

*Journey Toward Housing
Justice: On the Road to
Stability
2011 Annual Report*



**Downtown Congregations
To End Homelessness**

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**Downtown Congregations
To End Homelessness**

Working Together to End Homelessness

All People Need Access to Stable, Safe, Decent, and Affordable Housing!

The Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness (DCEH) is an interfaith collaboration of 16 downtown Minneapolis synagogues, mosques, and churches working together to end homelessness and poverty. DCEH focuses on shifting from an immediate needs approach to long term solutions through a combination of education, advocacy, and action. Through learning and volunteer opportunities for congregants, community partnerships, and development of effective strategies and programs, the DCEH is committed to impacting the community around us to decrease homelessness.

Our Mission and Work

MEMBERS OF THE DOWNTOWN CONGREGATIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS

AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, FIRST COVENANT CHURCH, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, GETHSEMANE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, MASJID AN-NUR, MASJID AL-IKHLAS, PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. MARY'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH, TEMPLE ISRAEL, WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

HEADING HOME HENNEPIN, PLYMOUTH CHURCH NEIGHBORHOOD FOUNDATION

OFFICERS OF THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

ROLF LOWENBERG-DEBOER, CHAIR, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

JOAN MILTENBERGER, CO-CHAIR, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH

DENNIS SANDERS, TREASURER, FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CAROL KOEPP, SECRETARY, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

JANICE ANDERSEN, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, **JULIA FREEMAN**, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, **REV. KRISTEN JACOBSON**, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, **ROLF LOWENBERG-DEBOER**, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, **REV. DENNIS SANDERS**, FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, **CAROL KOEPP**, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, **SANDY OBARSKI**, GETHSEMANE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, **ANN CARLSON**, HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, **KAMMILAH EL-AMIN-SHABAZZ**, MASJID AN-NUR, **REV. DR. JEFF SARTAIN**, PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, **SANDRA ANDERSON**, ST. MARY'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, **JOAN MILTENBERGER**, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH, **MARCY FROST**, TEMPLE ISRAEL, **REV. DOUG MITCHELL**, WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

INTERFAITH TEAM MEMBERS

KATHY ANDRUS, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, **PAT WAMSER**, THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY, **GAYLE DUSTRUD**, CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, **DEBRA MAGNUSON**, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, **TRACY MAY**, FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY, **LOU SCHOEN**, GETHSEMANE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, **KAY NELSON**, HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, **JESSICA FREHSE**, PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, **ROBERT FISCHER**, PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, **KATIE DAY**, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH, **ANN PANNIER**, ST. OLAF CATHOLIC CHURCH.

STAFF MEMBER

HEIDI JOHNSON MCALLISTER, CONGREGATIONAL ORGANIZER

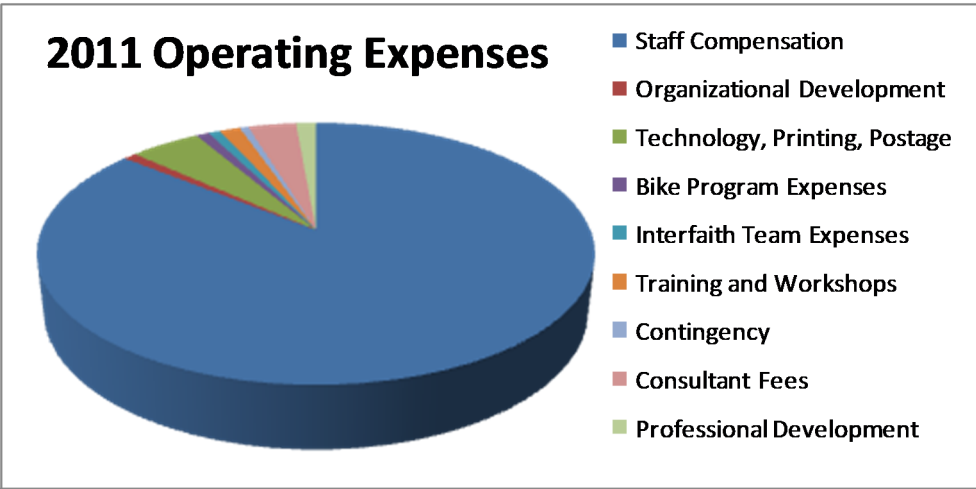
2011 Financials

Support and Revenue

64,579.79	Downtown Congregations
22,960.00	Private Foundation
5,700.00	Religious Sources
15,638.78	Individuals, Other Sources
5,355.00	In-Kind

Operating Expenses

54,332.37	Staff Compensation
560.00	Organizational Development
3,076.33	Technology, Printing, Postage
564.97	Bike Program Expenses
525.00	Interfaith Team Expenses
894.81	Training and Workshops



Letter from DCEH Steering Committee Chair and Congregational Organizer

Dear Friends,

In a time when the social safety net is under fire. In a time when unemployment is high. In a time when housing options are tight and rents are rising. In a time of polarized politics. The DCEH faces these and other challenges, but we continue to pursue the bold vision of a healthy Minneapolis community, where all people have access to housing. As people of faith, it is our duty and call to share and pursue this vision of a healthy community. In 2011, we continued down this road, pursuing a society where housing justice is achieved. We continued to raise our voices with people on the edge in our society. We continued to work together with our direct services to serve in the best, most dignified way. We continue to educate the people of our faith communities about the realities and stories of people facing homelessness for the first time, or for a long time.

We believe it is our duty as people of faith, in all times to advocate, educate, and serve together. Building a healthy community requires us to know our neighbors and to bridge the massive gaps dividing us. As an interfaith collaboration, our presence and action is a voice of morality and justice in the community. At the end of 2011, we marked three years as a collaboration; for which a review of the work we accomplished in these three years was completed. Now, we look to future opportunities and work needed to move forward for the next three to five years. In the review, we heard over and over this collaboration is powerful and inspiring. Our community partners continue to tell us how vital and exciting our work is to the whole community. In three years, we have learned an enormous amount about organizing and advocacy to shift our community to end homelessness. In 2012, we will be creating a strategic direction for the next three to five years that will guide our work, provide focus, and be able to deepen our impact. As the DCEH leadership, we are excited about the future and look forward to continuing this work together. We believe all people deserve an affordable, safe, and decent place to live and with the public will, it can happen!

Rolf Lowenberg DeBoer
Steering Committee Chair
Central Lutheran Church

Heidi Johnson McAllister
Congregational Organizer
DCEH

In 2011, the DCEH

New Governor of Minnesota and Bi-partisan State Legislative Leaders Spoke to DCEH Members

On a snowy winter January evening, over 330 members of DCEH congregations gathered together to hear the priorities of the leaders of the State Legislature, which included jobs, the budget, and ensuring the safety net is maintained despite the budget deficit. It was an exciting evening to hear from the new Governor of Minnesota, Mark Dayton, and a bi-partisan group of Legislators, which included Senator Scott Dibble, Representative Morrie Lanning, and Representative Karen Clark. Each speaker shared the 2011 Legislative Session priorities of their caucus (Republican or Democrat). On that evening, we heard people in the most vulnerable situations are a priority for both caucuses; each speaker ensuring the budget deficit will not impact people living in poverty. All speakers encouraged the participation of Minnesotans in the legislative process and to provide accountability to Legislators and the Governor. Following the Governor and Legislative Leaders, attendees were invited to take part in an advocacy training.



Added a 16th Congregation to the Collaborative

First Covenant Church joined the collaborative in January 2011, raising our number of congregations from 15 to 16 member congregations. Together, we move forward as First Covenant joins bringing a knowledge and dedication to sheltering people that do not have housing.

DCEH Inspired Events and Work Within Congregations

Among the many events and forums that Central Lutheran holds on the topic of ending homelessness over the year, one of the most popular from last year was when Representative Paul Thissen spoke to 140 people on a Sunday morning about the 2011 Legislative Session and challenged folks to be a voice in the process.

On October 16, 2011, Westminster Presbyterian Church celebrated the DCEH Sabbath to End Homelessness. Rev. Dr. Tim Hart-Andersen's sermon concentrated on "What Does It Mean to Obey God?" One of the texts was the familiar question from the lawyer to Jesus in the Temple, "Teacher," he asks, "Which commandment in the law is the greatest?" (Matthew 22:36). Any Jew then or now knows the greatest commandment. It's called the shema, after the first word in it: Shema Israel: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." The simple answer to give, but not to live out, is to love God and love neighbor. This text drives our congregation to care about what happens to people who are living without decent affordable housing and to be a part of the DCEH.

On October 1, 2011, Masjid An-Nur hosted the *Day of Dignity* in North Minneapolis with the Islamic Relief Services. The day was about building community and addressing the needs of a struggling community around the mosque. The day encompassed music and fun activities as well as providing direct service resources from DCEH congregations and services from the community.

In November of 2012, the First Unitarian Society celebrated the value of doing interfaith work in an effort to end homelessness and reduce poverty by inviting Imam Makram El-Amin to be our guest pulpit speaker. Kamillah El-Amin, director of community services at Masjid An-Nur, spoke at the forum that morning about increased needs on the Northside of Minneapolis.

St. Olaf Social Justice Commission hosted three educational events in the fall of 2011 to draw attention and encourage action for ending homelessness and poverty. As part of the Sabbath for Ending Homelessness, over 120 persons from the parish and beyond learned about the history of homelessness, and solutions to end poverty and create opportunities for justice in housing and employment.

At Plymouth, we participate in Housing 150; a partnership with Westminster Presbyterian and the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation to create affordable housing in the Twin Cities. We also host families through Families Moving Forward and encourage our congregation to be involved in advocacy around housing issues in the state.

One of the goals of the Church of Gethsemane as a member of DCEH was completed in 2011 with the formation of an Advocacy Group. We have ten members who receive e-mails regularly updating them on the activities of DCEH and asking them to respond to Action Alerts. We also have met twice as a group to meet one another and discuss any questions from the group. Heidi Johnson McAllister has visited with us twice during the year on Sunday mornings, preaching the sermon and leading a forum after both services. These visits were very helpful in the establishment of our Advocacy Group.

Turned the idea of a Shared Client Database into Client Collaborative

Over the course of many months in 2011, our Direct Service Provider Team researched and discussed the need for a database to assist with direct services and our DCEH collaboration. Daily direct service congregations participated in this process, including the Basilica of Saint Mary, Central Lutheran Church, Community Emergency Services of Augustana Lutheran, Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, and St. Olaf Catholic Church. The purpose of a shared database would be to understand the whole picture of a person and be good stewards of the generous resources given to our faith communities. As we began to explore, we realized that the cost of a database was high and cost prohibitive. We also ran into challenges of privacy and our role as communities of faith.



Instead, we decided to start with an in-person collaboration where congregational outreach/community ministry staff come together to brainstorm the situation of guests stuck in the system and come regularly to our outreach programs. The collaboration looks at the whole person of emotional, mental, and physical health of the person; we also discuss their employment, housing, food, and other specific basic needs. In our brainstorm,

we discuss the needed resources of the guest. This collaboration is an exciting venture of the downtown congregations to partner effectively in the beginning in the 2012 year.



Trained 150 People to Advocate in the 2011 Legislative Session

Following the Governor and bi-partisan group of Senators and Representatives in January 2011, the DCEH hosted an advocacy training. 150 people were trained on one of two topics: *Building Relationships with Legislators* and *Policy Priorities for Homeless Youth*, specifically on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. At the end of the evening, our members left with a deeper understanding of how to speak up and communicate effectively with their legislators as well as how the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act is necessary to end homelessness for youth ages 16-22. With these trainings, congregants of DCEH member congregations left prepared to take action during the 2011 State Legislative Session.

1,000 Voices Raised Together

The Advocacy Network of the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness has grown in three years to top 1,000 people! These people spoke up for policies, which end homelessness in our community and in Minnesota. In the 2011 Legislative Session, DCEH Advocates spoke up to protect Homeless Programs in the state budget, including:

- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act providing services and shelter to youth under 21
- Emergency Services Program providing shelter funding
- Transitional Housing Program providing time limited housing assistance
- Basic Safety Net programs: General Assistance, Emergency Assistance, and more

During an extremely difficult budget year, the State Legislature was not able to agree on a budget solution prior to the end of the session as deemed by state law, causing a state shutdown. During that time, a designated Special Judge determined Homeless Programs should still continue to function as they are essential services. The voices of our congregations continued to be raised during the whole session and post-session budget negotiations. When a budget was finally negotiated, Homeless Services were preserved!

Additionally, in the fall of 2011, the DCEH implemented an *Affordable Housing Campaign*, with the purpose to ensure increased funding for affordable housing in Minnesota. Our first step was working to increase the amount of funding the city of Minneapolis includes in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), a dedicated funding source from the city. The DCEH advocates spoke out for increased funding in the AHTF for the 2012 city budget, when previous years have been \$8 million or below. However, for the 2012 budget, the amount in the trust fund was up to \$9.6 million due to advocacy work in the 2011 year!



Leaders of District 41 Organized District Meeting with Senator

The leaders of District 41 organized and lead a community forum inviting the general public from the district, along with Senator Geoff Michel. The leaders of the district took on this challenge easily and with great thoughtful planning. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the realities of homelessness, housing and poverty in Edina with residents and the Senator.. Additionally, the community discussed the importance of the state programs Senator Michel's Jobs and Economic Development Committee oversees, such as the Housing Trust Fund.

Over 80 people attended this session, learning and engaging in conversation with a panel of speakers:

- Daryl Coppoletti, *Hennepin South Services Collaborative*
- Richard Hooks Wayman, *Hearth Connection*
- Laura Kadwell, *Heading Home Minnesota*
- Abigail, *Resident and formerly homeless*
- Patrick Ness, *Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless*
- Alan Arthur, *Aeon*

Although Senator Michel was not able to make the community meeting, a representative from Senator Michel's office attended, sharing with those assembled the position of Senator Michel on housing programs and funding in the Jobs and Economic Development Budget. The representative ensured us the information and concern about the preservation of housing funding will be brought back to Senator Michel. This event opened the conversation with

Senator Michel to discuss the funding for housing appropriated by the Jobs and Economic Development. In the outcome, the Housing Trust Fund was saved with a \$2 million increase.



Organized DCEH Advocates to Attend Day on the Hill and Meet With Their Legislators

At the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition Day on the Hill, Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness organized over 50 participants (of 800 participants from across Minnesota) to attend the Day on the Hill. With a greeting from Governor Mark Dayton and inspiration from the keynote speaker Father David McCauley, participants prepared themselves with knowledge of current legislation under consideration, as well as strategized for conversing with legislators to share their learned knowledge and engage them on the particular legislation. Our afternoon meetings with Legislators educated and engaged them in conversation about the funding levels of the Safety Net and Homeless Programs in the budget. With a budget deficit, our voices spoke to a need to ensure funding for services and programs for the most vulnerable in our society, people without stable housing.



Expanded our District Organizing Pilot

In 2010, District 41 (Edina/Bloomington area) began with two leaders, Danielle Niska and Diana Hix Warner, who organized neighbors from DCEH congregations to speak with the Senator and the two Representatives from this district. In 2011, we expanded our pilot from District 41 to District 43 with the addition of one leader, Bruce Baird. Together, these three leaders organized and led over 20 other DCEH members living in these districts to advocate for our legislative agenda. Each leader organized a rotation for their members to contact their legislators and to write letters to the editor, resulting in over 30 contacts made and two letters to the editor published.

Focused on Homelessness with our November Sabbath to End Homelessness: Journey to Housing Justice

In November 2011, seven congregations focused on homelessness during worship or the prayer service of the faith community. With prayers, a sermon, and specific educational forums for congregants, the Sabbath to End Homelessness heightened awareness and educated people regarding who is homeless, the reasons homelessness exist, and how it can be solved. The Sabbath to End Homelessness prepared and launched congregations into the 2012 Legislative Session.

***As people exiled from our true home, we are to seek the welfare of the city within which we find ourselves.
Jeremiah 29:1-9, Tanakh***

***How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in needs and yet refuses to help?
1 John 3:17, New Testament of the Bible***

Hosted Shelter Tours for the Sabbath to End Homelessness, Drawing Members of DCEH Congregations

Over 40 DCEH congregational members attended the Journey to Housing Justice Shelter Tours. Three shelters, St. Stephens for single men, People Serving People for families, and YouthLink for youth, hosted tours for the first three Sundays in November. These experiential, educational tours as part of the Sabbath to End Homelessness, exposed the real barriers, challenges, and struggles of people without a place to live. With the purpose to educate congregants about the realities of homelessness, each person walked away with a deeper understanding of our system of emergency shelter response as well as knowledge of the solutions for homelessness including, stable, affordable housing.

O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to justice, and let not the hatred of others to you make swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. Qur'an 5:8



Hosted a Fundraiser; Building Relationships Across Congregations

Bringing people together from all the DCEH congregations, the first DCEH fundraiser was attended by over 60 people. In addition to raising money over \$1,000 for the DCEH, our goal was to build relationships across faith traditions, to learn more about what the DCEH is doing together, and to learn about three of our congregations: Temple Israel, Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, and St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, as well as to enjoy good food from these three religious traditions. Staying late into the evening after the fundraiser was finished, people across congregations were deep in conversation! The energy of the evening created powerful connections!



Carl Kittelson, retired Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church member, repaired bikes last year for the Downtown Congregations' outreach programs for the homeless. He discovered this opportunity while reading an Ad in the Hennepin Church newsletter.

Carl, an avid bike-touring fan, repaired his family's bikes for years. He carefully takes apart each bike, cleans all parts, then reassembles it. Because of Carl's ministry, 30 people struggling to become stable have received bikes to provide transportation to get to jobs, school, and other appointments.

Gave away 30 Bikes, Locks, and Helmets

Lack of transportation can be a difficult barrier to overcome. The DCEH Bike Program started due to hearing stories of people not being able to afford transportation and seeking tokens. Over 75 bikes were donated last year at our Sofa and Spokes event to Mr. Michael's Recycled Bicycles, who administers the DCEH Bike Program.

In its second year, the bike collaboration with Mr. Michael's Recycled Bicycles served 30 adults, giving them a repaired, donated bike along with a bike helmet and lock. Our donated bikes are repaired, rebuilt, and then given to those served through the outreach programs of the DCEH. Each recipient of a bike attends a two hour class, giving them the tools and skills needed for biking, including bike safety and hands on changing a tire. Having a bike has improved the lives of our recipients as it gives them freedom and independence to move forward in their lives.



Photos by MCTC: Jacob Walter and Kate Maxwell Williams.

Here is what Charlie, a bike recipient wrote: "It will help me exercise after undergoing chemo therapy for cancer recovery. It will help me to complete my necessary errands and appointments. I live on General Assistance of \$203 per month and do not have money for the bus. Thank you." He was homeless and staying in shelters or living on the streets for two years. He then went to House of Charity and participated in their chemical dependency program for 7 months. He got section 8 and now lives in an apartment. He was going to school at the American Indian OIC for a Nursing Assistant certification when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. For 11 months, he had chemo and surgery. He had to quit school during this time due to fatigue and other symptoms. Now he is done with treatments and volunteering at Abbott Hospital (where he also goes for counseling) and in the senior building where he lives. He used to ride a bike and is looking forward to using this as his mode of transportation! He is motivated to stay healthy and get more involved in the community and eventually start