

REACH NEWS

October 2020



REACH has a threefold mission:

- Operating a winter shelter helping our guests to find permanent housing.
- Creating more affordable housing for very low income people.
- Advocating for change in housing policy to ensure that there is justice.

Because we believe that *Housing is a Human Right*.

Shelter Committee

REACH SHELTER PLANS FOR THIS COMING WINTER

Due to the possible resurgence of COVID-19 REACH has made the very difficult decision not to open for the 2020-2021 shelter season. We are doing this to protect our volunteers and staff, but most importantly our guests, who would be unable to maintain social distancing in a communal living situation. **We anticipate that they will be placed in hotels, or a similar setting, this winter and REACH will be supporting that effort.**

- **Last shelter season** REACH supplied 7,512 bed nights to Rochester's housing deprived, for an average of 49 guests per night from mid-November through April. Despite having to reduce our census due to COVID restrictions we were the second largest shelter in Rochester last year during the Point in Time Count and ended the season with zero cases of COVID thanks to the incredible efforts of our staff and volunteers. **By the end of the season several of our more vulnerable guests were placed in hotels and we supplied liaison staff as support.**
- We have not yet received a formal Request for Proposals from Monroe County, but **plan to work collaboratively with other agencies such as House of Mercy and Open Door Mission to provide staff and support in the hotels throughout this winter season.**
- REACH has begun discussions with the Coptic Christian Community, owners of our building at **720 West Main St**, to provide a resource center where people from the neighborhood might be able to meet with caseworkers or medical providers from other agencies, use telephones or copiers, etc. Our goal is to bring services back into the neighborhood, which has also been a long term goal of the Coptic Christians.



Once we have a clearer idea of how our services will be utilized we will notify you on both our website and Facebook page, and with more information in a future newsletter. Although we are disappointed not to be operating our own shelter we will continue our mission of housing the most vulnerable members of our community with dignity and respect, and with the goal of finding them permanent housing. As always, we thank you for your support of REACH's mission and hope that we can count on you throughout these difficult times.

Deb Peiffer and Andy Carey

Meet our Intern - REACH welcomes Michael Seiler.

Hello, REACH Advocacy community. I am a graduate student from Nazareth College. I am studying for a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW), and I will be the first REACH intern ever! I am very enthusiastic to be working with such a great organization that is providing our community with a service that for the shelter deprived can literally be the difference between 'life and death'. I take pride in working with the REACH community on all levels and with gratitude, I will be involved on all levels within the community providing supports wherever they are needed. I will search for and write grants, work hard to establish relationships with our guests, and providing services and encouragement that will hopefully lead to permanent housing, and I will help grow, and grow with REACH in 2020/21. If I can be of service in any way please do not hesitate to let me know how I can help! 😊



The Tiny Home Committee



- We had the good fortune to be able to meet with Ken Braley from Habitat for Humanity that provided us with valuable information on the use of skilled and non-skilled volunteers, best places to recruit volunteers, insurance and waiver form needs and engaging work force development teams.
- We continue to have issues with getting the deep holes drilled on the property to determine soil stability. Roost Builders has volunteered to drill the holes so that we can be assured that the soil on the property is stable for building homes. We are in the process of getting the necessary permits from City Real Estate for drilling to take place this month.
- With the publication of new Tiny Home Codes, our architectural drawings are being revised to meet the new code requirements.

- Our website now has both the fact sheet and narrated power point translated into Spanish. <https://tinyhomes.reachadvocacy.org/>
- We are looking for someone who has skills working with various media modalities. We would like some help in using these modalities to share our vision of the Tiny Home Village. If you can help us with this please contact me: susan_mxwill@yahoo.com



Advocacy Committee

- The Advocacy Committee is now collaborating with many other organizations by joining with the **Rochester Housing Justice Alliance** to advocate for justice in housing policies.
- We are working on two fronts at present:



- We are standing with all those families and individuals who may be facing eviction during this pandemic crisis.
- Rochester Courts are already hearing eviction cases. Many of these are people who have lost income during COVID 19 and while they may be kept from eviction, they may find that they owe rent at the end of the moratorium.



- We are beginning a conversation about public housing in Rochester.
- How do we get to the table to address this solution to the current housing crisis?



Housing Justice for All is the website for the **Upstate-Downstate Housing Alliance** and is a useful resource for current legislative concerns. [Click here.](#)

We invite you to become a citizen activist and let your representative know what needs to be done to secure housing justice for all New Yorkers.

From the Board

The REACH Board is very excited to announce an opportunity for anyone to **become a founding member of REACH Advocacy!** All you need to do is make a minimum donation of \$250.00 (larger donations are welcome) beginning on November 1. A letter will go out soon to anyone who has donated \$100.00 or more in the last six years inviting them to become founding members. **Our Tiny Home Village Project** is ready to move forward to the construction phase as soon as we reach the Phase

**BECOME A
FOUNDING
MEMBER**

One cost of \$200,000. We are 40% there! Please consider joining us by donating to this exciting project to provide a new option for affordable housing for people living on less than 30% of the area median income.



Meet our Treasurer Kyle Geer, MBA, CPA

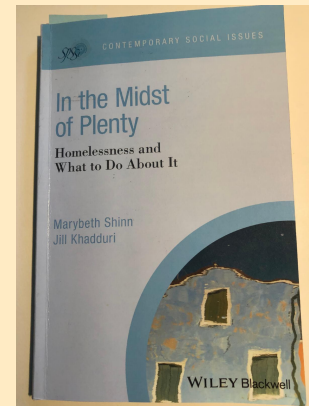
As many of you may know Lydia Worboys decided that she needed to step down as our treasurer. We are delighted to announce that Kyle Geer, who was doing our IRS filing has agreed to step up and take on the treasurer's position. Kyle is the Principal of Geer Tax and Accounting Services, Inc. as well as an Accounting Manager at Cudlipp Financial Services, Inc. He has been a licensed CPA since 2013 and is currently serving as Treasurer for 'Source of Success' after school education program and the Genesee Valley Umpires Association.

Kyle is a 2010 graduate of SUNY Geneseo, and a 2011 graduate of Clarkson's Masters of Business Administration program.

We are most appreciative of Kyle's willingness to serve REACH in this way.

Recommended Reading:

We recommend Marybeth Shinn and Jill Khadduri's book, **In the Midst of Plenty: Homelessness and What to Do About It**, (2020 Wiley Blackwell). This book helps us to better understand the history and nature of contemporary homelessness rooted in the vast divide between wealth and poverty in our nation.



Here are a couple of quotes:

"Our central argument in this book is that homelessness arises primarily because poor people do not have access to housing they can afford." (p.34)

"Since the 1970's, the market has not produced housing that poor families and individuals can afford in any part of the US...." (p. 48)

"The central message of this book is that homelessness is a choice, not a choice by people sleeping on the streets but a choice by the rest of us to look the other way....We know the strategies targeted to high risk groups can reduce entry into homelessness, and we argue that expanding the social safety net, tackling social exclusion, and undertaking a variety of strategies to make housing affordable will prevent homelessness for many more. What we need is the political will."(p. 176)

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



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