
SMOC

South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT



2004

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF WAR ON POVERTY ISSUE

ORGANIZING RESOURCES
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

SMOC South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Organizing Resources for Social Change

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SOUTH MIDDLESEX OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

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CONTENTS

“Because it is right, because it is wise . . .”	2
President’s Message	4
Executive Director’s Message	5
Program Reports	7
Behavioral Health Services	7
Community Development	10
South Middlesex Non-Profit Housing Corporation	10
Shelters and Housing Continuum	14
Economic Development	24
Financial Assistance Programs	27
Energy Services	28
Family and Nutrition Services	29
A Work in Progress	35
Board Member of the Year	36
Employees of the Year	37
Managers of the Year	37
Volunteers of the Year	38
Board of Directors	38
Financial Data	39

“BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT, BECAUSE IT IS WISE . . .”

This year, 2004, marks the 40th anniversary of President Lyndon Johnson’s special message to Congress proposing “A Nationwide War on the Sources of Poverty.” The date of Johnson’s message was March 16, 1964. In it he stated that “Because it is right, because it is wise, and because for the first time in our history, it is possible to conquer poverty, I submit, for the consideration of the Congress and the country, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.”¹ Commenting on what he hoped the war on poverty would accomplish, Johnson said, “The Act does not merely expand old programs or improve what is already being done. It charts a new course. It strikes at the causes, not just the consequences of poverty. It can be a milestone in our one hundred eighty-year search for a better life for our people.”²

One of the strategies Johnson proposed for striking at the causes of poverty was the creation of Community Action Agencies. At the time there were many government efforts to help the poor but very little coordination among them. Nor were there any concerted efforts to find out what services people in poor communities needed the most. The Community Action Agencies were to provide the necessary planning and coordination based on actual consulting with community groups. Men and women in cities and towns throughout the country were encouraged to form community action boards and prepare comprehensive long range plans to attack poverty in their own local communities. Plans could then be submitted to the Office of Economic Opportunity for possible funding. Community action boards were required to include poor people as well as more affluent citizens. This helped to insure that the actual needs of people in poorer communities were being identified and addressed. It also helped to empower residents of poor neighborhoods by helping them learn how to organize themselves and access community resources.

President Johnson appointed Sargent Shriver to lead the War on Poverty and the Office of Economic Opportunity. Shriver’s leadership resulted in the creation of more than a thousand Community Action Agencies across the country. SMOC was honored in August of this year with a visit from Shriver. Now retired, his passion for human services is as vibrant as ever. In remarks to a gathering of SMOC employees and guests he said, “I believe the people in this country have the obligation and also the opportunity to get to know about all kinds of problems and to do something about them – what they can do to transform the United States. . . . As people mobilize, they begin to change the world. Damn near everyone needs to be helped in some way.”³ Shriver lauded SMOC’s efforts saying, “We’d have no program at all if it weren’t for all of the people here. It’s people like you who make this program something that helps all kinds of people.”⁴ During his visit, children from SMOC’s Head Start program serenaded Shriver. It was under Shriver’s leadership that Head Start was initiated nationwide. The children also presented him with a poster stating, “Thank you for giving us a Head Start”. (See page 19 for photos of Shriver’s visit.)

Today, 40 years after the inauguration of the anti-poverty efforts, it is obvious that poverty has not been eradicated. Estimates suggest that 35 million of our people can still be counted as poor. Various reasons have been offered for the persistence of this blight on American society. Certainly one reason is that the phrase “war on poverty” was partly political hyperbole. The effort was neither a full-scale assault nor an all out war on poverty. An all out assault would have required many more resources. But this does not invalidate the efforts that were made.

¹ Internet Modern History Sourcebook: President Lyndon B. Johnson: The War on Poverty, March 1964.

² Ibid.

³ D. Craig MacCormack, “A Helping Hand” The MetroWest Daily News, August 14, 2004, 10.

⁴ Ibid, 1.

Most of the programs initiated were constructive and as Peter Edelman points out in a recent article, “. . . every piece still exists today in one form or another. Head Start, VISTA, the Job Corps, Foster Grandparents, Upward Bound, community health centers, legal services for the poor, and the often (and unfairly) maligned community action program – all still exist today, and all are still doing important work that helps to prevent and reduce poverty.”⁵

The Community Action Program does indeed, as Edelman asserts, “still exist!” The South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), whose impressive and breathtaking programs are described in this Annual Report, is the federally designated Community Action Agency for the greater MetroWest and Blackstone Valley area. It had its origins in 1965 when a group of citizens in Framingham responded to the challenge of the anti-poverty initiative and organized a summer Head Start program. Initially it was a part of the Framingham School Department with units in the Woodrow Wilson School, Memorial School and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Hopkinton. It had a special medical component that provided health care services such as immunizations and dental care. In 1966 a regional Community Action Agency was formed calling itself the honored name that it still carries today, the South Middlesex Opportunity Council. The region served included Ashland, Bellingham, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Natick, Wayland and Southboro. The Agency took over the running of Head Start and in 1967 converted what had been a summer program to a year round effort.

In addition to the Head Start effort, the fledging agency organized a community outreach component. A staff of four social workers who identified themselves as “area representatives” went door to door in disadvantaged communities encouraging poor people to advocate for themselves. Neighborhood meetings were held in which poor people organized to advocate for adequate health care, teen centers, streetlights and other community services. A third component sometimes described as more “radical” than the “area representatives” program organized low-income people into welfare rights organizations. The emphasis was on issues such as decent housing, access to the health care system and day care. (See page 19 for photo of Sargent Shriver with several early leaders of SMOC.)

From these initial efforts by committed citizens of our MetroWest communities, SMOC has developed into the second largest Community Action Agency in Massachusetts. Based on the original mandate for Community Action Agencies as cited in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, SMOC’s purpose is to advocate for and meet the needs of low-income people. Over the years, this advocacy has resulted in the creation of a continuum of programs that strike at the problems that most seriously affect poor people and keep them mired in poverty. They include programs addressing emergency shelter for the homeless, transitional and permanent housing, employment training and placement, substance abuse services, mental health services, women’s protective services, nutrition, energy and weatherization, services for the elderly, day care and preschool education, youth services, as well as community organizing around housing, health care, rising energy costs and banking services.

A CONTINUUM OF CARE

The multiple programs, existing in interaction with each other, constitute what is referred to as a Continuum of Care. The numerous services the programs provide address the fact that the origin of poverty for any one person or family is usually a multiplicity of factors rather than a single cause. A woman mired in poverty may be homeless but also be the victim of domestic violence, lack employment skills and even struggling with an addiction. Thus, when an individual or family enters the system through a particular point in the Continuum of Care such as seeking help with housing, an intake specialist, familiar with the resources offered by the various programs, accesses, along

⁵ Peter Edelman, “War on poverty’ hasn’t lived up to name but it does good”, Star Tribune, August 29, 2004.

with the individual/family, other areas in which assistance may be needed. A service plan identifying short and longer terms goals is created resulting in providing access to and coordination of needed services available from the programs within the continuum.

The Program Reports that follow, after the President and Executive Director's messages, describe the activities of SMOC's numerous programs during the past year. The Reports also include a description of a Work in Progress, a major new undertaking by SMOC during the past year. SMOC has always been "a work in progress" as its leadership responded to new opportunities to fulfill its mandate of advocating for and meeting the needs of low-income people. The affiliation of the People in Peril program in Worcester with SMOC is an example of the willingness to step up to new challenges.

Citations describing the winners of SMOC's annual awards for Board Member, Managers, and Employees of the year appear after the Program Reports. This year a new award is being given - the Isabel Harrison Volunteers of the Year Award. The announcement of the Award winners is followed by a listing of the members of SMOC's Board of Directors and SMOC's 2004 financial data.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bruce S. Hulme, President, SMOC Board of Directors

On behalf of the South Middlesex Opportunity Council's Board of Directors, I'm pleased to present our Annual Report of the quality programs and services that we have been providing to the greater MetroWest area for the past 38 years.

SMOC was founded over 38 years ago in 1965 as a part of the Federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The range of services that we provide has grown to include Child Care, Women's Protective Services, Substance Abuse, Energy and Financial Assistance, Shelter programs, Economic Development and Advocacy, Mental Health, Women Infants & Children, and Elderly Nutrition as well as our separate Non-Profit Housing Corporation. Over the years we've seen the economy cycle through its highs and lows, but it seems that in these past few years, in spite of our ever increasing agency budget and the growth of program services, a much broader range of individuals and families from many different backgrounds and walks of life have come close to slipping through the safety net that SMOC provides. I would like to be able to tell you that our budget is shrinking, our services are becoming obsolete and that we will be winding down our operations because of declining demand. However, I'm sad to say that is not happening.

This year we face many changing demands with an election on the horizon, housing prices showing no signs of abating, health care costs continuing their upward spiral and the jobless rate, although improving, still not providing the quality of jobs that we would like to see for all classes of people. SMOC will continue to help people realize their goals of more independent and dignified living by providing quality services to the people of the greater MetroWest area and by fulfilling our goal of "Organizing resources for social change".

I am once again glad to have an opportunity to thank my fellow Board members and SMOC staff and volunteers for all the work they have done to make this another tremendously successful year.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Jim Cuddy, Executive Director

Greetings!

A good deal of attention is being paid to this year being the 40th anniversary of the passing of the Economic Opportunity Act which initiated the War on Poverty and led to the creation of Community Action Agencies across the country. Since this organization's roots lie in the War on Poverty, I thought it might be appropriate to identify several connections between other events in our country's ongoing history with the "War on Poverty" and the founding of this agency.

Over the years there has been considerable discussion concerning what ideas and values were influential in the initiation and shaping of the "War on Poverty." The seeds were certainly present in the social ethos of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. As Cass Sunstein asserts in his recent book, The Second Bill of Rights, Roosevelt bundled economic and political rights into an indivisible package. In 1936 he declared that "Freedom is no half-and-half affair" and later maintained "Necessitous men are not freemen. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made."⁶ Michael Harrington's book, The Other America, and the Civil Rights Movement have also been credited as having been prime energizers of the efforts to eradicate poverty. I'd like to reference another influence that goes back to the events that occurred right after World War II. I am specifically speaking of the Marshall Plan, when this country decided to take on the rebuilding of both its allies and enemies in the aftermath of World War II. This country rebuilt Europe and Japan, and, in doing so, changed the lives of tens of millions of individuals living in post-war conditions in those countries. It was a clear expression of the belief that government should and could make a positive difference in the lives of entire countries, entire communities and in the lives of individuals and their families.

In many ways, SMOC's Housing & Community Development Division is a microcosmic expression of the ideas and values that were the foundation of the Marshall Plan - the belief that disadvantaged individuals and families should have safe, decent, well-managed housing. For the past twenty years, SMOC has utilized private financing, fundraising and government assistance programs to rebuild neighborhoods and communities, to provide safe, attractive and affordable housing to disadvantaged individuals, with the belief that by doing so, we will offer them a better life.

Another possible energizer of the War on Poverty is a bit more complex and perhaps requires a conceptual leap on the part of the reader. The urge to use force, namely, to go to war, seems to be particularly strong in our society. The need to label the effort to eradicate poverty as a "War" perhaps suggests something interesting about the American psyche. In any case, forty years ago, when the War on Poverty was launched, the country also made a decision to wage a war with military might. Then it was in Vietnam. The reverberations of that ill-fated decision are still being felt today. Many of us believe that the decision to wage a military campaign doomed the efforts to fully invest in eradicating poverty in this country.

Today, while there has not been much talk for decades of the government's ability to eliminate poverty, we are back at war and have been for the past two years. We are trying to use force to solve an international crisis and to make our culture safer and more productive. We are trying to use force, frankly, as a way to do good. I could not disagree more with that notion, However, I recognize and applaud the conviction that the government can be a force or an instrument for creating better conditions. Forty years after the launching of our "War on Poverty," I wish that we could achieve a consensus on two beliefs - that the government should care about its residents, and that the government can be a force for good in alleviating the conditions that disadvantaged people live under in this country.

⁶ David M. Kennedy, "Unfinished Business", New York Times, September 19, 2004.

Now let me turn my attention to this organization. This past year has been marked by the following:

- The continued expansion of our single adult system, despite the loss of our Detox Program, which closed at the end of the last fiscal year due to statewide funding cuts;
- The realignment of our Senior Management and Division system;
- The merger with the People in Peril Program of Worcester; and
- The sale of our EnSoft Solutions company.

Let me make some succinct comments about each.

In order to expand our housing continuum for formerly homeless single adults, during the past year we completed development projects in Easthampton, Palmer, Worcester and Framingham. These projects provide more housing options and resources for formerly homeless single adults. As part of recognizing these efforts, we produced a paper called “Creating and Sustaining a Housing Continuum for Disadvantaged Single Adults, 1985-2004,” The paper was widely distributed in May. It was written to explain how we have taken on this challenge and as a way of encouraging other organizations to join with us in this effort.

Following the departure of Bill Minkle, our long-time Energy & Financial Assistance Division Director, we reorganized and placed responsibility for Bill’s programs under Charles Gagnon, our Chief Operating Officer. This realignment allows us to better focus on utilizing scarce resources. Also, following the retirement due to illness of Dennis Reynolds, our Behavioral Health Services Division Director, we hired Richard Michel, who joined us at the end of September 2003 to head up the Behavioral Health Services Division.

In April, after six months of discussion and dialogue, the People in Peril (PIP) program located in Worcester, became a part of SMOC. PIP is the largest provider of services to homeless individuals in Central Massachusetts. We were delighted to welcome them to our organization. The merger came about because both organizations’ Boards and staff shared a similar vision – ending homelessness through the creation of housing and integrating that housing with support services. Having PIP as part of SMOC is an exciting challenge, a challenge that we are confident in meeting as an organization.

At the close of this fiscal year, our EnSoft business was spun off and sold to the individual who had served as EnSoft’s Chief Information Officer. This ended the organization’s attempt to create a conservation software business, but we will continue to use the software in our Energy Conservation Programs.

There are several other things that need to be mentioned. I would like to thank Joyce Giacomarra, our Chief Financial Officer, who has continued her outstanding stewardship of the agency’s finances. This was not a particularly easy year, but Joyce and the Administration & Finance staff did an outstanding job of keeping the agency fiscally sound and stable. Once again, despite no or minimal increases in our government contracts, we were able to provide each and every employee in good standing with a raise or bonus.

I would like also to thank and commend the organization’s Board of Directors for their handling of their governance function in such an adroit and capable manner. The Board is interested, involved and active. Evidence of this can be found in the agency’s fundraisers, and in the work of its Outreach Committee.

I would like to conclude by perhaps stating the obvious, that when it comes time to write the next Annual Report, I fervently hope that our nation will be at peace and focused on helping its most disadvantaged residents achieve a better life.

PROGRAM REPORTS

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

<>Emergency Shelter for the Homeless <> Transitional and Permanent Housing <>
Employment Training and Placement <> **Substance Abuse Services** <> **Mental Health
Services** <> Women's Protective Services <> Nutrition <> Energy and Weatherization <>
Services for the Elderly <> Day Care and Pre-School Education <> **Youth Services** <>

ADMINISTRATION

This year, 2004, has been a time of change for SMOC's Behavioral Health Services (BHS). New people have been appointed to a number of the leadership positions, including the Director of BHS, the Director of Clinical Services, the Director of Residential Services, the Director of Addictions and Dual Diagnosis Services, and the Site Director in Marlboro. This has led to modifications in our organizational and program design. One of the most productive changes has been the alignment of accountability and responsibility, resulting in improved clinical documentation, effective oversight and utilization review with funding sources, effective cost control, and the investment in new growth. Although change did result in some fluctuation in revenue and costs, we were able to end the year with a positive contribution.

While change can negatively impact clinical productivity, any reductions due to uncertainty and confusion were more than compensated for by our ability to recruit new staff. Successful recruitment was essential for our investment and expansion into servicing the elder mental health community. Recruitment of residential counselors was also a critical factor in improving our position with the Department of Mental Health by proving that we have the capacity to meet the Department's needs in FY05. However, successful recruitment was not the only reason we were able to succeed during a time of transition; new staff and new operations were supported by dedication, commitment and the full acceptance of program responsibility.

One of the gains from clear program alignment is that we have been able to develop effective brochures describing our various services. The brochures are available to human service professionals desiring to make referrals and to clients, themselves. Selected content from each of the brochures is printed below.

ADULT MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES

Our Mental Health and Addictions Services begin with a comprehensive diagnostic assessment. From the information gathered during the assessment, the clinician and the client develop treatment objectives that will assist the client in achieving their goals. The length and modality of treatment is determined by the individual needs of the client. Engagement and the building of a therapeutic relationship are of central importance in the delivery of Mental Health services. Our clients have experienced mental health issues related to serious and persistent mental illness, adjustment to major life changes, grief and loss, trauma, aging, and drugs.

The overall goal of Mental Health and Addiction Services is to assist clients to identify the causes of the symptoms they are experiencing, the strengths they possess to manage the symptoms and to develop new skills that will assist in eliminating symptoms. The overarching goal is to improve the overall quality of an individual's life.

Addiction Services, in particular, assist individuals to understand the function the addictions serve in their lives, to identify negative consequences of the addictions and to develop coping skills that will assist in achieving and

maintaining abstinence. Although abstinence is the ultimate goal, Addiction Services are individualized to “meet the person where they are at”. Engagement and the building of a therapeutic relationship are of central importance in the delivery of Addiction Services.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Are you tired of being misunderstood? Not able to get your needs met? Frustrated that your kids feel out of control? Overwhelmed by parenting? Feeling pulled in a million different directions? Do you wish that your family were different? Are there things that you want to tell your family but don't know how? Do you feel judged by everyone? If so, SMOC Child, Adolescent and Family Counseling Services may be able to help.

Our clinical services for children and families may include individual, group, or family therapy. Our clinics are located at 300 Howard Street in Framingham, and at 133 East Main Street in Marlborough. At times we provide home based therapy as well as counseling services at area schools and as a part of SMOC's Child Care and Head Start Programs.

In March we received a referral from the Department of Social Service (DSS) in Boston for individual therapy for two brothers, who were being reunited with their father. The boys had been in foster care for almost a year due to their mother's substance abuse and subsequent incarceration. The boys demonstrated a good deal of fear and anxiety about their experience at home, which had led to their being placed in foster care. They were five and seven years old. The boys were moving to a new location and had never lived with their father as their primary caregiver. Given these factors, it seemed appropriate that we engage this father to assess the needs of the family as a whole.

The father was open to receive services through our Family Based Services (FBS) program, which is contracted through DSS and SMOC. The services were provided in the home by a FBS clinician and focused on parenting, child development, safety for the children and adjustment issues. Also community supports were developed in this process.

With the assistance of the FBS clinician, the boys were enrolled in day care and after school care through SMOC. They were assigned an individual therapist from SMOC BHS, who saw them at their childcare program. Clinical services and FBS services were well coordinated by respective clinicians, which enhanced benefits to the family. The FBS clinician also assisted the father in finding health care providers, such as a pediatrician, pediatric neurologist and dentist.

Due to these supports being put into place in a timely manner, the boys and their father were able make a very healthy and positive transition. The FBS services were terminated in August because the family had met all of the goals that were set. The family will receive ongoing clinical services through SMOC BHS as needed.

ELDER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Elder Outreach Program provides clinical services to homebound elders who are experiencing mental health and/or substance abuse issues. Initial assessment and ongoing treatment is provided by a licensed independent clinical social worker and can be short-or-long term in nature. The problems of elders are often related to the aging process and can include loss and bereavement, isolation, and changes in health status or physical abilities; however, they can also be symptoms related to long-term mental illness or chronic substance abuse. A guiding principle in providing therapeutic services to an elder is the importance of collaboration with the significant others in the elder's life. Collaboration is crucial due to the complexity of issues that arise when working with an elder. Often times there

are medical, cognitive and psycho-social issues. Although this collaboration is encouraged, it is only done with the consent of the client. Outreach services are offered at the elder's home. Currently the program serves elders living in Marlborough, Framingham, Natick and Ashland. The ability of the program to serve a particular town is contingent on clinician availability.

SMOC's Behavioral Health Staff provides compassionate, non-judgmental supportive services to elders to help them reach their fullest potential. Referrals can be made by a variety of sources including the elder, community providers, family members, hospitals and Councils on Aging. However, services are voluntary and therefore the elder must be in agreement with the referral. To schedule an initial diagnostic assessment, call the Intake Coordinator at (508) 879-2250, Ext. 77 and provide demographic and insurance information on the individual requesting services. Therapeutic services are billed to the elders insurance. Medicare and Medicaid are the primary insurances accepted; however, a variety of other insurances are often approved. The Intake Coordinator can provide information regarding which insurance providers are accepted.

YOUNG ADULT RESIDENTIAL AND CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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

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.

The program emphasizes clean living through skill development, access to resources and adherence to a recovery process that improves interpersonal skills, self management and productive community membership. YARCM provides....

- Single and double rooms
- A convenient location in downtown Framingham
- Peer support groups
- Relapse prevention
- Recovery skills groups
- Assistance in accessing medical, psychiatric, and dental care
- Career counseling
- GED preparation

Admission guidelines include being between the ages of 18-24, homeless or at risk for being homeless, 30 days of sobriety, able to work, and motivated to achieve and maintain sobriety. Insurance is not necessary to enter the program.

One of our clients, AM, came to the YARCM program after a difficult journey through our courts, imprisonment and life in a homeless shelter. AM had lost the trust of his family due to forging checks. His family had to lock up the checks and even rotate their location to keep them away from him. AM had even sold his valuable collection of antique trains to support his drug habit. However, things began to change for him the day he stood before a support group and said “My name is A, and I am a drug addict.” This beginning soon led to a referral to YARCM.

Today, AM is the assistant manager of a large retail store, entrusted with cash and inventory, a role model and supervisor of staff. AM has a savings account where the balance is moving in a steady upward direction. Next semester he will return to a university and continue his once abandoned dream of earning a degree. At YARCM he has taken a leadership role with the other residents to keep the Program safe and sober. His contributions to the vitality of the peer model will be felt for years to come.

We continue to work on developing brochures for our Driver Alcohol Education and Criminal Justice Programs. Due to the closed referral system, we will not be developing brochures for our Residential Programs and Community Rehabilitation Service.

The most important thing about all our services, is the way in which we help people in need. We are not successful every time, but it makes our efforts worth while when we are.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. SOUTH MIDDLESEX NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORPORATION

AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

↔ **Emergency Shelter for the Homeless** ↔ **Transitional and Permanent Housing** ↔ **Employment Training and Placement** ↔ **Substance Abuse Services** ↔ **Mental Health Services** ↔ **Women’s Protective Services** ↔ **Nutrition** ↔ **Energy and Weatherization** ↔ **Services for the Elderly** ↔ **Day Care and Pre-School Education** ↔ **Youth Services**

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.

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, as well as 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 total number of units statewide is 1,181. The property inventory by community location for FY2004 is as follows:

City / Town	# of Buildings	# of Units
Framingham	60	523
Northbridge	21	98
Marlboro	6	74
Fitchburg	1	55
Palmer	2	35
Hudson	4	28
Millbury	3	29
Natick	2	18
Ashland	2	19
Charlton	2	16
Easthampton	3	47
Oakham	1	18
Worcester	5	148
Hopkinton	1	34
Medway	1	14
Hardwick	1	14
Waltham	3	11
TOTAL	118	1,181

FY2004 HOUSING OPERATIONS, PROPERTY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- SMOC Housing's expansion throughout FY2004 was significant. The number of residential and program units increased nearly 20% during the fiscal year. Our property and programmatic initiatives extending our operations throughout the Commonwealth continued and allowed SMOC to directly partner with strategic partners and municipalities to address the acute shortage of affordable housing and service-enriched facilities. This included the affiliation with PIP, Inc., in the City of Worcester, Fitchburg, Western Massachusetts and the MetroWest.
- The significant changes and reductions in the availability of housing resources through local, state and federal assistance programs presented substantial challenges to our tenant populations. The agency witnessed the elimination of the Individual Self-Sufficiency Initiative (ISSI) program for homeless single adults, the termination of the Shelter + Care Program in MetroWest, the abrupt "freezing" of all new Section 8 Rental Certificates by the Federal Government's Housing and Urban Development (HUD) agency, as well as other numerous assaults upon targeted housing resources for the neediest residents in the Commonwealth.

- The agency's Continuum of Housing and Care for Single Adults experienced a significant increase in the number of units utilizing several creative development resources. The Housing Corporation was awarded Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program (AHP) development grants, HUD's Supportive Housing Program grants, Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS development grants (HOPWA), Community Development Block Grant funds and other financing programs. SMOC's Continuum of Housing and Care will reach more people in need as we effectively utilize new resources to meet our mission.
- 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. Within this fiscal year alone, we completed several residential and mix-use developments in communities such as Framingham, Worcester, Fitchburg, Easthampton and Oakham. We also completed the relocation of SMOC's primary single adult shelter The Turning Point Shelter, The Post-Detox Program and other program changes.

FY2004 DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The Housing Corporation's activities covered an expansive array of existing and potential community development initiatives throughout FY04. This included many diverse projects such as: producing new sober housing for formerly homeless Veterans in the City of Easthampton; converting a mix-use property into twelve new units of affordable housing for women; and, preserved 55 units of Single Person Occupancy in the City of Fitchburg. Given the complexity and multiple financing partners, many of SMOC Housing's projects span over two fiscal periods to successfully complete achieving an integrated development model to meet a variety of community needs. Here are a few highlights of projects completed or started in FY2004:

People in Peril (PIP), Inc., Worcester: Upon the completion of the affiliation with this not-for-profit organization based in the City of Worcester, SMOC Housing assumed the management of their portfolio. 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. Other ventures will include the development of the Ann Pax Center for Women that will include both housing and program components serving homeless women.

"Hasting's Hall", 35 Holt Street, Fitchburg: The Housing Corporation purchased this 55-unit Single Person Occupancy property in order to preserve these affordable single room occupancy units in greater Worcester County. The property was well maintained over the years and is fully occupied. The Bank of Western Massachusetts provided the permanent financing. Hastings Hall will continue to be a safe, decent and affordable housing choice for the area's needy residents. (See page 20 for photograph)

"The King's Inn" - 1418-1426 Main Street, Palmer: Completed in the first quarter of FY2004, the agency purchased this important property in downtown Palmer in FY2002. The building contains 19 units of housing and 4 commercial storefronts on the street level. This development facilitates the revitalization of Palmer's Main Street and created 19 new units of affordable housing for single adults. Financing for the "King's Inn" was provided by Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation, Ware Cooperative Bank, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, MASS Housing's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Town of Palmer's Small Cities Program and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

Viking's Landing & 250 Main Street, Easthampton: SMOC purchased these lodging houses to create a new opportunity for homeless and formerly homeless Veterans in the region. These locations will house 31 individuals that participate in SMOC's Sober Housing Program and are working on a permanent housing and employment plan to achieve economic self-reliance. SMOC's Sober Housing Program is partnering with the regional Veterans' programs and other not-for-profit entities. The Bank of Western Massachusetts and the Federal Home Loan Bank provided the financing. The project was completed in the 3rd quarter of FY2004. (See page 20 for photograph)

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, Burlington, Palmer and Framingham to identify and design new ways to create new affordable housing for elderly residents and Senior Citizens.

37 Prior Drive, Framingham: SMOC Housing purchased this single family home in North Framingham from a generous family that was willing to sell the building at a considerable discount in order for SMOC to prepare the property for a first time homeownership dream. SMOC worked closely with the Town of Framingham to conduct extensive marketing and line up preferred financing that would enable a low-and-moderate income family to purchase the home. In conjunction with DHCD's Soft Second Program, the Town of Framingham Community Development Block Grant Program, Natick Federal Savings Bank and Sovereign Bank, the collaboration was realized and over 150 families were interested in the housing opportunity. The property was sold to a family and conveyed in late fall of FY2004. (See page 20 for photograph)

46 Pratt Street, Framingham: SMOC Housing purchased this 10 unit lodging house with financing from the Framingham cooperative Bank and a Supported Housing Program (SHP) grant from the Federal agency of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This property will be targeted to homeless males who will participate in the Sober Housing Program and begin pursuing a blueprint for self-sufficiency.

360 Union Avenue, Framingham: SMOC Housing purchased this site and developed 12 new units of permanent Sober Housing for women. A permanent housing HUD grant was awarded to acquire the property and the Framingham Cooperative Bank provided the permanent financing. As the end result, SMOC Housing created 12 new homes for women who have graduated from our Sober Housing Continuum. (See page 20 for photograph)

Scudder House, Framingham: SMOC was award 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 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, education and training modules and create an Individual Service Plan (ISP) for economic self-reliance.

Fiscal Year 2004 was a successful year and one of significant changes and expansion for the Housing Corporation. SMOC Housing will continue to identify new ways to meet our mission and address the growing need of more affordable housing for residents in need. It is our goal that we continue to strengthen the households we serve, revitalize and stabilize the neighborhoods where we have invested our efforts and expand our community development partners as we continue our mission of providing and creating fundamental economic, community and individual opportunity.

B. SOBER HOUSING CONTINUUM AND SHELTERS

AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

<> **Emergency Shelter for the Homeless** <> **Transitional and Permanent Housing** <> Employment Training and Placement <> **Substance Abuse Services** <> **Mental Health Services** <> Women's Protective Services <> Nutrition <> Energy and Weatherization <> Services for the Elderly <> Day Care and Pre-School Education <> **Youth Services** <>

SUBSTANCE ABUSE RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

Sage House is a shelter providing substance abuse treatment and supportive services for seven homeless families who participate in the program for 9 to 12 months. Clients and their children receive a variety of supports including relapse prevention groups, group and individual counseling, and vocational training. Sage House was a temporary home to 9 families during the last year. The dynamic has changed dramatically in the past year with 3 two-parent families entering the house. Judy Lalau became the new Program Coordinator this year and has been working closely with SMOC Behavioral Health Services to review and update the content of the treatment groups. The facility received much-needed updates through a generous donation from TJX Corporation enabling us to get a new roof for the building and to have two bathrooms completely remodeled.

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.

Sarah was 17 years old and pregnant with a 10-month-old son in DSS custody when she was referred from MCI Framingham to Serenity House in November 20, 2003. Sarah was receptive to treatment from the beginning and willing to make serious changes in her life. Both of her parents are active addicts and Sarah wanted something better for her own family.

While Sarah was here she worked on her self-esteem, relapse prevention and built a foundation for her 12-step program. She also focused on her parenting skills and had monthly visits with her 10-month-old son facilitated through DSS. Serenity staff worked with Sarah and DSS on a plan to reunify mother and son. During her stay at Serenity House, Sarah gave birth to a daughter and adapted well with her new baby in the program. Sarah began to have overnight visits every other week with her now 1-year-old son. She decided that having her son, baby and being in treatment was too overwhelming for her at this point in her life and sat down with DSS to delay reunification until she felt more secure in her parenting abilities.

Following her Serenity graduation, Sarah moved to Southbridge into Community Health Link (CHL) Sober Community Program. This program offers case management, parenting groups, and daily AA meetings. A recent follow-up with Sarah found that she now has both children with her, lives in a two-bedroom apartment and continues to be an active participant in her recovery process.

New Beginnings is a 12-bed supportive housing program for formerly homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The program celebrated its tenth anniversary this year and hosted a celebration that included former residents, volunteers, and many of the nuns who helped make the program a reality. (See page 23 for photograph of 10th Anniversary Celebration)

John has been a resident of New Beginnings for 18 months. He is a much loved and respected member of the community here. John has made many positive changes in his life since coming to New Beginnings. He is committed to receiving the best medical care he needs to deal with his many health issues and he has followed through every challenging step of the way. John uses all of the resources available to him including support groups, meetings, commitments, and a men's group. He has achieved 6 years of recovery one day at a time. He has bought a car, receives tutoring on a regular basis and is employed on the property of Bethany Hill. Most importantly, he has a peace and joy about him that is contagious. He finally has the serenity he was seeking.

SINGLE ADULT SHELTERS

This year all of the shelters witnessed an increase in health concerns among the guests. An increase in Hepatitis As well as Hep C impacted each of the single adult shelters. Hep C treatment renders patients physically as well as emotionally ill while they are undergoing treatment. We also saw an increase in people being discharged from hospitals to shelters while still needing some medical assistance. The number of homeless people with diabetes and insulin dependent increased forcing us to deal with the issues related to having needles and syringes in the shelter environment. In Framingham we are fortunate to have the new Community Health Center which has had a positive impact for many of our clients.

The Meadows Program is an 8-bed residential program for women leaving the correctional system. Participation in the program lasts six months. During the past year, the program served 23 women. Five of the six graduates moved into SMOC Sober Housing and continue to stay in touch with the program. During the past year Meadows began participating in some of the Serenity House programming. Women from both programs attend some of the same BHS facilitated clinical groups. The addition of a new House Manager at Meadows was also a highlight this year. Michelle has many years of recovery and is a great support and example for the women.

Shadows is a homeless shelter for up to 10 women. The women in the program receive safe shelter and supportive services. The shelter served 110 women last year, 60% of whom moved directly from the shelter into sober housing or treatment programs. This year the shelter had an increase in the number of women from MCI Framingham, either on parole or probation. We are fortunate to have the Case Managers from the SMOC CRC program to provide additional services in assisting these women in finding jobs and housing.

Turning Point Shelter is an 18-bed emergency shelter program for single adult men. The Shelter was temporary home to 123 individuals, only 17 of whom had stayed at the shelter previously. The biggest change for Turning Point this year was the move from Hollis Street to Merchant Road. We have more common space and much better parking! The additional space presented some initial challenges for Margaret and her team. One of the decisions included the switch to an all-male facility. We rarely had more than 1 or 2 women at the shelter and with the availability of Shadows in Ashland, it seemed a prudent change to accept men only. 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 shelter serving up to 18 men and women. The Shelter served 221 men and women last year. A notable increase this year was the number of individuals with mental health symptoms including mania, delusions, as well as auditory and visual hallucinations. Staff must do a thorough job of pre-screening these clients to ensure that they enter the shelter with a minimum of 30 days supply of medication to avoid disruption in their treatment. These are generally folks on fixed incomes making housing placement especially challenging. Another emerging population is those who are HIV positive. This year 7% of all referrals were HIV+, another population where it is important for staff to do a good job in ensuring that they have the medications they need to maintain their health.

Mitch is one of many success stories from the Marlboro-based SMOC Continuum of Care. Mitch came to us one year ago from a detox. He was a 43-year-old addicted to heroin for almost half of his life. Mitch continued with Day Treatment for almost 2 months because he was determined to “get it” this time. He had been trying to stay sober for several years. The shelter got him involved with Behavioral Health Services (BHS) as soon as Day Treatment ended. He became so comfortable with his BHS counselor that he finally opened up and talked about things he NEVER talked about. Mitch had never lived in a sober shelter before and he pretty much stayed by himself. He went to meetings on his own and when there was idle time, he walked and walked and walked. He became the coffee maker at his favorite AA group and very quickly had many positive friends in this new life. Mitch also got involved with a local church that has helped tremendously with his spirituality as well as his serenity. Mitch moved on to 496 Lincoln Street Sober Housing and proceeded to get his license and his family members back. Several months later he was working and seeing his family on a regular basis.

The car came and the opportunity to move into his own place was too good to pass up. Mitch is still involved with counseling and coffee making and stopping by the shelter to see if any newcomer needs a ride to a meeting, or the store. He constantly tells us how grateful he is to the SMOC programs he was exposed to and how much we helped him to obtain his short-term goals!

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.

The Post Detox Program has a daily capacity of ten and had an average daily census of 8.8 for the year. A total of 84 served clients entered the program during the year. Forty percent of the participants moved on to Sober Housing or halfway houses.

The Overflow Shelter served 423 men and 128 women during the last year. The loss of the Framingham Detox was felt deeply at this program, leaving many folks without a crucial resource when they need it the most. More clients are going to the Emergency Room as a result and others are self-detoxing which increases the challenges for both clients and staff.

The Day Program funded by the MetroWest Healthcare Foundation finished its third full year of operations this summer. This program provides us with the opportunity to work with the Overflow Shelter guests outside of the shelters hours of 6pm to 8am. Day Program clients receive an assessment for service needs and referrals to appropriate resources including: 91 to MassHealth, 53 to detox, 174 to DTA, 21 to Sober Housing, 110 to sober shelters, and 9 to six-month residential programs.

“Bob” is a typical example of how someone moves through our continuum and receives necessary connections along the way. Bob originally came to us in February 2003 when he was 21 years old. Bob had been involved with DSS from the age of 8. He had lost a parent to an illness and had not been able to be permanently placed with any family. He could not hold a job for long and therefore could not keep any kind of apartment for longer than a couple of months. He was a substance abuser and was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. He needed a lot of support from staff and was constantly asking for approval before doing anything on his own. After he was sober for a period of time, we offered him a bed in the Social Recovery Support Program (SRSP) section to help him prove to himself that he could accomplish things on his own. He did very well in that program and we eventually moved him to the YARCM program. He now is in his final phase of the program, received a 1 year chip for his sobriety, and seeks other supports to deal with daily issues that arise.

The Social Recovery Day Program (SRSP), also 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 first year, the program served 116 men and 34 women. The beds are located in a partitioned area of the shelter and these participants also have their own sitting area. Case management is provided and in the first year, 60% 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 SHELTERS

SMOC Family Shelters have assisted 181 families during the past year in our shelters. This number is only a small representation of families who are homeless and could benefit from the services of a shelter. Many more families are unable to access shelter due to the eligibility requirements. Families have to be at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. This means that a family of three needs to be making no more than \$1,584 a month or \$19,018 a year gross. If a family makes even \$1 over that amount, (TAFDC, Childcare, and SSI are considered income), then the family is not eligible for shelter, but at the same time, they also can not afford an apartment. Most rents in the Metro West area for two bedroom apartments are about \$1,200. Income needed to afford a 2-bedroom apartment for a family of three and meet other cost of living expenses in the Metro-West area is approximately \$50,000. There is a wide gap between being eligible to receive assistance and being able to afford an apartment. This means that the families denied shelter by DTA often end up staying in unsafe conditions, sleeping in cars, going back to abusive relationships, or splitting up the family so the children have a place to stay.

On May 15, 2004, the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) started a Shelter-to- Housing placement program also known as the **Housing Development Account Program (HDA)** to help families move quickly from shelters and hotels into permanent housing. Participants are families enrolled in job training who will find employment within a 12-month period. Other eligible families are those who found employment while in shelter and were at-risk of losing their Emergency Assistance by exceeding income guidelines.

Staff worked quickly to develop an implementation plan since families who were identified as good candidates and enrolled in the program needed to have leases signed and a tenancy in place by June 30, 2004. The Housing Assistance Program (HAP), in collaboration with the family shelters that SMOC operates, identified families who could be successful once the one-year stipend ended. Families placed through the program will receive case management services provided by the HAP Housing Advocates and Scattered Sites Program Family Advocates.

SMOC staff identified 27 families who would receive up to \$6000 to be used as a shallow subsidy for up to one year. All SMOC shelters and the Winter Heaven shelter in Milford participated in the program. Pathways placed 5 families, Medway had 7, Scattered Sites placed 10 families and Winter Heaven placed 5 families in the program. DTA allocated 27 slots to SMOC and all 27 were filled, a 100% placement rate for the program.

The Scattered Sites Shelter Program provided emergency shelter to 67 families during the last year. Ten of the families participated in the HDA program and moved from shelter into their own apartments during June.

Mary and her husband, Art, had lived with Mary's mother until they found an apartment closer to Art's work. They had lived there for four months while Mary was pregnant with their first child. Mary was scheduled to have a C-Section and needed Art to be at home with her during the recovery. Art asked his employer to change his hours in order to take care of his wife. Art's work was unable to change his hours and let him go after the baby was born. The family was unable to pay their rent and moved in with a family friend who had a Section 8. They were only able to stay for two weeks, then went to the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) requesting shelter. Mary, Art and their 1-month-old child entered the Scattered Site Program in March. While in shelter, Mary and Art filled out housing authority applications, did job searches and applied for day care. Art found a job working for a cable company as a subcontracted installer. He went through two weeks of training and started the position after being in shelter for three months. Soon after Art started working, DTA initiated the HAD program where a family in shelter could receive up to \$6,000 as a rental subsidy. Art and Mary, with the help of their housing worker, were able to secure an apartment and moved in. Mary recently obtained a part-time position at a local grocery store. The short-term subsidy will pay \$500 a month towards their rent. Art and Mary's long-term goal is to be homeowners. They plan on saving their money so that when the subsidy ends they will have a start towards a down payment on a house.

The Medway Family Shelter provided shelter to 49 families during the 2003-2004 fiscal year. Like the other family shelters, Medway House has seen a dramatic shift in the homeless population that has appeared at our doors. In addition, we have seen a serious decline in opportunities to obtain affordable housing. One of the challenges that we faced last year and seems to be a trend for the coming year is that more and more families are not legal citizens of the United States. This creates many impediments for families in securing jobs, housing, and medical benefits. We have also experienced more families who are struggling with substance abuse and who are unwilling to admit that they have a problem and to seek help. Within the last few months we have also seen an increase in families with critical mental health issues. We have always had families who suffer from situational depression but more frequently now we see more serious concerns including suicidal ideation's, hallucinations, paranoia and some who are on heavy duty psychotropic medications.

Pathways Family Shelter (PFS), during the past year, housed a total of 53 families accounting for 59 adults and 86 children. Pathways Family Shelter has one room called a Community Room that can be used for families who are were denied shelter by DTA. Statewide there are only 60 Community Rooms. The Community Room at Pathways can be used for families for short-term stays, if they have housing prospects, can work or can increase their income and follow the shelter rules. In this last year we have had four families use the room. The room is often used for families who were already in our shelter but became ineligible due to an increase in income. We receive about 2-3 calls a month from families across the state needing to use the Community Room. These are families who have been denied shelter benefits because they are over income, over assets, have lost their subsidized housing (even if it was through no fault of

A Sparkling Visit from

Sargent Shriver



LEFT:
Sargent Shriver speaks about the importance of human services.



RIGHT:
Sargent Shriver enjoys a poster given to him by SMOC's Head Start children. The poster read "Thank you for giving us a head start."



BELOW:
Head Start children and teachers enjoy their visit with Sargent Shriver.



ABOVE:
Sargent Shriver with Margaret Davitt and Arthur Chaves. Margaret was one of the first social workers employed by SMOC in 1967. Arthur wrote the proposal for the first Head Start program in MetroWest.

SMOC HOUSING CORPORATION PROJECTS



Left:
FIRST TIME HOME BUYER
Single Family
37 Prior Drive
Framingham

Right:
HASTINGS HALL
Single Person Residence
Fitchburg



Left:
VIKING'S LANDING
Single Room Residence
for Veterans
East Hampton



Right:
GROUP SOBER RESIDENCE
for Women
360 Union Avenue
Framingham



Economic Development Programs



Left:
FOUR GRADUATES OF
SMOC'S LEARNING CENTER

Right:
ADULT LEARNING
CENTER STUDENT



Below:
SMOC'S CAREER CENTER
COMPUTER LAB



New Beginnings 10 Year Anniversary Celebration



NEW BEGINNING'S
STAFF AND RESIDENTS



Family and Nutrition Programs



Above:
ELDERLY NUTRITION PROGRAM-
A SPIRITED CONGREGATE MEAL
PARTICIPANT

Left:
A MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERY

THE VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE
CLOTHESLINE PROJECT



Above:
THE WIC ON WHEELS
(WOW) VAN



Left:
A HEAD START CLASS

their own). A waiting list is kept for the Community Room, but since these families are in a crisis situation they do not call back if the room isn't immediately available.

Kellie is a young woman who certainly made the most of a very difficult situation. When she found herself with no other option than to enter Pathways Family Shelter with her infant son, she did so with fear and trepidation. She had been in shelter before both as a young child and as a new mother and had experienced life bouncing from friend to friend. Although entering a 14 family congregate shelter was not something she necessarily wanted to do, she knew that it was what she needed to do in order to create a safe and secure life for herself and her son. Kellie had a clear sense of exactly what she needed to do in her life in order to move toward self-sufficiency and in the almost ten months that she has lived at Pathways she has been ticking off her list of accomplishments. Like so many of our young women and men, Kellie had credit issues, legal issues, and health issues with which she needed to deal. She also knew that she needed to get a G.E.D. so that she would be able to enroll in college to pursue a career. She realized that if she was going to be able to support herself and her child she needed to further her education. While living at Pathways, Kellie has resolved her credit and legal issues and her savings are right on target. She has had much needed dental work done. Kellie secured daycare for her son, which allowed her to attend G.E.D. classes and receive her certificate in June. She is now looking forward to attending Mass Bay Community College this fall and hopes to get a degree in the medical field. Although Kellie has done an extraordinary job with her housing search efforts (above and beyond the requirements of the program), she has yet to secure permanent housing. She hasn't become discouraged because she knows she is on the right track. Her determination and hard work will eventually be rewarded. Kellie has become a more confident woman as time has passed for her at Pathways. Her confidence, her dry sense of humor and her compassion have made her someone her fellow residents look up to and admire. Kellie is successfully accomplishing the difficult balance that being a single mother requires. She is a loving and attentive mother to her delightful son. Kellie is proud of her success and rightly so. She has turned a negative situation into an extremely positive one. We at Pathways know that the best is yet to come for Kellie and her son.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The past fiscal year represents the first full year since the Section 8 Choice Voucher was frozen in Massachusetts. This has had a serious negative impact on the ability of our Housing Advocates to obtain Section 8's for their clients. Previously, 87% of our housing placements were done with Section 8 Vouchers, and without them Housing Advocates had to shift the emphasis from obtaining Section 8 as the first step in placing families to finding alternative ways to place them in permanent housing.

The Housing Search Team at SMOC switched their efforts from applying for mobile subsidies to obtaining Public Housing placements and to negotiating with landlords to lower rents for an extended period of time while the client is seeking to increase the work hours or to obtain a better paying job. During the past fiscal year, 40% of our placements were in public housing, 55% were placed in market rate apartments, and 5% with the Skinner Section 8 Choice Voucher.

The Housing Assistance Program (HAP) provides housing search services to families referred by DTA who are residing in our family shelters, Pathways, Medway and Sage House, In addition the program provides prevention services to DTA referred clients who are facing eviction or are about to be homeless. The HAP program provided housing search services to 395 families during the last year. Forty-one percent of these families were assisted in obtaining permanent housing or in having their tenancies maintained through the direct intervention of the housing advocates.

The Housing Opportunity for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) provides housing information and placement services to individuals and families living with HIV/ AIDS. The program finished the year with a total of 48 consumers. During the year the program received 26 referrals and placed 12 individuals and families into permanent housing or maintained their housing. The HOPWA program was also affected by the freezing of Section 8 vouchers. Five Tenant- Based Rental Assistance subsidies for HOPWA consumers residing in MetroWest were lost this year. Despite the difficulties encountered by the Housing Advocate in placing individuals and families, the program was successful in meeting its placement goal. All HOPWA consumers during the past fiscal year were placed in Public Housing or market rate apartments where landlords agreed to lower the rent for a determined period of time allowing the tenant to increase his or her income. The market rate placement represented about 59% of all placements while 41% were public and subsidized apartment placements. The highlight of this past fiscal year, was the addition of 4 permanent sober housing units set aside for HOPWA consumers who are recovering from addiction and substance abuse. This was a welcome addition to the thin stock of available units for consumers in the MetroWest area.

The Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC) provided a variety of services to tenants, landlords, homeless individuals and families along with individuals and families facing eviction who are not eligible for DTA services. During the past fiscal year, the HCEC program provided 1,675 tenants, landlords and advocates with information and referrals on various housing issues including but not limited to housing search, code violation, credit, loan counseling, eviction and foreclosure as well as homebuyer assistance.

A total of 45 people attended one of 4 sessions of the First-time Homebuyers classes which each consisted of four classes. Other workshops held throughout the year included; financial literacy, how to be a good tenant, how to do housing search, and how to prepare for a housing inspection.

One of the highlights of the HCEC advocacy team this past fiscal year involved foreclosure prevention. A family of 5 was able to avoid losing their home of 8 years to foreclosure. Our staff assisted the family in negotiating with the financial institution holding the mortgage to refinance the loan thereby lowering the client's monthly mortgage payment to one that is reasonable and in line with the family's earnings.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

◁Emergency Shelter for the Homeless ▷ **Transitional and Permanent Housing** ▷ **Employment Placement and Training** ▷ Substance Abuse Services ▷ **Mental Health Services** ▷ Women's Protective Services ▷ Nutrition ▷ Energy and Weatherization ▷ Services for the Elderly ▷ Day Care and Pre-School Education ▷ **Youth Services** ▷

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

The component currently has thirteen different programs funded by nine different sources that provide services to eight specific 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 are providing the individuals that we serve with an opportunity to increase their earnings/income potential and helping them to secure permanent affordable housing.

While the 2004 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.

Lisa (not her real name) came to the Career Center to participate in our Office Skills Training Program. Lisa had just been released from prison and was living at a SMOC halfway house for women recovering from chemical dependency. Lisa had a long history of trauma, drug abuse, homelessness and crime. Her mother was a prostitute and a drug addict. Lisa was sexually molested as a child, had easy access to drugs in the home and at age 12 ran away and began living on the streets. At age 38, when she came to the Career Center, she had been incarcerated 18 times. She had not completed high school and she had never held a legitimate job. She expressed her opinion that we were wasting our time trying to help her; she felt that someone like her would never be able to get a regular paying job and live a "normal" life. That was almost five years ago. Today, Lisa works at a full-time job that she obtained with the help of the Career Center. She resides in SMOC housing and lives a life free of alcohol and drugs. She "gives back" by working part-time for SMOC, counseling women who are coming out of prison and struggling with substance abuse. The impact that SMOC programs have had on Lisa's life is immeasurable. When asked what was most helpful, Lisa cites the Office Skills Training Program and the encouragement and support that she got from staff there. Most importantly, she says, "You gave me hope."

The following are Economic Development program highlights for 2004:

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 DHS 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 41 youthful offenders through this program during 2004.

Career Center: The Career Center is open to the public and provides self-serve access to Job Search resources for walk-ins. Since the state unemployment office (formerly located at 300 Howard Street) moved to a new location in Marlboro that is not accessible by public transportation, SMOC's Career Center is a valuable resource to many downtown residents. During 2004, the Career Center provided services to more than 600 individuals. (See page 21 for photograph of the Career Center.)

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 16 low-income individuals to pursue their educational goals during 2004.

Home Modification Loan Program: 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 11 individuals with disabilities during 2004.

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 un-

cessful in a traditional classroom setting. This valuable program served more than 40 students during 2004, with 9 students earning their High School Equivalency Diploma. (See page 21 for photo of graduates of the Learning Center.)

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 21 individuals during 2004.

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 1251 homeless individuals and helped 352 individuals to obtain permanent housing, 242 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 (MST) 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.

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 54 women recovering from addictions during 2004.

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 144 inmates releasing from Massachusetts correctional facilities during 2004.

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 140 people to complete 83 college classes and obtain 55 jobs during 2004.

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 sensi-

tive 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 108 women.

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 14 teen parents during 2004.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Emergency Shelter for the Homeless <> **Transitional and Permanent Housing** <> Employment Training and Placement <> Substance Abuse Services <> Mental Health Services <> Women's Protective Services <> Nutrition <> **Energy and Weatherization** <> Services for the Elderly <> Day Care and Pre-School Education <> Youth Services <>

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 26th year of operation.

An 11% cut in federal funds forced SMOC Fuel Assistance into a staffing reduction twice during heating season. Fiscal year 2004 closed, being one of the most difficult fuel seasons in recent memory. Clients faced a hard winter with benefit levels being reduced up to \$100 per household. The sagging economy produced another strong year of applicant intake.

At the close of intake, our courageous fuel staff had processed 5,200 applications with 360 of those applicant households in an emergency status. Over 4,000 households were deemed eligible and received payment. 2,500 households had an elderly or disabled family member and the program expended 1.88 million dollars to area fuel vendors.

SMOC Fuel Assistance also provided 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 expansion that SMOC's Section 8 Rental Assistance program experienced during the past decade came to a screeching halt in 2003-2004. Through directives from our funding source, all selections from the waiting list ceased and all issuance of vouchers ceased. SMOC Rental Assistance was directed to begin terminating tenancies for cause whenever possible.

Despite these roadblocks to development, SMOC Rental Assistance continued to improve and grow in small ways this year. The loosening up of the rental market produced an influx of renters to the Framingham area. At fiscal year-end we had attrited only 43 subsidies. The program closed the fiscal year at 107% leased with 1,106 units under contract. The program expended 13.4 million dollars to area landlords, an increase of 1.2 million over FY2003.

A highlight of the year was our march on the statehouse. Tenants, advocates, property owners and program administrators joined together at a public hearing to force HUD to re-think a decision that would have forced thou-

sands of subsidy holders off the program. The statehouse was filled to capacity; many attendees could not get into the building. When the dust cleared HUD had backed off on it's decision and found the funds to finance all subsidies. No one lost their Section 8 voucher.

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.

FSS demonstrated modest growth in the last quarter of FY2004 through the work of our new FSS Program Coordinator. Innovative and fresh ideas have resulted in a number of new participants. The program model is being expanded into the agency's family shelters in an effort to better educate potential Section 8 subsidy holders.

L. became a Family Self-Sufficiency client five years ago and has been a model participant from day one. During her time on FSS she improved her computer and English language skills by taking classes, maintained a full time job, and received a promotion at work. L. completed all this while raising 4 children on her own! She has completed her FSS contract and received an escrow disbursement of over \$15,000 in August 2004. With her escrow disbursement, L. hopes to pay off some credit card debt and continue preparing for her ultimate dream of buying her own home.

ENERGY SERVICES PROGRAMS

AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Emergency Shelter for the Homeless <> Transitional and Permanent Housing <> Employment Training and Placement <> Substance Abuse Services <> Mental Health Services <> Women's Protective Services <> Nutrition <> **Energy and Weatherization** <> Services for the Elderly <> Day Care and Pre-School Education <> Youth Services <>

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.

A typical client comes to us from rental or fuel assistance. Ms. K is a resident of Framingham, a mother of a baby boy and lives in a three-family house. She was about to have her utilities shut off when she applied for fuel assistance at SMOC. After qualifying for fuel assistance she was referred to SMOC's Energy Service Program Supports Manager. An energy audit was performed by one of the programs outside auditors. Among other things, the audit determined she qualified to receive a new refrigerator. The new refrigerator was shown to cut down on her electric usage and lower her monthly bill. The audit also qualified Ms. K for insulation work. This conservation effort also reduced significantly her gas usage. Not only did Ms. K benefit from these associated programs but her elderly grandmother, who was also a fuel client, lived on the third floor and was able to benefit from the program as well. (When a three-family house has at least 2 eligible clients we can do work on the whole house). In addition to these energy conservation measures we were also able to get Ms. K on the electric and gas discount rate. Ms. K is no longer in danger of having her utilities shut off. She has a nice new refrigerator, a warmer home and lower energy bills.

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 276 households annually while the HEARTWAP program provides heating system repair or replacement for as many as 25 homes. In addition, we run a refrigeration program that replaces 12 year or older refrigerators with Energy Star units and serves over 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 considerably depending on the size of the multifamily unit but on average we serve close to 750 clients a year.

FAMILY AND NUTRITION SERVICES

AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

↔ Emergency Shelter for the Homeless ↔ Transitional and Permanent Housing ↔ Employment Training and Placement ↔ Substance Abuse ↔ Mental Health ↔ **Women's Protective Services** ↔ **Nutrition** ↔ Energy and Weatherization ↔ **Services for the Elderly** ↔ **Day Care and Pre-School Education** ↔ **Youth 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 7-14 day safe-home program and a 90-day stay shelter. The 90-day shelter provides a safe home for up to five families. It is the only battered women's shelter in the Metro West Area and is one of the few handicapped accessible shelters in Massachusetts.

This year found *Voices* struggling with the effects of devastating funding cuts. Services for sexual assault survivors alone were cut at the State level by 75%. These cuts forced a reduction in staffing, not only reducing our capacity to provide direct services to clients, but also negatively impacting our outreach capabilities, which effects the entire component. In FY 2004 we were able to serve only 51 survivors of rape and sexual assault – a 67% decrease from FY2003. Our hotline calls were down by 20% to 3700 and our shelter served 113 families, including 208 children – a 25% reduction from FY2003. The bright spot was our Transition to Independent Living (TIL) program, a homeless intercept program for families who have experienced domestic violence, which remained strong and served 52 families.

Voices hosted its second annual fundraising event, *Celebrating Survival*, with guest speaker Kellie Greene. Kellie, who has been featured on TV shows such as 20/20 and Oprah, is a rape survivor, the founder of Operation Freefall and S.O.A.R. (Speaking Out About Rape) and a nationally recognized advocate for victim's rights. This memorable evening was full of wonderful food, passionate speeches and uplifting stories, all of which gave testament to our shared commitment for change and the capacity of the human spirit to overcome even the most difficult circumstances.

Voices was proud to host the Clothesline Project this year at several community events. The Clothesline Project, which honors survivors of violence, began in October of 1990 with a small display of 31 shirts on a village green in Hyannis, Massachusetts. The concept was simple – let survivors tell their story in their own unique way, using words and/or artwork to decorate shirts. Once finished, the shirts are hung on a clothesline, bearing witness to the pain of the survivors. It is the very process of designing a shirt that gives a woman a new voice with which to expose an often horrific and unspeakable experience that has dramatically altered the course of her life. Participating in this project provides a powerful step towards helping a survivor break through the shroud of silence that has surrounded her experience. (See page 22 for photo of Clothesline Project).

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. No matter what stage of life or circumstances, MetroWest Harvest Food Initiatives and the programs it supports has been providing critical nutritional support to persons of low income, children, the homeless and the elderly. MWHFI has evolved into a unique and crucial conduit through which all participating programs collaborate to ensure that food is distributed efficiently and resourcefully. The various programs seek to maximize accessibility and availability of food to those in need.

Elderly Nutrition Program (Meals on Wheels): On July 14, 1965 the Older Americans Act (OAA) was signed into law by President Johnson. The OAA established the primary vehicle for organizing and delivering community based services at the state level to the elderly. In 1973 an amendment to the OAA established a major service component – the national nutrition program for the elderly. Nutrition services are provided under Title IIIC of the Older Americans Act. There are two types of services: Congregate Meals and Home Delivered Meals. All meals comply with strict dietary guidelines and must provide a minimum of 33% of the recommended dietary allowances for each meal served. There is substantial volunteer support to maintain this program. (See page 22 for photo of home delivered meal)

In the past year the Elderly Nutrition Program has provided 135,395 home delivered and congregate meals to over 2500 individuals. In addition we have provided nutritional education to the seniors we serve through four

newsletters and two Nutritional Education Seminars run by our registered dietitian. It is important to recognize that while we do provide a nutritious meal we also offer the priceless gift of a daily visit, smile and a chat to an often-lonely elder who may have no other human contact throughout the day. As mentioned earlier we rely heavily on volunteers to complete our mission. All volunteers and staff are dedicated to the people they serve and often go above and beyond the delivery of a meal. We are extremely fortunate to have such dedicated staff.

Because of our grant writing successes we have been able to accomplish several program goals. We have upgraded delivery equipment throughout our sites. We have nearly completed a video presentation to be used in marketing and recruiting. We are especially excited about our Nutritional Supplementation Program, which now provides daily nutritional supplements to over 50 at-risk seniors. One such recipient who weighed in at a mere 80 pounds prior to starting the supplementation program gleefully informed her Meals on Wheels driver that she had gained almost ten pounds and was feeling much stronger.

We exceeded our goals in providing Farmer's Market Produce to homebound elders by delivering to seven communities. In fact, we increased the number of individuals who were able to participate in the homebound program significantly through a wholesale purchasing arrangement worked out with a local farmer.

All of our staff have successfully completed their annual State Sanitation training and certification including their annual Chokesaver training. We continue to recruit volunteers and have had the great pleasure to work with many wonderful and dedicated individuals. We had a wonderful Volunteer Recognition Event with a great turnout. Thank you to all the staff who helped put together such a fun, warm and welcoming event.

We look forward to meeting the challenges of the upcoming year.

MetroWest Harvest Food Recovery Program: The MetroWest Harvest Program is the brainchild of the 1989 MetroWest Leadership Academy, who, when given the task of creating a community program decided to "drive out hunger". MetroWest Harvest brings quality-donated foods and prepared meals to shelters and food pantries where they are distributed.

The Harvest program has had another very 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 six Le Chef programs, an expansion over last year, one of which involved the seventh grade students at the Framingham Charter School who with the help of Chef Larry Bravernick of Sodexo prepared 150 meals in the Framingham Civic League's kitchen. The meals were delivered with assistance from parents to several local homeless shelters. This continues to be a wonderfully collaborative program in which everyone benefits. We hope to bring the program to other youth groups in the area.

One of the greatest moments of this year has to be the purchase of a "Hot-Shot" delivery vehicle. This van is a combined hot/cold van that provides great flexibility and can serve the dual purpose of hot Meals on Wheels delivery and for transporting perishable food donated to MetroWest Harvest. The van became a reality due to the extraordinary efforts of one extraordinary volunteer, Andy Toorock, who managed to raise the funds necessary to purchase the van. We extend our heartfelt thanks to a very generous anonymous donor, Framingham Cooperative Bank, Project Bread, MetroWest Daily News, Citizen's Bank and most especially to Mr. Andy Toorock and his determination and dedication to MetroWest Harvest's mission.

Greater Boston Food Bank Drop Site: The Greater Boston Food Bank lost the Drop Site at the Paramount Harley Davidson in July due to space demands on the part of the host organization. We continue to search for a replacement site in MetroWest to service the 28 food pantries that participated in the program.

Prior to July, the drop site serviced 28-30 pantries both frozen and non-perishable food. Each month there were two truckloads of food delivered averaging over 32,000 pounds of food to area pantries. Currently the Food Bank has

reserved one day each month to accommodate the loss of a local drop at the Boston Warehouse.

Hope Pantry for Kids: HOPE continues to experience a very high demand in the number of clients being served on a monthly basis. Our most recent data show that we are feeding 400 families per month (more than 800 individuals) with approximately 46 new clients each month. In all, we have delivered over 20,800 bags of groceries. In the spirit of collaboration we have brought the Framingham Resource Center in as partner to the Pantry. In the event of volunteer shortages at the pantry the Resource Center is able to provide occasional coverage. Other collaborative efforts have been our work with Framingham Post Detox to assist in food acquisition. In addition, The MetroWest Harvest Program has made our MassCan Truck available for three additional Greater Boston Food Bank purchases. We were especially pleased with the very successful Mail Carrier's Drive that alone brought in enough food to sustain the food pantry for two months. We are waiting for a response to a DHCD grant where we proposed food pantry supplementation as well as two major "off-season" food drives, both of which will offset seasonal shortages.

Summer Food Service Program: We managed the Summer Food Service Program for the seventh year on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Education and Department of Agriculture. This year we operated daily at three locations and served over 9102 children. We had a strong program under the leadership of Chris Hanna at the Fuller Middle School kitchen.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTERS

In 1985/1986, SMOC opened two Resource Centers, one in Framingham and the other in Marlboro. The Resource Centers were conceived of as instruments/focus points where SMOC could express and maintain its role as an advocate, and be able to take advocacy stances on issues affecting low-income people. The initial focus of both Centers was on housing. The agency had completed a Strategic Plan in 1985 which showed that housing and housing costs were the number one issue facing economically disadvantaged residents. The apartment complexes in the region that had been deemed "affordable" were being converted to condominiums by real estate speculators. Additionally, the cost of housing was rising dramatically.

The Framingham Center got very involved with condominium conversion projects and tenant assistance programs. The Marlboro Center was involved in a grassroots attempt to establish rent control in Marlboro. Over time SMOC developed extensive housing programs independent of the Resource Centers. However the two Centers still exist and remain dedicated to community organizing, community education and multicultural outreach and advocacy to meet the basic needs of low-income people in the Metrowest. Operating as multi-service centers and a door to SMOC's many social services, they provide information and referral through assistance to newcomers and immigrants, access to health care, the MetroWest Helpline, tax preparation services, and partnerships with state and local officials as well as community and religious organizations.

Newcomer Assistance and Outreach Projects: Unfortunately, this year was marked by conservative and hostile factions in Framingham attacking immigrant residents of Framingham in the local papers, on e-mail networks and at town meetings. The FRC's Newcomer Assistance and Outreach Projects responded and were active in community education and organizing this year. The projects helped Town officials and State Representatives organize a Welcoming Immigrant group and to pass a proclamation in the Town of Framingham welcoming all immigrants to the community.

Organization of Portuguese Immigrants: The Organization of Portuguese Immigrants program provided 681 newcomers and other residents of the Marlborough/Hudson area, primarily Portuguese speakers, with translation serv-

ices, assistance in meeting basic needs, information and referral services and assistance with assimilation to this country. The program also provided medical translation at Marlborough Hospital and served 252 clients last year. Written and oral translation services were also provided at a free medical clinic in Marlborough.

Brazilian Outreach Project: The Brazilian Outreach Project assisted over 60 Brazilian residents of Framingham with case management and advocacy services and information and referral to community organizations. Services needed were primarily access to health care, financial assistance, food pantry referrals, redressing inadequate/unsanitary housing and child care assistance. Portuguese speaking staff from across the agency helped meet the growing needs of this community. The project helped many families with children who were born in the United States maximize benefits.

Russian Outreach Project: The Russian Outreach Project assisted 518 immigrants in the region enhance their access to food pantries and clothing, affordable housing, translation assistance and basic help with assimilation. The Project continues to assist the Elderly Nutrition Program distribute Farmer's Market coupons for fresh, local produce. The Project, in collaboration with Jewish Family Services, also organized the community to defend against cuts in state benefits for immigrants.

Health Care Access Projects: Last year saw the partial restoration of health care benefits for homeless single adults after a 6-month disruption that resulted in soaring numbers of homeless people at local emergency rooms and many without access to needed prescription drugs. However, the new program left many homeless people still uninsured due to more restrictive eligibility requirements. The Health Care Access Project helped to insure over one hundred homeless individuals in Mass Health. The project has been very successful in obtaining higher benefit levels of health care for those homeless people who are disabled by medical or mental health conditions. In March of this year, the new federally funded Framingham Community Health Center opened its doors after community collaboration lead by the MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation with Great Brook Valley Health Center. Located at the hospital's former Southside clinic until a new building can be built, the health center has already improved access to care for everyone in our community.

Family and Friends for Life Program: Completing its first year in operation, the Family and Friends for Life Program received 28 requests for mentors and matched 18 low income people in SMOC programs with mentors of the Greater Framingham Community Church. This innovative program provides 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. Mentors have received extensive training to prepare them for challenges in the areas of substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence and sexual assault and boundary setting to name a few. Both the Church and SMOC have gained mutual understanding about each other's organization, resources and importance in the community in meeting the needs of low income people.

MetroWest Helpline: The MetroWest Helpline helped 2042 callers access area resources and services. The great majority of calls were for food pantry referrals, emergency assistance, financial assistance, parenting support, legal services, mental health and childcare/head start. The Resource Centers continue to operate financial assistance and private donation programs such as emergency funds and loan programs to prevent homelessness, the Back to School and Holiday Drives as well as a free tax preparation service in collaboration with AARP. 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 was created as a two-year pilot program in 1972 by an amendment to the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 and was made permanent in 1975. WIC was established during a time of growing public concern about malnutrition among low-income mothers and children. WIC services were designed to deliver early nutrition and health intervention during critical times of growth and development to prevent future medical and developmental problems. Strong congressional support, stimulated by various evaluations that found WIC to have high rates of return for its investment, resulted in increased funding for WIC. SMOC started administering the WIC Program in the early 1980s. Back then, we served less than 400 participants. Today, we are serving over 3,000 participants at five permanent locations throughout MetroWest and at seven mobile locations with our WIC on Wheels medical van. Over the years, WIC has become very accessible to all types of families. We increased the number of WIC offices, offered evening and weekend hours, simplified the application process, offered a wider variety of foods to choose from and have agreements with grocery stores and pharmacies in most every community so that shopping with WIC checks is easy and convenient.

During the past year, WIC provided nutrition education and counseling, referrals and WIC checks for free, nutritious foods and infant formula to over 1,000 pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to 5 years old every month. These numbers exceeded our assigned caseload yet we were able to provide services to all who applied and were eligible despite being short-staffed for most of the year.

We increased the percentage of prenatal women who enrolled on WIC early in their pregnancy. Early enrollment helps reduce the incidence of premature births and infant mortality and reduces the rate of low and very low birth weight.

A pregnant teen enrolled on WIC and was found to be losing weight. With the guidance of the WIC Nutritionist and the WIC checks she received for \$50.00 of healthy groceries per month, she was able to gain weight. Ultimately, she had a full-term, healthy weight infant.

We increased the percentage of women enrolled on WIC who initiate breastfeeding. This helps infants get a healthier start in life.

Our Senior Nutritionist hosted a weekly cable television wellness program called 'The Be Well Show'. Through this medium she educated the Framingham community on health and safety issues and about many SMOC programs.

One of our nutritionists conducted a SMOC Community Seminar Series talk on childhood obesity at Plymouth Church in Framingham. Her presentation was extremely interesting, informative and timely; childhood obesity is increasing at an alarming rate and poses a serious health threat to our communities.

A Mom who enrolled her child in WIC was concerned about her child being overweight. Our WIC nutritionist helped Mom by giving her tips on smart food shopping, healthy eating, recipes and exercise. Ultimately, her child stopped gaining weight at such a fast rate and is now in the normal weight for height percentile.

Our WIC on Wheels (WOW) van got back on the road and increased client participation throughout the area. Our new Site Coordinator has organized the van, made some major improvements and conducted a significant amount of outreach to local communities. (See page 22 for photograph of WOW Van.)

CHILD CARE AND HEAD START SERVICES

Child Care and Head Start provided services during the past year to approximately 1,005 children in the communities of Framingham, Marlboro, Natick, Ashland, Hudson, Holliston, Milford, Northbridge, and Grafton. We continued to operate 11 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. (See photo of Head Start Class on page 22).

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.

Head Start is one of SMOC's original programs and our Child Care programs were begun soon after. They remain a critically important link in SMOC's Continuum of Care, making it possible for low-income families to pursue employment and education activities and helping to break the cycle of poverty by giving children a "Head Start" in their life-time of education. After many years of growth and expansion, the last few years (due to state and federal funding problems) have been a time of maintenance and we have worked hard to keep our current level of services and quality while faced with that reality. While recent news on the state level has been hopeful with bipartisan support being expressed for the future of early education, support at the federal level (Head Start) will undoubtedly be determined by the outcome of the coming election.

In recent years an increased emphasis has been placed on improving curriculum (primarily in supporting emerging literacy) and the overall quality of early education programs. There have been numerous initiatives in this regard sponsored by the Head Start Bureau, the Massachusetts Department of Education and the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services. This renewed emphasis on quality from these agencies has produced many positive changes in early education services; however this fragmented, multi-agency approach has also placed increased demands on provider agencies who must respond to the different demands of each agency. The coming years will undoubtedly remain both challenging and rewarding ones.

A WORK IN PROGRESS PEOPLE IN PERIL AFFILIATES WITH SMOC

SMOC has always been "a work in progress" as its leadership responded to new opportunities to fulfill its mandate of advocating for and meeting the needs of low-income people. The merger during the past year with the People in Peril (PIP) program located in Worcester is a notable example of SMOC stepping up to new challenges, even those fraught with some difficulties.

On April 6, 2004, PIP became an affiliate organization of SMOC. The affiliation was the culmination of a process that began in the summer of 2003, initiated by a luncheon conversation between Jim Cuddy, Executive

Director of SMOC, and Arthur “Bud” Brousseau, Executive Director of PIP. Over the course of the next eight months, PIP Board members visited SMOC programs, followed by a meeting of PIP Board President Brian Chandley with his counterpart, SMOC Board President Bruce Hulme. PIP and SMOC staff worked together to create an operational plan for the affiliation, and lawyers for both organizations drafted legal documents which reflected the consensus reached by members of both organizations.

The Affiliation Agreement called for the PIP Board of Directors to become an Advisory Board. In addition, it called for three members of the current PIP Board to join the SMOC Board of Directors, and for one of the three to join the SMOC Executive Committee. As part of the agreement, Ken Candito, Brian Chandley and Carl McCarthy joined the SMOC Board and Brian Chanley was also appointed to the SMOC Executive Committee. It was also agreed that Bud Brousseau would continue to serve as the Executive Directory of PIP, and that he would report directly to Jim Cuddy.

The major motivation behind the affiliation was the potential positive impact on the lives of PIP’s homeless guests through the additional resources that would be made available to PIP following affiliation. The PIP Board believed that SMOC’s infrastructure would result in a more robust, substantial program for PIP’s existing guests. They also believed that, through affiliation, more transitional and permanent housing options would be made available for the guests of PIP. As Bud Brousseau stated, “the solution to homelessness is housing, and SMOC has established a continuum of housing options and possibilities for formerly homeless single adults. Their housing continuum includes SRO’s, Sober Housing residences, and housing for sub-populations such as women and veterans, and folks who suffer from co-occurring or dual- diagnoses.”

Bruce Hulme of the SMOC Board welcomed the PIP organization into the SMOC family. He recognized that the task confronting the two organizations would be difficult, but that it was a challenge that can be met. “Through the programs created by our combined organizations, and the housing developed by our organization, we can offer the opportunity for a better life for homeless adults.”

AWARDS

FREDERICK RUBIN AWARD SMOC BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Jim Shay

Each year, SMOC recognizes one Board Member for her or his commitment to the agency’s mandate to advocate for and meet the needs of disadvantaged people. The award is named after the late Frederick Rubin, a dedicated and devoted former Board Member and MetroWest community leader.

This year, The Board of Directors honors Jim Shay as the Frederick Rubin Award winner for Board Member of the Year. Jim joined the Board in 2001 representing the town of Southboro. Prior to joining the Board, Jim worked for the agency as Director of Masscan, a program designed to help people develop employable skills. Since joining the Board, Jim has continually contributed his efforts to various Board and agency projects such as the Outreach Committee, the Voices against Violence Fund Raiser and the Golf Tournament Fund Raiser. Much to the delight of SMOC staff and friends, Jim recently arranged for a memorable visit to SMOC by Sargent Shriver, the first Director of the War on Poverty. Jim’s talents, thoughtfulness and commitment were recently recognized by his appointment to the Board’s Executive Committee.

SMOC EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS OF THE YEAR

Each year SMOC solicits nominations from throughout the agency for employees and managers of the year. It is both moving and gratifying to read the many nominating statements that are submitted. Each employee and manager nominated deserves the award. It is difficult to choose!

EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

Christana Olabi Abe and Mary Shanahan

For over eight years, Christana Abe has dedicated her efforts to the families and especially the children of Sage House. Chris uses her skills to model appropriate behavior for parents and uses every opportunity she can find for a “teachable moment.” When she takes clients grocery shopping she uses the occasion to teach about bargain shopping and the planning of nutritious meals. Chris treats each of the children as if they were her own. As one co-worker states, “She has a magical way with children.” Chris is also committed to her own development. She is enrolled in night school at Fisher College in North Attleboro while studying Early Childhood Education. Since coming to Sage, Chris has become a citizen of the United States and while she found it difficult, studied for and got her driver’s license! SMOC is honored to count Chris among its valued employees.

Mary Shanahan is the Sober Housing Coordinator. She has been with SMOC since 1996. Mary’s co-workers describe her as someone who believes in what she is doing. She is committed to the Sober Housing Program and wants the folks in the program to succeed. She will work with everyone and anyone if she believes her efforts will benefit clients and contribute to stabilizing their housing. Mary has superb communications skills which makes her especially effective at weekly sober house meetings where she talks with residents about how things are going and what unresolved issues they are facing. Because of her good working relationships with outside resources, she is usually able to refer clients to the kind of help they need. Mary is supportive of clients but also of SMOC, itself. She affirms the opportunities the Sober Housing Program provides people “to get sober and learn how to live sober” and encourages people to take advantage of them. Employees throughout SMOC value and cherish Mary as a co-worker.

MANAGERS OF THE YEAR

Teresa Morse and Victor Ortiz

Teresa Morse is the Senior Nutritionist for SMOC’s WIC program. She has been with the program for over ten years. Teresa is described by her Supervisor as bringing a positive management style to her work as well as being flexible and adaptable, creative, an excellent problem solver, a good listener, a non-procrastinator, organized and a great communicator and motivator. Her co-workers also know her as spirited, spontaneous and the possessor of a marvelous sense of humor. During the past year, Teresa has distinguished herself as the creator and moderator of the “Be Well Show”, a wellness show on Framingham cable TV. She has recently agreed to be the moderator of a videotape series featuring various SMOC programs, which is being developed by the SMOC Board/Staff Outreach Committee. SMOC is grateful for the commitment of talented employees like Teresa.

Victor Ortiz is the Director of Residential Facilities. He has been an extremely dedicated SMOC employee for six years with superb organizational skills. He has organized the once fragmented building inspection process, keeping a binder on each property that contains all pertinent information. This critical information is used by Victor but also by numerous Housing Managers to address issues that maybe raised by the permitting department of the towns and cities that contain SMOC properties. Along with organizational skills, Victor brings an unrelenting willingness to help

out where and in whatever way he is needed. When eight Scattered Site clients moved out during the same month, he worked closely with program staff to insure that furniture moves were coordinated. In such situations, rather than just directing others, Victor was always found moving as much furniture as anyone on the team. Victor's commitment and his ever-cordial greetings are valued jewels in the SMOC family.

ISABEL HARRISON VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR AWARD

Olga Forbes and Andy Toorock

This year, for the first time, SMOC is presenting two Volunteers of the Year Awards. The awards are named after Isabel Harrison, longtime Board member and until recently Vice President of the Board. As with the employees and managers of the year, nominations were solicited from throughout the agency. Also, as with the employees and managers, it was difficult to choose among the many deserving nominees.

Olga Forbes provides the administrative and operational support for the Marlboro Meals on Wheels Program. Her administrative skills allow the site and driver staff to focus on client service without having to concern themselves with organizational detail. Olga began as a teamed volunteer with her husband, Charlie. The two were the backbone of the program for twenty years and provided wonderful support to a former site manager, Gail Dwyer, during her final months of struggle with cancer. Charlie and Olga increased their support to Gail, which allowed her to continue work, and feel useful, during her final months. Charlie died last year. After a short respite, Olga returned to work with the seniors of Marlboro and SMOC. SMOC is grateful for and celebrates Olga and Charlie's many years of service to SMOC.

Andy Toorock has been committed to the mission of MetroWest Harvest for four years. He became a volunteer with the program after hearing David McCloskey's talk at a Framingham Rotary luncheon. Since that encounter Andy has been "on call" to pick up and deliver donated food to shelters in Framingham, Natick, Ashland and Hopkinton. He has transported such large quantities of food to a variety of shelters that he knows most of the Directors and is familiar with the likes and dislikes of the clients. Last year Andy asked how MetroWest Harvest would use a major donation if he could convince some friends to make it. When told that Harvest needed a HotShot Van at a cost of \$20-\$30K, he made it happen within one short year. The van opens up all kinds of possibilities to the Harvest and the Meals on Wheels program. Harvest and SMOC are forever in debt to Andy for his stellar contributions as a volunteer.

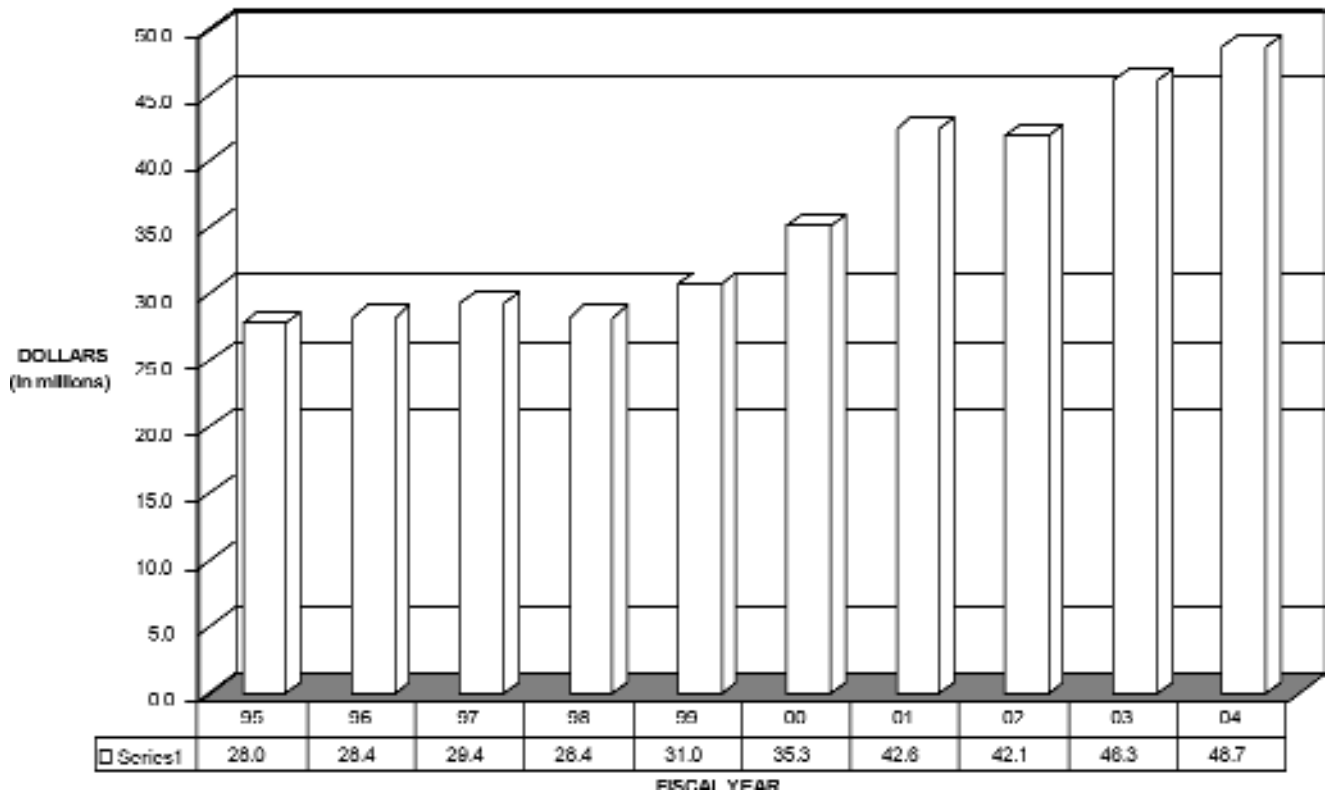
SMOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A thirty member Board of Directors governs SMOC. One-third of the members are representatives of the low-income population in the service area. Another third are elected officials from each of the communities in the area or their appointed representatives. The remaining third are representatives of selected private organizations in the service area such as the NAACP, the Chamber of Commerce, and Clergy Associations. The Board holds ten meetings a year. An eight-member Executive/Finance Committee appointed by the Board meets regularly between scheduled monthly Board meetings.

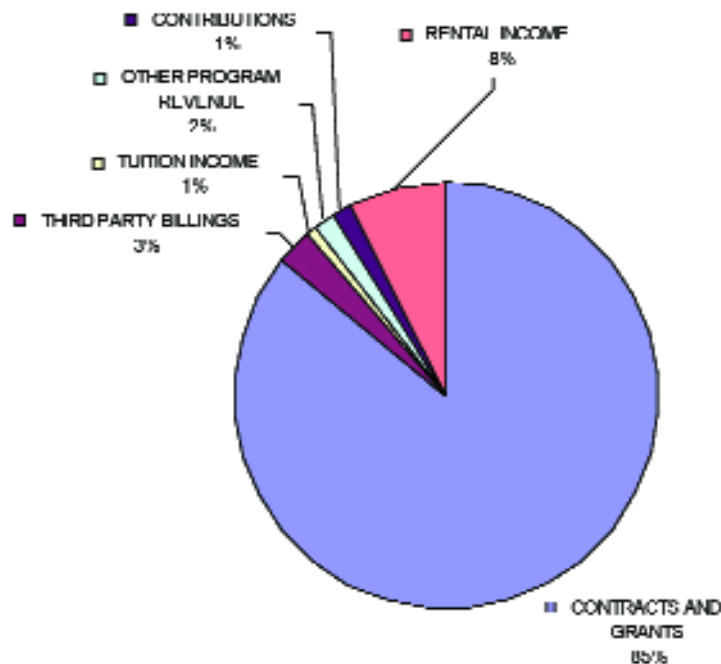
Bruce Hulme, President
Jeffrey Fishman, Vice President
Paul Prior, Treasurer
James Hanrahan, Clerk

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, Harry Seruleneck, Jim Shay, Pamula Zicko

SMOC REVENUE

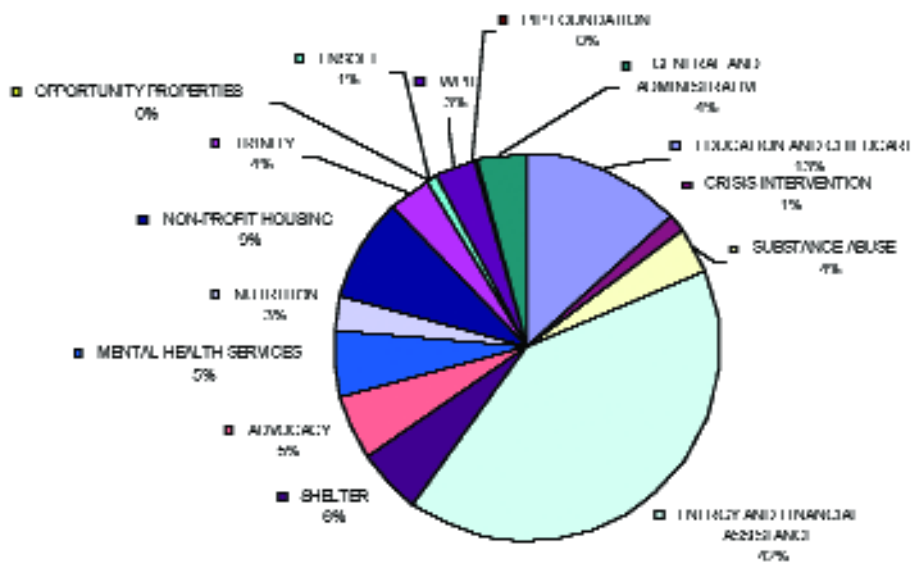


FY'04 REVENUES



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|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| CONTRACTS AND GRANTS | THIRD PARTY BILLINGS | TUITION INCOME |
| OTHER PROGRAM REVENUE | CONTRIBUTIONS | RENTAL INCOME |

FY'04 EXPENSES



- | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE | CRISIS INTERVENTION | SUBSTANCE ABUSE |
| ENERGY AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE | SHELTER | ADVOCACY |
| MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES | NUTRITION | NON-PROFIT HOUSING |
| TRINITY | OPPORTUNITY PROPERTIES | ENSOFT |
| WPIP | PIP FOUNDATION | COMMERCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE |