

NEWS



NEWS

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Room 216 - City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215. 686.6210 or 6211
Fax: 215.686.2170
Internet: www.phila.gov

John F. Street, Mayor
Barbara A. Grant
Director of Communications

Contact: Luz Cárdenas, (215) 686-6210
Tara Sleprow, (202) 638-2535 at NLCHP

For Immediate Release: March 4, 2004

NLCHP Honors City of Philadelphia's Efforts to Fight Homelessness with STAR Award

PHILADELPHIA — The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP) today honored programs and communities throughout the country that are working to address the root causes of homelessness. Philadelphia is one of 13 cities to be recognized for its compassionate and effective approach to the problem of homelessness.

The Solutions through Alternative Remedies (STAR) Award recognizes programs that have constructive, creative, and innovative components, as well as the ability to be replicated and be effective in addressing the problem of homelessness. The honored programs are highlighted in the NLCHP report released today entitled *Solutions through Alternative Remedies: Practical Models to Help End Homelessness*. "While many cities across the country are cracking down on homeless people, communities that are working to address the underlying causes of homelessness should be recognized for their efforts," said Maria Foscarinis, Executive Director of NLCHP.

Some communities criminalize homelessness as a strategy to reduce the problem. NLCHP produced *Practical Models to Help End Homelessness* to highlight communities that have adopted more constructive and effective ways to reduce street homelessness. In Philadelphia, a Sidewalk Behavior Ordinance, supported by then-Council President John F. Street, was passed in 1998. But the efforts of advocates, led by Project H.O.M.E., resulted in the ordinance having a positive impact on the whole community – including those living on the streets. The City committed \$6 million toward street outreach teams and beds for individuals with behavioral health problems. When the ordinance was passed, there were approximately 800 individuals living on the streets of Center City; last summer, the count was 200.

-more-

“We are honored that the great work being done by City social service, police, and non-profit workers is being recognized by the NLCHP. Mayor Street’s leadership coupled with true community partnerships continues to make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable men, women, and children. The time has come to end the disgrace of homelessness in Philadelphia and across America. This is a wonderful opportunity for Philadelphia to lead the nation,” said Rob Hess, Deputy Managing Director, Special Needs Housing.

NLCHP is a national non-profit legal advocacy organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to serve as the legal arm of the national movement to prevent and end homelessness.

Programs in the following cities received STAR awards: Fresno, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Sacramento, CA; San Francisco, CA; Denver, CO; Washington, DC; Orlando, FL; Boise, ID; Boston, MA; Duluth, MN; Philadelphia, PA; Pittsburgh, PA; and Madison, WI.

###