

Jane is a 34-year-old mother of two. She just escaped an abusive marriage and, in the process, lost her kids to Children's Services. She is fighting a heroine addiction and must receive treatment before she can get her kids back. There is a four-month wait for residential substance abuse treatment and she has nowhere to go in the meantime.



Henry is mentally retarded, cared for by his mother until her death last year. He was never diagnosed and has never been part of the "system." Now at age 45 his only housing option is the local homeless shelter.

Harvey is a 60-year-old Vietnam Veteran living on the streets since he returned from Vietnam. He has an addiction to alcohol. He has no family and no income. He came to CHOSSEN last year and has been sober for twelve months. He is eligible for VA benefits, which will give him the income he needs to be self-sufficient. He remains in the homeless shelter until those benefits come through.

January 17, 2006

Dear Community Partner:

There are nearly 1,200 documented homeless in Butler County and available emergency shelter for less than 10% of these. Serve City's CHOSSEN houses 48 homeless each night –each with a heartbreaking story and each one deserving a helping hand. The staff of CHOSSEN works hard each day to move people from homelessness into permanent housing. For some, that means helping them get a job and an apartment. Some are highly skilled and find high-paying jobs and move directly into homeownership. Others have more difficult challenges that require them to stay at CHOSSEN longer, and some simply don't have the capacity to make it entirely on their own.

There is a breakdown in the current housing system that leaves too many people without housing options. Many of them end up in our shelter and truly have nowhere else to go. An emergency shelter should never be someone's permanent housing but up until now, for many, there has not been a viable alternative. Serve City developed the CHOICES project to create a solution to a growing housing problem. CHOICES will provide **transitional housing** for those needing additional time to get on their feet and **permanent housing** for those falling through the cracks of existing services but requiring a supportive housing environment.

Serve City will purchase and demolish 7 dilapidated properties and rebuild three new structures to accommodate the CHOICES project. CHOICES will provide 48 additional beds in 24 apartments for those in transition and those requiring permanent supportive housing.

In addition CHOICES will.....

...free up coveted emergency beds at CHOSSEN by providing an option for those in transition.

... bring new development to a distressed neighborhood on Hamilton's east side.

...be financially solvent, generating adequate cash flow to maintain the program long-term.

...be modeled after a resident-governed HUD Best Practice in Seattle, Washington.

Serve City is seeking **private funding** for this project to maintain the flexibility to move the right people into this housing project – people who need additional time to find permanent housing and people who have no other alternatives for permanent housing. We have been working diligently over the past few months with private funders to secure a majority of the \$1.5 million project costs and we plan to break ground this summer.

We need a firm financial commitment from the community to pull this project together. We are asking you to consider a one-time tax-deductible gift in support of the CHOICES project. We recognize that this is a substantial request and we do not take lightly the commitment we're asking you to make.

We have two upcoming events related to this project that I would like to share with you. We have established Sunday, February 19, 2006 as CHOICES Sunday. On this day we are hoping to increase awareness of the need for this project through the local media as well as gain support of this project through the local faith community. We are also focusing on this project during our annual Christmas in July fundraiser scheduled for July 15, 2006. This event is a time to learn about the tremendous impact Serve City continues to have on the local community as well as learn about the exciting opportunities the CHOICES project presents. We believe firmly in the need for this project and are confident that the community will show their support for this project through their financial provision.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Serve City. We are only able to provide services to the neediest residents of our community because of partners like you. If you have questions about the CHOICES project or wish to speak to someone about this important effort, please contact me directly at (513) 673-5472.

Sincerely,

Linda Kimble
Executive Director