

January 2020



REACH
News

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO OUR READERS!

REACH believes that HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT

**The problem is not homeless men and women,
but a shortage of truly affordable homes.**

Notes from the Board

The Board had their inaugural meeting this past week and is pleased to announce that REACH Advocacy has now received approval from the IRS as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. *Donations may now be made directly to REACH Advocacy, Inc. P.O. 10845, Rochester, NY 14610.*

The Board meets on the **first Monday of the Month**, except on public holidays, when it will be the second Monday.

We are thankful for **St. Thomas' Episcopal Church** who have provided space for these monthly meetings.

Meet the Board - This month Susan Maxwell

I have always believed that it is important to give back to the community in which one lives so throughout my life I have volunteered for many different organizations. Many times I found myself volunteering for an organization that had many wonderful people already supporting the organization. I knew I wanted to find an organization that was in its early formative years and in need of volunteers to help support its mission. In my career as a mental health professional I worked with many who were living in poverty and who felt disenfranchised from mainstream society. I knew that after retirement I wanted to continue to be involved on some level in fighting poverty and helping those who were homeless. I was happy to hear about REACH from a friend and connected with Peter and Sarah Peters whose enthusiasm drew me into volunteering and supporting their work with those who were housing vulnerable. I was then blessed to be asked to chair their Tiny Home Committee and I have enjoyed every minute of my time on this



committee with wonderful members who are dedicated to helping those who are in need of housing.

My hope for REACH and our dream for a Tiny Home Village is that we can be the model for more Tiny Home development on vacant land in the City. I know that housing can begin to address homelessness and serve as a means from which the homeless can begin to pursue their personal goals and improve their quality of life. I look forward with anticipation and excitement in 2020 as we continue toward building our Tiny Home Village.

Shelter Committee - REACH Home 2019-20



The 2019-20 REACH Shelter Season is off to a roaring start. Our beautiful new space provided by the Coptic Christian Community has been at capacity since the first week of operation. The amazing volunteer staff, led by Evelyn and made up of many former REACH Guests, has provided a safe and dignified community environment for the guests. REACH Volunteers, social workers, and community service providers are working hard to help REACH Guests find the supports needed to accomplish their goals.

Once again, families, churches, and community organizations are providing wonderful dinners to the guests. A special thank you this year to St. Peter's. St. Peter's Staff and Volunteers have graciously taken in our guests for their incredible lunch program during the week.

We continue to enjoy the support of the community for the supplies and finance needed to run the shelter. This year has also been a great year for collaboration with many community service providers, as well as the Monroe County Department of Human Services.

Please view the REACH Facebook Page and Website for ways to donate your talent, treasure, and/or supplies. This winter has been the busiest season the REACH Shelter has ever faced, so your support is greatly needed and appreciated.

To see photos from some of our December events please click [here](#).

Meet a REACH Home Guest



Frank Bryant (55) came to REACH Home in November after being sanctioned by the DHS and losing his rent subsidy. Frank has worked all of his life, mostly in the food business. He began his food career with Charley Brown's here in Rochester and has worked in the food business in Florida and Vegas, where he worked in the Beverly Hills Café. When this business failed, Frank moved to Florida for a while and came back to Rochester

in 2016 to be near his son who was quite ill at the time.

Frank decided to re-invent himself and became a full-time student at MCC preparing to become an addiction counselor. He got a TAP grant to help with his tuition and public assistance with his rent. He has maintained high grades and is excited with the progress he is making.

Frank was sanctioned when he was wrongly reported to have missed a counselling appointment. Once sanctioned he lost his rental assistance and was evicted. Here at REACH Amy, one of our social workers, helped to straighten out his record with DHS and he has been re-instated and is now waiting for an apartment.

In spite of this set back Frank is maintaining full-time study and making good grades. Frank illustrates the problem with current sanctioning practice by DHS. (For more information see the Advocacy Committee's report below.) There is no right of an immediate appeal to prevent the kind of eviction that Frank faced.

We at REACH wish Frank well as he pursues his studies.

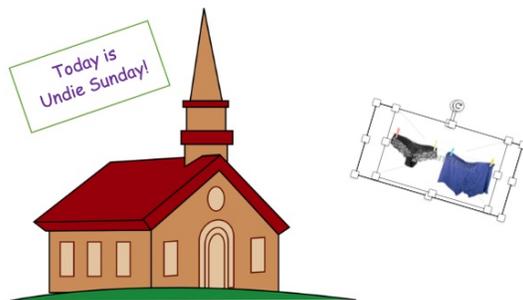
WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR PARTNERS!!

Would your church, work, or community group be willing to partner with us to provide necessary supplies for the shelter? Please consider taking on one of these ideas:

Bring an evening meal--there is one opening in February and thirteen in March. You can sign up on line [here](#). The evening meal is one of the most important ways we help to create community among our guests. If you have any questions please drop us an email. **A BIG**



THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE ALREADY BROUGHT MEALS TO OUR GUESTS.



Help us with our supplies.

Host a special collection day in your community.

MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SUPPORT US IN THIS WAY

Most Needed:

Men's boxer briefs and women's underwear sizes M-XL

T-shirts

Waterproof/lined gloves

Gallon and quart refrigerator storage bags

13 gal. and 33 gal. trash bags

Powdered drink mix such as Iced tea, Lemonade, Fruit Punch

Cereal

Pillows, now that we are full to capacity

PLEASE CONTACT US if you have a small size refrigerator that we can use in the office for medications.

We always need gently used winter boots for men and women, and winter coats/jackets, especially in larger sizes.

We CANNOT accept bags of used clothing as we do not have the facilities or staff to process them. Also, we are a winter shelter, so we need specific warm winter items for adults only. Thank you for your consideration!

Tiny Home Committee

From Susan Maxwell, Chair:

December is a time for us to look back and review what we have completed this past year and identify the next steps needed to realize our Tiny Home Village in 2020.

This has been a year spent on land preparation and surveys, completion of architectural designs, meetings with various city departments, grant writing and sharing our vision of a Tiny Home Village with community leaders and the community at large.



There is still much to be done but we are confident that we will begin to build the Village mid-year 2020. We cannot do this alone. It takes collaboration and support from the community and you are an integral part of our effort to help those who are housing vulnerable. Your financial support will help us realize the Tiny Home Village. Please consider donating to REACH this Holiday season, and designate your gift to the **Tiny Home Fund**. We are so grateful for your support and on behalf of the Tiny Home Committee we wish you and yours Happy Holidays.

Advocacy Committee

The Advocacy Committee met for the first time on January 2. We recognize that advocacy has both a public policy element and also a human story element. We are concerned with the structures that have been put in place, especially those that impose sanctions on those who are very poor. We recognize that people who struggle with health, transport, or work schedules may miss an appointment, and yet may be sanctioned increasing their stress. We choose to advocate with and for these members of our community.



Recently Governor Cuomo vetoed a bill that would have lowered the number of people sanctioned in Monroe County. The Advocacy Committee is looking for ways to counter this move by the Governor and join with others to lobby for more humane rules to govern sanctions. See David Andreatta's article in the [City Newspaper](#).

We welcome others to join us in this work. We have two more meetings planned for

this month, 16th and the 30th. We meet at 4:00 p.m. at Fr. Tracy Wellness Center, 821 N. Clinton Ave. Contact Peter if interested at peterwpeters@me.com.

Peter W Peters, Chair pro tem.

Upcoming Events of interest:

- Tuesday, January 14, **Poor Peoples' Campaign:** Health Care and Housing Rally in Albany. For more information click [here](#).
 - Sunday, January 19, 8:00 p.m. at Christ Church, East Ave., **Housing is a Human Right**, Peter and Sarah Peters
 - Tuesday, January 21, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. the City of Rochester in preparation for the **2020-2024 Consolidation Plan** hosts a Stakeholder Workshop on **Homelessness** at the Ryan Center, 530 Webster Ave.
 - Wednesday, January 22, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. the City of Rochester in preparation for the **2020-2024 Consolidation Plan** hosts a Stakeholder Workshop on **Housing** at the Phillis Wheatley Library, 33 Dr. Samuel McCree Way.
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Can you Help?

Donations needed as we prepare for the next **Point in Time** count of the **Homeless**. Read the details [here](#).

Resources that may interest our readers:

As REACH continues to plan for the building of a Tiny Home Village we may be seeking funds from local banks fulfilling their obligations under the **Community Reinvestment Act**. But see what the current administration is planning, read Jamie Weisburg's article, [Protecting the Community Reinvestment Act Is an Investment in Economic Justice](#).

Thank you for your interest and support of REACH.
For more information please check out our Website at reachadvocacy.org
and please like us on Facebook!

