

- VICTORY PARK
- 48TH & LEIGHTON
- BLOCK 54 AT 9TH & O

- GOODBY TO PAPER UPAGE
- PARK & CHARGE
- TELEGRAPH DISTRICT

- BIKE SHARE COMING
- DLA AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Meaningful Connections for Lincoln's Homeless

In October, Lincoln's eighth annual *Project Homeless Connect (PHC)* served 432 clients. PHC is a one-day, one-stop event where individuals and families who are homeless or near homeless can receive a wide variety of immediate, on-site services and support for unmet needs. Health professionals provide medical, dental, mental health, and substance abuse services. Others provide assistance with housing and social services applications, legal issues, and personal care. Still others provide information and help guests access off-site services such as education, crisis intervention, and basic needs. PHC has literally been a life saver in some cases.

Homelessness is very real issue everywhere, even in Lincoln. According to the most recent annual count of Lincoln's homeless persons on January 28, 2016, 694 persons in 512 households were homeless. Of that 694, 32 persons were unsheltered, 316 were in emergency shelter (limited to 30 days) and 346 were in transitional shelter (available for 31 days to two years). Another 341 persons – NOT counted as homeless – were in *permanent supportive housing* or being assisted through *rapid rehousing*.

Permanent supportive housing is a combination of housing and services designed for people with serious mental illnesses or other disabilities needing support to live stably in their communities. An example of permanent supportive housing is HUD's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program which combines rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Rapid rehousing, a highly successful and cost-effective method of decreasing homelessness, is based on three concepts:

- The majority of families and individuals experiencing homelessness also experienced a major crisis -- financial or otherwise. Intervening to address their crisis helps them return to permanent housing on their own.
- Most families experiencing homelessness have recently lived in permanent housing. With a one-time assist, many can return to permanent housing and remain housed without long-term supportive services.
- Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative effect on adults and children. Quick intervention that returns the household to permanent housing as soon as possible minimizes the negative impact more cost-effectively than having the household wait for a vacancy in another program.

The *Lincoln Homeless Coalition* works to increase awareness and build community-wide commitment to the needs and issues surrounding individuals and families who are near or experiencing homelessness. Lincoln Homeless Coalition membership is open to any health and human service agency, organization or entity, or individual concerned with housing, self-sufficiency and homeless issues.

To learn more about Project Homeless Connect or the Lincoln Homeless Coalition, go to www.lincolnhomelesscoalition.org.



Above: At Project Homeless Connect, each client was paired with a "navigator" — a volunteer who knew the resources available at the event. The client and the navigator worked together to decide which resources to visit.

Below: Blood pressure screening was one of the many medical services provided at this year's Project Homeless Connect.

