Jeffrey Fishman, Vice President

Paul Prior, Treasurer

James Hanrahan, Clerk

Kim Battle, Rita Blum, Ken Candito, Brian Chandley, Robert Clark, Larry Erickson, Patricia Greeley, Isabel Harrison, Ruth Hibbard, Hugo "Holly" Hollerorth, Larry Kaplan, Robert Kays, Dorothy Kennedy, Jose Lemos, Carl McCarthy, Ron Ordway, June Robertson, Larry Scult, Jim Shay, Pamula Zicko

SMOC'S VALUES

SMOC's employees, volunteers and Board members work to effect social and economic change according to the following principles:

- **Respect for the dignity & value of every individual.**

SMOC respects the dignity and inherent value in all individuals. We relate to each other, to community partners, and to clients with respect, kindness, sincerity, and compassion.

- **Appreciation for the value of diversity and an end to racism and discrimination.**

SMOC embraces and values diversity. We strive to reflect the diversity of our clients and the communities we serve by providing employment, board, and volunteer opportunities. SMOC recognizes that racism is a critical barrier to social change and economic justice.

- **Freedom from violence including domestic violence and sexual assault.**

SMOC believes every person has a right to be free from violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault, and is entitled to safety in their own homes and neighborhoods.

- **The right to housing and the abolishment of homelessness.**

SMOC believes housing is a right, not a privilege and that homelessness should be abolished. Every person has a fundamental right to a decent, safe, healthy and stable home. We also believe that any person without a permanent, habitable housing situation is homeless.

- **The right to health care.**

SMOC believes health care is a right and not a privilege. Every person has a fundamental right to quality, affordable and accessible health care.

- **Freedom from hunger.**

SMOC believes that hunger is an early warning signal of poverty and when food is so plentiful in the United States, everyone should have enough nutritious food to eat.

- **The elimination of poverty.**

SMOC believes every person has a right to be free from poverty. SMOC believes that poverty reflects the declining number of jobs paying decent living wages, an increasingly inequitable distribution of wealth, continuing racial divisions and the absence of low-income people from the political resolution of the problem.

- **The right to work for a living wage.**

SMOC supports the right of all people to work, be employed and earn a living wage.

- **Easy access to social supports through co-location of social services.**

SMOC believes low-income and disadvantaged people are best served when services they rely on to meet complex human needs are integrated, concentrated, and co-located in their communities.

- **SMOC's Employees are its greatest strength.**

SMOC recognizes its employees are its most valuable asset and values their contribution to the success of its mission. We also help and encourage our employees to realize their potential, individually and as a team, and recognize that each and every one can and does make a difference.

