

Homelessness Collaborative in Broward is Focused on Housing Individuals and Families from Former Encampment

- *Permanent housing is ahead for 80 previously unsheltered homeless –*



The Homelessness Collaborative in Broward reached a major milestone Thursday when the last individuals and families remaining in the downtown Fort Lauderdale encampment voluntarily moved out along with their pets and belongings, the first step in their journey towards realization of *A Home for the Holidays*.

- 80 individuals left the encampment.
- All 41 tents were removed with owner approval.
- Every pre-identified resident of the encampment who wanted services was offered services.
- Three individuals were reunited with family members in Illinois, Texas and Oregon.
- 28 households are eligible for **Rapid Rehousing** units. Rapid rehousing helps people obtain housing quickly, without preconditions such as employment, income or sobriety, and allows them to increase self-sufficiency by providing short-term rental assistance and supportive services to get people back on their feet.
- 26 households are eligible for **Permanent Supportive Housing**. Permanent supportive housing promotes independent living with ongoing financial assistance and connections to community-based healthcare, treatment and employment services.
- Eight individuals and two families were placed in shelters and will continue to work with case managers on permanent housing solutions.
- Individuals and families will begin to be placed in their new homes on Monday, December 3. Apartments are being furnished through the generosity of City Furniture.

These successes were the result of adopting the nationally recognized best practice “housing first” approach to assisting individuals experiencing homelessness. Months of work and planning by more than 40 public and private partners went into the work of the Collaborative, which was founded by Broward County, the City of Fort Lauderdale, United Way of Broward County, the Broward Business Council on Homelessness and the Broward Homeless Continuum of Care.

United Way of Broward County and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance also founded the Broward Business Council on Homelessness, which allocated and raised millions of dollars in funding from a variety of businesses and not-for-profit organizations. Early on, AutoNation and Operation Lift Hope each contributed up to \$300,000 to the Council, and challenged others in the business community to match that amount. [View Business Council Contributors](#)

The Broward County Board of County Commissioners allocated \$1.2 million and the City of Fort Lauderdale Commission allocated \$800,00 in new funding for this effort.

“The collaboration between Broward County, the City of Fort Lauderdale, and the private sector represents the future of effective governance – one that emphasizes collaboration, empathy, and creative problem solving. This is a landmark achievement which will lay the foundation for future efforts to address homelessness. Broward County should be proud of this achievement,” said Broward County Mayor **Mark Bogen**.

“I am so proud that this collaborative effort has produced such quick and humane results,” said Fort Lauderdale Mayor **Dean Trantalis**. “The encampment at the library had represented our failure to adequately address homelessness. Now, the plaza illustrates what we can do when we work together. We provided a helping hand to the homeless who lived there – finding housing for them and setting them up with needed social services. We need to press ahead and use this as a model for ending homelessness throughout our community.”

“The initiative follows the national best practice ‘Housing First’ model, a humane and compassionate approach that prioritizes getting unsheltered homeless individuals and families into stable housing with the supportive services necessary to ensure long-term success. Homelessness is a humanitarian crisis and I’m proud that our community recognizes its moral obligation to help,” Broward Commissioner **Nan Rich**, who serves as Chair of the Broward Homeless Continuum of Care Board.

“Helping so many people get back on their feet and on a path to housing and stability is an epic achievement for our community, done with dignity and humanity. AutoNation is grateful for the efforts of everyone involved and tremendously proud to be part of this initiative to end homelessness,” said **Mike Jackson**, AutoNation Chairman, CEO & President, and Co-Chair of the Broward Business Council on Homelessness.

“Our success is the result of months of planning and millions of dollars contributed by numerous public and private partners who led by taking action and are driven by their caring hearts. We look forward to helping even more people throughout our community in the months ahead,” said **James Donnelly**, CEO of the Castle Group and Co-Chair of the Broward Business Council on Homelessness.

“We are incredibly impressed with the work of the collaborative team to quickly and safely put residents of the encampment on a path to stable permanent housing. It’s so inspiring what can be accomplished when an entire community comes together to tackle a complex social issue,” said **Kathleen Cannon**, CEO of United Way of Broward County.

Bob Swindell, CEO of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, said, “We are humbled to be part of this effort and owe a debt of gratitude to the business community for stepping up to lead and be the catalyst that brought new attention and much needed resources to assisting individuals experiencing homelessness. Though there is much work left to be done, our community can be proud.”

Background

The [Homelessness Collaborative in Broward](#), a coalition of county and city government, law enforcement, not-for-profit, faith-based and business leaders, was formed in April 2018, united in their desire to end homelessness in Broward County as we know it, beginning with the downtown encampment. Members created a comprehensive plan for helping individuals in the encampment find a path to safe, stable, permanent housing, with supportive services as needed. For many weeks, professional outreach teams visited with those in the encampment, assessing their needs and identifying resources required to meet them.

- On Monday, November 26, the Collaborative announced the start of the initiative with a [news conference](#), and began to implement its plan. In the first day, 18 individuals experiencing homelessness left the encampment voluntarily, and nine tents were taken down with owner consent. By 4 p.m. Thursday, November 29, all 41 of the tents had been taken down and all 80 individuals relocated temporarily to nearby motels while individual housing plans were being finalized.
- Four dogs and two cats belonging to individuals in the encampment were given rabies vaccinations, wellness checks and microchips so the pets could be safely housed with their owners. Owners were also given a supply of pet food, collars and leashes.

Moving Forward

As Donnelly suggests, while the closure of the encampment is an important milestone, it is by no means the final chapter in this story.

- Housing teams continue to move clients forward in the path to permanent housing. Outreach teams continue to address the needs not only of those who formerly stayed in the encampment, but also those who were not previously identified as residents of the encampment, who came to the encampment seeking services, **and** those experiencing homelessness in Broward County every day. There are at least 2,300 individuals experiencing homelessness in Broward County, according to the January 2018 Point-in-Time count.
- Anyone experiencing homelessness encountered at the encampment during this process that has made themselves known to staff has either been accepted into the Broward Homeless Continuum of Care system for the first time, or their client histories have been updated for their most current needs.

- Anyone experiencing homelessness in Broward County is urged to call the Homeless Helpline at 954-563-HELP (4357) to learn about services available through the Broward Homeless Continuum of Care. The Continuum of Care is funded by the Broward County Commission, who has previously allocated \$13.8 million in county, state and federal funds toward home prevention services, and \$23 million in county and federal funds in homeless intervention services, in addition to \$1.2 million provided for the encampment project specifically.

How You Can Help

- Companies and individuals can donate, and landlords can sign up to assist at UnitedWeEndHomelessness.org or by calling 954-462-4850.
- Individuals, families and community organizations wishing to participate in collaborative efforts to end homelessness are encouraged to call 954-357-6101 or email AWayHome@Broward.org.
- For more information on the Homelessness Collaborative in Broward, visit Broward.org/EndHomelessness.
- You can also follow us on social media at Twitter, Facebook or Instagram at BCHomelessness.

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