



Going Places Summer 2015



A League of Their Own

PLACES celebrated another successful bowling season during an awards banquet May 7 at Kohler Catering in Kettering. Participating this year were 17 teams consisting of 49 residents, clients and tenants; seven alternates; and 14 staff. Here are the winning teams:

- » Gold: Tangy Court 1
- » Silver: SLP 1
- » Bronze: Gascho Gardens 1

PLACES, Inc.

11 W. Monument Ave., 7th Floor
Dayton, OH 45402
(937) 461-4300
www.placesinc.org

Homelessness, Mental Illness and Housing First What You May Not Know

Stacey Coleman is the facility manager at Imperial Court in Vandalia, one of four Housing First facilities operated by PLACES. Here, 12 formerly homeless adults diagnosed with mental health disorders live independently in furnished apartments. Thanks to PLACES, these individuals receive permanent housing and onsite supportive services, just like the 26 tenants living in the other three PLACES Housing First facilities. We asked Stacey to share her thoughts about homelessness, mental illness and how PLACES helps.



What challenges face tenants?

Most have been homeless for a long time: maybe 12 months or longer over three or four years. Besides substance abuse and mental health issues, they tend to have an abundance of unaddressed health issues – like diabetes, chronic pain and lack of vision and dental care – which can severely impact their mental health.

How do physical health problems affect mental health problems?

Think about it: If you're sick all the time and can't get to a doctor, you get angry and

continued on page 2...



Serena is a tenant at Imperial Court in Vandalia, a PLACES Housing First facility.

Housing First FAQs

What is Housing First?

Housing First is an approach to providing permanent supportive housing often used to help chronically homeless individuals. Ending chronic homelessness is a goal for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and our local Continuum of Care, the Homeless Solutions Policy Board.

Whom does Housing First serve?

Like all of HUD's permanent supportive housing programs for homeless persons,

Housing First serves people who are disabled. This includes those who are seriously mentally ill; many also have chronic problems with alcohol or drugs.

How does Housing First work?

First, participants move quickly into safe and affordable housing.

Then they can choose to receive intensive supportive services so they can maintain stable housing, improve their overall condition and live as independently as possible.

continued on page 3...



In Memoriam

Teresa Davis, 62, a PLACES residential adviser at Marty’s House from 2001–2012, passed away March 24 after a long battle with breast cancer. “She loved to take the residents to Trader’s World and jazz concerts downtown,” said Tracey Jones, residential service coordinator. “She looked forward to the picnics and bowling and was involved in the PLACES Heart and Home Legacy Society committee. We are going to miss her greatly.”

9 on Staff Receive Awards Totaling 90 Years of Service

Congratulations to PLACES staff members receiving service awards during the All-Staff Meeting May 29:

25 years: Lisa Butler

15 years: Jackie Williams, Wilma Woodfork

10 years: Julie Caskey

5 years: Penney Kramer, Saundra Ramey, Will Ramey, Mtesa Samb, Tia Young

What You May Not Know

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depressed; you think nobody cares about you, so you’re not motivated to do anything.

How do tenants change?

We have a new tenant with significant mobility issues. Now she has a walker, a cane and handrails in her bathroom so she can move around safely. There’s a wheelchair coming for a ramp that’s being installed so she can access the building. We made sure the right things were in place for her.

She used to keep to herself because she felt lost and alone; no one paid attention to her when she was on the streets. But since she has a home health aide and a visiting nurse and has addressed her health issues, now she’s much more open and talkative; she even participates in activities. She finally has people here to listen, and that’s her lifeline: She knows people actually care.

Describe a tenant’s first day here.

We help them move any personal belongings and then take them shopping to buy towels, bed linens and groceries. We also give them a welcome basket – with personal products like soap, shampoo and toilet paper – and it’s like gold to them.

Most tenants come in very quiet, observing and checking things out, but others are very excited. Like anyone experiencing something new, there’s always a bit of an adjustment.

What happens next?

Once they’re housed, we can help them navigate the social services system so they can get their basic needs met, like food and health care, and then work on life skills, education or employment. But our services aren’t mandated or required; they’re truly voluntary, so even if you don’t participate, your housing won’t change. However, once people have a safe place to go – a roof over their head, a bed, electricity, running water – they often start to branch out and move on with their life.



Kat, Susan and Sandra, neighbors at Tangy Court in Harrison Twp., one of four PLACES Housing First facilities, work together to beautify their home.

How do some move forward?

Well, one tenant came here very angry and resistant to change; she wasn’t motivated to do much of anything. But over time, she came up with goals on her own; she went to school and became a nursing assistant. The PLACES case manager helped her with job skills training through the Montgomery County Job Center. She finally landed a job earlier this year and is doing very well.

If a tenant keeps refusing services, how do you respond?

We understand and respect that – but we still offer. One tenant doesn’t want assistance; he’s eligible for income and medical benefits but has no desire to apply. He uses the food pantries, but that’s about it. We never judge; we say, “When you’re ready, we’re here to help.” Since this is independent housing, tenants can do what they want as long as they follow the rules PLACES has and abide by the lease.

Rules?

Yes – and we talk about those during our monthly tenant meetings. We might review our nonsmoking policy inside the units, how to put in a maintenance request or how to reserve the barbecue grill. Yesterday we met at Golden Corral to discuss our end-of-summer activity; they’re deciding between a Dayton Dragons game, Kings Island,

Safety First

Residents at two PLACES Adult Care Facilities – Randolph House and Marty’s House – are enjoying several home improvements thanks to \$13,100 in funding from the Residential State Supplement (RSS) Quality Payment program through the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

“RSS Quality Payments are made to enhance the quality of care of the living environment for all residents,” said Tracey Jones, PLACES residential service coordinator. “Both areas were in dire need of repair, and the improvements made them safer for our residents.”



Marty’s House residents now have a newly repaired asphalt driveway.



Randolph House residents now have a new sidewalk and porch at the front door.

Newport Aquarium or the Cincinnati Zoo. We vote to keep things democratic!

What’s the biggest hurdle you help tenants overcome?

The biggest is developing social skills. A lot of them are used to being alone, but here they start to enjoy a sense of community. I’ve seen them help each other out; one

tenant may say, “Don’t forget signup day at the pantry,” or “If your food stamps didn’t come yet, you can have some of my food.” Neighborly things like that. So they’re making friends. In most cases, it’s the first time anyone has ever shown them any kind of support. □

Housing First FAQs

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Tenants sign leases that confer the full rights, responsibilities and legal protections under federal, state and local housing laws.

Why is Housing First unique?

To be housed, individuals have no prerequisites such as sobriety, participation in mental health or alcohol and other drug treatment programs, or a clean criminal history; even people with low or no income, poor rental histories or past evictions are not “screened out.” Instead, after these individuals are housed, case managers proactively offer them supportive services to ensure housing stability and prevent a return to homelessness.

How does PLACES help?

Participants are housed in one of four Housing First facilities at PLACES where onsite case managers:

- » Focus on an individual’s strengths
- » Establish a helping relationship
- » Treat participants with dignity and respect
- » Help participants build connections with people like landlords, employers, ministers, teachers, community centers and coaches
- » Emphasize growth, change and individual choice
- » Help participants establish goals and then build skills to reach those goals



Bobby is a tenant at Cobblegate in Moraine, one of four PLACES Housing First facilities.

How long do tenants get services?

It varies. Some need a little support for a short time, while others need intensive support for a long time.

How do tenants benefit?

HUD studies show tenants enjoy:

- » Long-term housing stability
- » Improved physical and behavioral health
- » Reduced use of crisis services (emergency departments, hospitals and jails)

Many tenants further improve their quality of life by addressing substance abuse issues and gaining employment.

Is Housing First successful?

This model has proven to be highly effective for ending chronic homelessness for people who are seriously mentally ill or have chronic problems with alcohol or drugs. □

Housing First: How Did PLACES Do in FY 2015?



Did You Know?

PLACES Gets 41% of Its Funding from HUD

Thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), all 38 PLACES Housing First tenants receive housing subsidies and can receive supportive services.

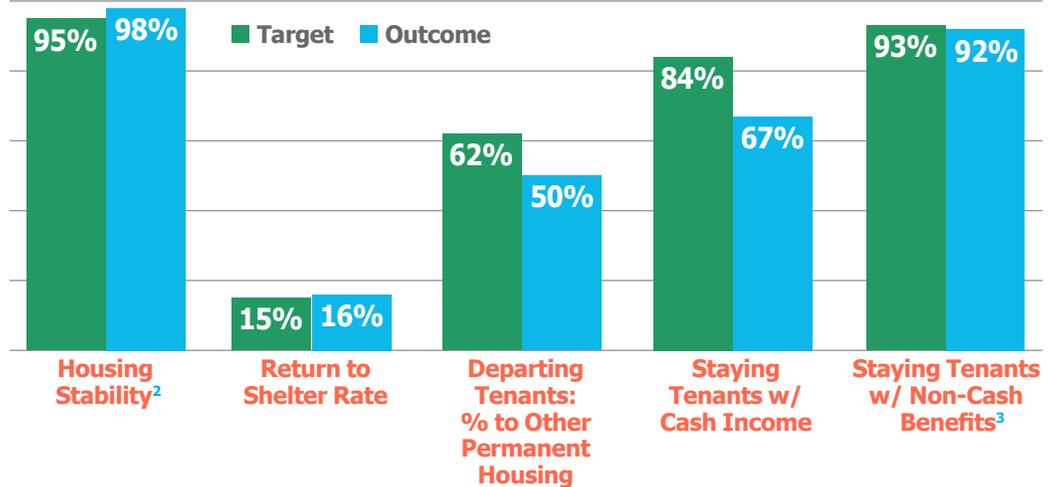
These services come in many forms, says Shannon Root, director of client services at PLACES:

- » **Education services** – such as GED instruction or substance abuse prevention classes
- » **Employment assistance and job training** – such as resumé building or acquiring a vocational license or certificate
- » **Food** – such as meals or groceries
- » **Life skills training** – such as money management and housekeeping
- » **Transportation** – such as bus passes or transportation through the facility van

“The goal of these supportive services is always to help the tenants build their independent living skills so that if services disappeared, tenants would not go back into homelessness,” says Shannon.

PLACES generally met or exceeded 3 of 5 targets:

FY 2015 ended June 30, 2015



Where are the 6 tenants who left?

- » One found other permanent housing.
- » One left to live with family.
- » One went to an unknown destination.
- » One returned to shelter briefly and then found permanent housing.
- » Two returned to the streets.

What is PLACES doing to help more tenants obtain cash income?

Of the 36 tenants who stayed, 24 have cash income. The Housing First staff at PLACES continues to help new tenants – including those at Imperial Court, the newest Housing

First facility that opened in September 2013 – apply for benefits and employment services. Since it can take as many as two years for new tenants to qualify for benefits, the number of staying tenants who have cash income is expected to increase in FY 2016. □

¹ 28 tenants responding to survey in January 2015.

² 44 of 45 tenants housed six months or longer are stably housed.

³ Examples of non-cash benefits: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), housing subsidies and bus passes.

What's Happening at PLACES

- » **August 13:** Luau for residents, clients, tenants and staff featuring music, games and snacks at 11 W. Monument Ave., second floor
- » **Second Tuesday of the Month:** Bingo for residents, clients, tenants and staff at Miami Valley Housing Opportunities, large conference room
- » **October 1:** PLACES Heart and Home Legacy Society Appreciation Event for donors at Moraine Country Club
- » **October 15:** Fall Harvest Get-Together for residents, clients, tenants and staff featuring food, cornhole and other games at Marty's House, a PLACES Residential Adult Care Facility in Huber Heights