

MHA in Tulsa: HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



**The Need:** Billy's Story--"I remember the way cocaine took away the pain, regret and fear that came from living on the streets of Tulsa. Then, just as quickly, the drugs faded away, leaving me with nothing in my life but addiction. All the while, I was homeless and losing my battle with schizophrenia."

**Program Overview:** Mental Health Association in Tulsa's nationally recognized housing program provides 833 units of safe, affordable housing for 1,136 individuals, along with access to support groups, advocacy, treatment, legal counseling and other community resources.

**Measurable Outcomes:** MHA in Tulsa believes that the cost of doing nothing in the community – and leaving people to be homeless – is far greater than the cost of providing housing and support services. As a community, this proactive approach reduces expensive emergency room visits, cuts down on police and ambulance calls and provides a path to recovery and renews hope for a better life.

While the 2013 annual budget for Housing Development and Services is \$3,453,028, when it comes to the program's return on investment, the combined economic impact of the \$5.3 million capital campaign in 2001, and the \$33 million Building Tulsa, Building Lives campaign is \$72,527,057.

With housing, treatment and support, people with serious mental illness can return to school, find meaningful employment, obtain life skills, receive counseling and assume responsibility in a living environment that helps them

function alongside other members of society.

**How Each Gift Helps:** Every dollar you give can save a life. "After I lived on the streets or two years," Billy recalls, "The Mental Health Association in Tulsa gave me a safe place to live and people to help me stay on my path to recovery. I'm proud to say that I have been clean and sober for four years now. When I think about my first night in my new apartment, I remember telling myself that I would never go back to that life hooked on drugs. And I never will."

**Program Narrative:** Housing Development and Services assists individuals battling mental illnesses and overcoming homelessness and also prevents homelessness by serving individuals who simply need safe, decent and affordable housing at below market rates. The program's housing model allows greater flexibility to manage and achieve overall program goals. These goals can be encapsulated into a "mixed income, mixed population model" featuring three interrelated concepts:

- Provide access to housing for individuals who are homeless and mentally ill
- Prevent homelessness
- Preserve affordable housing

Using this model the program purchases affordable housing in neighborhoods around Tulsa funded through public-private partnerships and supplements the cost of operation through leasing apartments to market-rate payers. In addition, by providing stability to individuals, families, and neighborhoods, the program reduces social costs to the city and state while assisting clients as productive, tax-paying citizens.

**Costs for Shelter In Tulsa County**  
(Annual cost to house individuals)  
Correctional system for an inmate with mental illness – \$43,000  
Cost of a shelter – \$24,000  
Correctional system – \$15,650  
Supportive housing – \$7,893

**Reduction in Chronic Homeless Count: Tulsa County**

