

## WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST HOMELESSNESS 2016 NEWSLETTER

**ADVOCACY REPORT:** WCAH staff and Board have continued to advocate for Wisconsin's homeless, speaking with individuals associated with State government. Meetings have taken place with numerous elected and appointed State officials with an eye towards creating policy changes which would assist homeless persons and families through better coordination among State departments as well as an increase in funding. We are confident that our efforts will have a positive effect in the upcoming budget and legislative session.

**LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER:** In June, WCAH launched a monthly newsletter aimed at informing members of the State Legislature about homelessness in Wisconsin. With the release of the July newsletter, to date we have had 11 responses from legislators asking for more information or requesting a meeting to learn more about homelessness in Wisconsin

**THE ROADMAP TO END HOMELESSNESS IN WISCONSIN:** In June, WCAH released this policy paper after extensive input from providers and stakeholders. The response has been favorable with numerous policy makers using it as both a guide and a resource to move forward on the issue of homelessness in Wisconsin.

**WCAH IN THE NEWS:** The Road Map, as well as WCAH research on Wisconsin's support of homeless services was prominently featured in a recent Wisconsin State Journal. In addition, Joe Volk, WCAH Executive Director, was a guest speaker in an hour long Wisconsin Public Radio interview about homelessness in Wisconsin. WCAH was also featured in a recent article by Wisconsin Context and Joe has done numerous radio interviews around the State on the topic of homelessness.

**WCAH PRESENTS:** In recent months WCAH staff and Board have made numerous presentations around the State including speaking before the Appleton Homeless Coalition, and presenting at the Home For Everyone Conference.

**PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:** On July 27<sup>th</sup>, volunteers fanned out across the State of Wisconsin in a coordinated effort to count homeless individuals and families in our communities. This process is part of a national count conducted every six

months to monitor changes in homeless populations across the nation. While the latest count is in the process of being tabulated, the January 2016 totals showed a 2015/2016 year-to-year increase in homelessness in counties far from Wisconsin's major metropolitan areas. For example, La Crosse, Monroe, and Crawford and Vernon Counties' homeless numbers all went up. The four county region's increase was 14.8%.

Too often the public's perception of homelessness is an issue that only plagues Milwaukee, Madison, or Green Bay. The State's point-in-time count, however, clearly shows that homelessness occurs everywhere; and it is getting worse. The Wisconsin Coalition Against Homelessness is advocating for a Wisconsin-wide approach to housing instability that incorporates strategies for rural as well as urban areas. This coordinated approach will help all of the State's varied towns, villages and counties to end homelessness in a way that best fits their communities.

**BOARD MEMBER PROFILE:** Walter Orzechowski: Wally has a Master's Degree in health care planning and business administration. His background includes public health, hospice, affordable housing, housing market research and development and community development.

For the last thirteen years Wally has been the Executive Director of SWCAP, a rural anti-poverty agency and has focused on reducing health disparities, developing affordable housing, encouraging local food production, job creation, small business development, and many other projects to eliminate or reduce the problems faced by the rural poor.

**JOIN THE EFFORT TO END HOMELESSNESS IN  
WISCONSIN! PLEASE GO TO OUR WEBSITE AT  
WCAHWI.ORG TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE  
COALITION.**