



Care for the Homeless Clients Lead Voter Registration Drive

“Which party will bring more services to lower income people?” a client asked while filling out a voter registration card at a recent CFH Voter Registration Drive at Franklin Women’s Shelter. Because all Care for the Homeless Voter Registration activities are non-partisan, we couldn’t answer that question, but it led to a civic debate between the client and her friend about who would best represent their interests.

It is true that getting people to vote isn’t always easy – you can read CFH Policy Director Jeff Foreman’s story about disappointing voter turnout for last year’s mayoral election on our web site at www.careforthehomeless.org—but voter registration season is also an excellent opportunity to spark political conversation. In the absence of a presidential campaign to catch attention many CFH clients say they hadn’t thought about voting since the last election. One client asked, exactly what am I voting for this time around?

This year’s voter registration drive has already been a wonderful opportunity to talk about the right to register and vote and many clients have expressed a tremendous interest in casting their ballots, including one young woman at Franklin Women’s Shelter who sat down for 15 min to ask about the duties of each office on this year’s ballot!

To further encourage voting among CFH clients, Care for the Homeless will be providing voter registration cards at all CFH sites, informing shelter residents of their local polling places and conducting 17 voter registration events in a registration drive which began in August and will continue through October 3rd. Three of those events will be held on National Voter Registration Day, September 23rd, when voter registration drives will be held across the country.

September is National Voter Registration month. You can get involved by volunteering at a Care for the Homeless Voter Registration event! To sign-up, please email the CFH Volunteer Coordinator, Angela Petriello, at apetriello@cfhnyc.org.

And don’t forget to make sure your voter registration information is up-to date.

New voter registration forms must be submitted to the Board of Election by October 10th for the November 4th General Election. If you are already registered you can vote in the September 9th primary election! Polls are open 6 a.m.-to-9 p.m. and you can find your local polling place at <http://nyc.pollsitelocator.com/>. Not sure if you are a registered voter? Check online at <http://nyc.pollsitelocator.com/>.



CFH Board member Barbara Knecht talking with CFH Client Leaders David Broxton (left) and Garrett McMahan (right) at a Voter Registration at Franklin Women’s Shelter on August 14th.

At Care for the Homeless, We’re On the Air!

Care for the Homeless Executive Director Bobby Watts is a featured guest on this week’s “Human Services News and Views” on WVOX radio, 1460 AM, at 6 p.m. on Thursday, September 11. Bobby will be discussing CFH’s critical services for people experiencing homelessness in New York and a troubling national trend to increasingly stigmatize and even criminalize homelessness. The program is hosted by New York City’s Human Services Council.

Become an advocate today! Join us on Facebook and on Twitter for up-to-the-minute info.



STOP! We're Heading for a Health Care Fiscal Cliff

Two years ago talk about “the fiscal cliff” was all the rage as the federal government came dangerously close to slashing federal programs beyond the bone or failing to fund some of them altogether. Human service programs, including health care funding, did suffer dramatic cuts through the automatic “sequestration” cut backs of the last few years – but despite the cuts health centers were saved from draconian budget cuts through funding in the Affordable Care Act.

That’s a good thing, because these clinics, or Federally Qualified Health Centers, are really the most effective way that health care is provided to underserved communities like people experiencing homelessness in New York City.

That’s why it’s critically important that health centers like the 33 Care for the Homeless clinics not go over the ‘fiscal cliff’ we’re headed towards. Federal funding for Care for the Homeless health clinics, and other community health providers across the country, will run out if it isn’t reauthorized by Congress. The official deadline for that is September 30. There is no funding currently authorized as of the new federal fiscal year (FY 2015-16) starting October 1st.

The primary federal funding for health clinics, the single major source of funding for health center operations like Care for the Homeless, will end unless it is reauthorized by Congress.

This isn’t a partisan issue. For many decades this funding has been reliably authorized by Republican and Democratic Congressional majorities and by both Democratic and Republican Presidents. Everyone should recognize the need to provide health care to those in need.

Of course in New York City the need has never been greater.



With 60,000 people homeless or in shelters each night, including about 24,000 children, the failure, even temporarily, to deliver that care would be catastrophic.

Care for the Homeless policy advocates and client leaders have been calling New York City Congressional offices and meeting with members of Congress to ask them to keep us from going over the fiscal cliff.

Here’s how you can help: call your member of Congress and ask them to reauthorize funding for Federally Qualified Health Centers before the September 30th deadline, and, by the way, there’s really no better time to pass that reauthorization than right now!

You can reach your Congress person through the Congressional switchboard at 1-866-338-1015.

Number of Homeless in NYC Continues to Go Up

New York City’s homelessness crisis has never been worse! Even as Mayor de Blasio and City Council rush to put in place critical building blocks to fight and prevent homelessness, like re-instating the City’s historic commitment to target some NYCHA public housing to people experiencing homelessness, stepping up homeless prevention programs and establishing a new city/state rental subsidy program to help people in shelters transition to stable housing, our homeless population continues to grow.

In December, 2013, the census in the city’s shelters run by the Department of Homeless Services averaged 53,173.

In August that census went over 55,000 (the DHS census on August 27th was 55,025). And those figures don’t include those sheltered under other city programs, faith based programs or living rough on the streets. A reasonable estimate including those uncouneted in the DHS census would be over 60,000 people including about 25,000 children under 18.

Unfortunately, as the weather gets colder the shelter census tends to rise.

As the problem grows, with the increase coming mostly from homeless families with children, even though many of them include at least one adult working, but in a low wage job, the need for services and effective programs to prevent homelessness and transition those in shelters to stable housing becomes even more urgent.

