

**Report to Albany City Council:  
January 2014-March 2014**

**Activities To-Date**

Activities of Project Hope looked significantly different during most of this quarter due to the temporary reduction in staff assigned to the project. In January, much of the Project Hope work wound down, primarily due to the end of our contract with the City and uncertainty about whether it would be renewed. As staff left the project in December and January we could not replace them until we knew if the project would continue. Once the City Council approved BFHP for a year long contract to hire a full time case manager we immediately began our hiring search for a new staff person.

In the interim, one of the former Project Hope staff people retained 8-12 hours/week for Project Hope Outreach, Engagement, and Case Management activities in Albany. Due to her limited hours her primary responsibilities included: checking and responding to messages left on the Project Hope cell phone once/day, home visits to the two houses where clients from the Bulb were living, and meeting other clients, by appointment, as needed (for example, she regularly took one housed resident to medical appointments). In February she completed the housing process for two gentlemen who moved into the master leased property in Richmond.

The ending of one contract and beginning of a new contract provided BFHP with the opportunity to adjust the way that services were offered to homeless residents of Albany. The biggest adjustment was to the staffing structure. The new contract provided for one full time staff person, as a single point of contact, with a single phone number, to do all of the tasks associated with the work from outreach to post housing case management. BFHP hired a staff person with an extensive background in homeless outreach services. On March 10, 2014 the new full time case manager, Charles Joseph, was hired by BFHP to work 40 hours per week on Outreach, Engagement and Case Management with people who are homeless in Albany.

Almost immediately, we noticed an increase in clients expressing an interest in housing and wanting to work with the new case manager to explore options. In his first few weeks Charles has met with 17 individual clients who reside on the Bulb. These clients both self referred and were referred by HAC (Homeless Action Center). Working with these clients on housing was immediately the primary focus of the case manager's work. As this work started, we noticed a trend in clients and service providers requesting specific information about how the ESG (Emergency Solutions Grant) funds work to house people and Charles spent his first few weeks providing basic information about this subsidy program as well as being trained himself on how to complete the paperwork.

As a part of his initial few weeks, Charles met with a number of other partners in the work at the Bulb. He met with Isabelle LeDuc from the City of Albany to discuss the City's expectations for

the work and to talk about other areas of Albany, in addition to the Bulb, where outreach and engagement services are needed. He and Isabelle followed up with a meeting with the staff of the Albany Community Center. Starting in April, Charles will incorporate the Community Center as one of his regular outreach locations. When he does outreach there he will encourage people to accompany him across the street to the van to get services (information about housing, toiletries, etc).

Charles also met with Andrew Franklin of Solano Community Church to learn about the history of the collaboration and to make plans to collaborate moving forward. Thus far, Charles and Andrew have done two collaborative outreach walks in the Bulb and starting in April, Charles will be attending the regular Thursday evening Pizza nights which Solano Community Church holds at the Bulb, as a way of meeting more residents, providing information about Project Hope and doing preliminary housing paperwork with those who are interested. Lastly, Charles met with Pattie Wall, Executive Director of HAC, to discuss some mutual clients and to discuss ways to work in partnership moving forward. This partnership is working well and several clients are currently receiving collaborative support from both agencies. In addition, Charles has been introduced, via e-mail, to the Albany Community Foundation.

### **Successes in Quarter One**

Even with the limited staffing capacity, two clients were housed in this quarter, four clients were on the verge of getting housed at the end of March, and eight others are engaged in significant conversations with Charles about housing.

### **HMIS Documentation**

As of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014, 36 people have engaged with BFHP Case Managers to the extent of completing an HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) intake. The HMIS demographic report for Albany Project Hope clients is attached. Significantly, 61% of the people in this report are chronically homeless. The current HMIS program for Project Hope is called Albany Outreach. BFHP has requested that Alameda County create a second HMIS program for Project Hope called Albany Aftercare. This will allow us to track clients separately depending on their housing status. Once this happens we will attach Albany Outreach outcomes reports to future quarterly reports.

The new Project Hope Case Manager, Charles, was trained in Alameda County's HMIS in mid-March and the work that he has done in March is currently being documented in case notes in HMIS. A goal for the next quarter is to increase the number of Bulb clients in the HMIS system, and to ensure that all HMIS records are accurate and up to date.

### **Challenges in Quarter One**

The biggest challenge of this quarter was the lack of staff time assigned to this project. We are aware that this limited availability of staff has been frustrating and confusing to clients at the Bulb who were used to more regular contact. In addition, we are aware that some of the impact

of this staff reduction has been a loss of trust in BFHP and in the process of working with clients to get them housed. A key focus in the next quarter, in addition to the tangible work of housing clients is rebuilding trust in the process. We are very excited to have a full time staff person to devote to this project and feel that this will bring the consistency and availability needed to successfully continue the work.

Another challenge this quarter has been finding the time to complete in depth assessments and case plans for clients. Since the program had minimal staffing for much of the quarter this level of engagement with clients was difficult to perform. Once a full time staff was on board, the urgency of moving forward with housing took precedence over in depth assessment. However, we recognize that in order for clients to remain housed a thorough assessment of strengths and barriers to housing maintenance is crucial as is the development of a clear case plan. We anticipate that the next quarter will remain busy with the urgent task of moving people into housing. At the same time, we will also start to build in time to create housing maintenance case plans with clients as they become housed.

Addendum: This report covers the time period from January-March. However, it feels important to note that an additional two people have been housed in the first few days of April and one additional person has utilized homeward bound services to return to his family on the East Coast. We anticipate housing one additional person in the next week. We are exploring the option of SRO (single room occupancy) units as a way to house an additional 5-8 people quickly, while still looking for longer term housing for them.