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FACETS and 5 Other Nonprofits Start the “Fairfax County Housing Challenge” Modeled after Statewide Effort to Get More Vulnerable People Housed

FAIRFAX, Va. (July 17, 2014) – [FACETS](#), a nonprofit that opens doors by helping parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in Fairfax County—along with five other Fairfax nonprofits—is challenging itself throughout the next year to find homes for even more precariously housed and homeless people. Every quarter the group of six will set new, high goals as part of this Fairfax Housing Challenge ([#ffxhousingchallenge](#)) in an effort to end homelessness.

The challenge is patterned after the successful [Rapid Re-Housing Challenge](#), a project with the Commonwealth of Virginia and the National Alliance to End Homelessness that ended in January and worked to place as many homeless families as possible in permanent housing in 100 days through rapid re-housing. The Fairfax members of the Rapid Re-Housing Challenge came together to start a more localized version, including FACETS, Cornerstones, Good Shepherd Housing, New Hope Housing, and Shelterhouse. In addition, the group invited Volunteers of America Chesapeake Bailey’s Crossroads Community Shelter since the Fairfax Housing Challenge will also include outreach to singles.

“The Rapid Re-Housing Challenge was a big success and pushed us to reach new goals. That’s why all of the Fairfax participants banded together to start our own local version. We are serious about getting people housed, and it’s important to have lofty goals to push us. It’s motivating and helps us all be more creative in getting people homes,” said Maura Williams, interim executive director, FACETS.

The first quarterly challenge began on July 1. FACETS’ goal for the first quarter of this year-long challenge is to get 12 families and 15 singles into housing. Next quarter, FACETS expects to set an even higher number since it is the start of hypothermia season. To do so, FACETS will engage its more than 40 hypothermia faith community partners and 1,500 volunteers in the Fairfax Housing Challenge.

Rapid re-housing is a proven and cost-effective strategy that has been used by communities across the country to reduce homelessness. In fact, from 2010 to 2013 family homelessness in Virginia decreased 17 percent, largely due to rapid re-housing. It involves helping households move into housing as quickly as possible after they enter the shelter system. Families and individuals are housed in market-rate apartments or houses in the community, and receive rental subsidies and/or services that are tailored to their specific needs, including a caseworker to help ease the transition and assist with any problems.

With the second largest homeless population in the region, homelessness is a real problem in the Fairfax County-Falls Church community. A majority of the people who are a homeless are in working families with children. With critical help from volunteers and partnerships with the faith and business communities, FACETS works to prevent and end homelessness throughout Fairfax County by offering a full spectrum of services, such as basic needs and financial assistance, counseling and outreach, educational enrichment programs, and permanent housing. More information can be found at www.FACETSCares.org.

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