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STAGE SET FOR ONE DAY COUNT OF LOCAL HOMELESS POPULATION
CSB anticipates large gathering of homeless population under one roof

COLUMBUS, Ohio – On Thursday, January 29, Community Shelter Board, in collaboration with a wide array of community partners and volunteers, is conducting its eleventh annual point-in-time count of sheltered and unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County. With goals around accuracy and delivery of much-needed services, CSB will use multiple strategies to conduct the count, holding an event at Blackburn Recreation Center, where more than 40 social service agencies will gather to provide access to critical services such as housing, food, healthcare, employment and other free community resources.

Michelle Heritage, Executive Director of the Community Shelter Board, says she expects the count results will add to what we already know about the growth of poverty in Columbus. “People are turning to shelters in record numbers – more than 9,000 people filled every shelter bed last year. Over the last three years, our shelters served 79% more families and 16% more single men and women.”

To assure census accuracy, CSB collects overnight numbers from shelters, and stations volunteers at free community meal sites. Others comb the land to reach those unaware of the count. Maryhaven’s outreach team provides transportation from known camps to the Blackburn Recreation Center event, which attracts many people because of the free services.

Over the last few weeks, shelter providers, outreach providers and homeless advocates have passed out flyers in shelters, on the streets and in homeless camps urging people to come forward and be counted at the event. Last year’s effort identified 233 people living on the land while more than 1,300 were in emergency or transitional shelter.

Heritage urged community residents to get involved in ending homelessness. “Volunteers are needed to help serve meals to people experiencing homelessness and to keep shelters running smoothly. You can make a difference. It only takes eight volunteers to serve a meal. Invite your book club, your church group or your family and friends to join you in making 2015 the year you give back as a volunteer”, said Heritage. Interested volunteers can sign up at www.fromhomelesstohome.org.

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires all communities to conduct a count of people experiencing homelessness during the last ten days of January. Point-in-time counts are conducted across the nation in compliance with a HUD funding requirement.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES:

Access Ohio
Amethyst
AIDS Resource Center of Ohio
Breathing Association
The Buckeye Ranch
Choices
Columbus Neighborhood Health Center
Columbus Speech & Hearing Center
Columbus Urban League
Community Housing Network
Community Mediation Service of Central Ohio
Community Shelter Board
COVA
Faith Mission
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Focus Learning Academies
Franklin County Children Services
Friends of the Homeless
Gladden Community House
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Licking County Breast and Cervical Cancer Project
Magic Johnson Bridgescape Academy
Maryhaven
Mount Carmel Outreach
Mount Carmel Crime and Trauma Assistance Program
National Church Residences
NetCare Access
New Directions Career Center
Ohio State College of Barber Styling
Project Connect
The Salvation Army
Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio
Southeast PATH
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Veterans Administration/Healthcare for the Homeless
Volunteers of America of Greater Ohio
YMCA of Central Ohio
YWCA Columbus

Community Shelter Board, established in 1986, is a collective impact organization that creates collaborations, innovates solutions, and invests in quality programs to end homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County. Community Shelter Board oversees an annual budget of \$31 million to support homeless programs and services. Last year, these programs served 12,000 people. Community Shelter Board is funded by the City of Columbus, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the United Way of Central Ohio, The Columbus Foundation, Nationwide Foundation, American Electric Power Foundation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the State of Ohio, and many other public and private investors.

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