



2009 - 2010
ANNUAL REPORT

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES.
END HOMELESSNESS.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has been another challenging, yet exciting year for the Florida Coalition for the Homeless in our efforts to help our homeless and near homeless neighbors across the state.

Once again, advocacy was a large focus of FCH's work as it is through advocacy we bring the voice of our homeless and near homeless neighbors to the table. Going into the 2010 legislative session, we needed to be heard more than ever as homeless funding had been completely cut from the proposed DCF budget.

While Fely Curva, hired by FCH to lobby on homeless issues in Tallahassee, brought needed expertise and connections to our efforts, nothing was more rewarding for me then to hear a Senator on the Senate Health and Human Services Appropriations committee tell his colleagues he had received 1,000 calls, emails and letters to put the homeless funding back in the budget. I've never been as proud as that moment to be part of such a dedicated and passionate group of people.

Another testament to the determination and commitment of our state advocates was that, despite the very tight budgets of local coalitions and service providers, participation in Homeless Awareness Day, did not drop. You brought the voices of our homeless neighbors to the Capitol in a unified and determined voice and that voice was heard!

As I write this, we are making final preparations for the 2010 conference. In just a few short years, and through partnerships and collaborations, what was FCH's homeless conference expanded to a statewide conference on homelessness and supportive housing to become what is now a regional conference that will feature speakers and presentations normally found only at national conferences. And while the 2010 conference is technically an accomplishment for the 2010 - 2011 annual report, I cannot end my time at FCH without acknowledging the growth of the conference and thanking everyone, especially the Florida Supportive Housing Coalition, Florida Department of Children and Families and Florida Department of Education, for taking the conference to new heights.

Rayme L. Nuckles

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On a personal note, I want to thank each and every person I've had the pleasure of working with during my time on the FCH board. While we did not always agree on every detail or be on the same side of every issue, we were able to agree on the principles and build our unified and collective voice that made the difference in getting needed policies and funding approved, keeping bad policies from being approved and growing FCH's organizational capacity to continue to work towards that day when no one is homeless in Florida.

I look forward to continuing to work with FCH and its new leadership to help our homeless and near homeless neighbors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rayme L. Nuckles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

President

ABOUT THE FLORIDA COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

The **Florida Coalition for the Homeless** (FCH) is a dynamic organization whose membership and board of directors include homeless advocates, service providers, members of the faith-based community, formerly homeless persons, educators, attorneys, mental health professionals and many others statewide who are committed to putting an end to homelessness and improving the conditions of persons living without shelter.

We are the only statewide organization solely dedicated to advocating for the needs of our homeless neighbors and we strive to make homelessness one of the state's priorities. We accomplish this through:

- Providing education on homelessness issues;
- Advocating for initiatives that help homeless people and against laws and ordinances that may harm them;
- Networking with advocates throughout Florida on federal, state and local issues;
- Promoting unification, involvement and leadership of local coalitions, service providers, homeless people, religious leaders, units of government and others in the development and implementation of a statewide agenda.

By our nature, FCH is a collaborative body – as such we have relationships with many of the national and state homeless service providers and advocacy groups, including:

- Florida DCF State Office on Homelessness' Council on Homelessness.
- Florida Homeless Education Department
- Florida Housing Coalition
- Florida Housing Finance Corporation
- Florida Supportive Housing Coalition
- FSU Institute for Family Violence Studies
- Sadowski Coalition

- National Alliance to End Homelessness
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children & Youth
- National Center on Family Homelessness
- National Coalition for the Homeless
- National Health Care for the Homeless Council
- National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
- National Low Income Housing Coalition

ADVOCACY

One of the most important components of FCH's work, and something that could not be accomplished without the dedicated members and advocates throughout the state, is advocacy.

State Level Advocacy

In conjunction with the Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County and the Miami Coalition for the Homeless, the 2010 statewide advocacy efforts included:

- Surveyed local coalitions, lead agencies and advocates about issues important to them. The survey was used by the FCH Policy Council and Board to set the statewide agenda with the following issues:
 - Creating a Local Homelessness Prevention grant to replace the state Emergency Financial Assistance for Housing Program (EFAHP)
 - Reinstating Grant in Aid (GIA) funding to local homeless coalitions
 - Creating a Voluntary Contribution Option for Homelessness Relief on DMV forms
 - Maintaining funding for Homeless Housing Assistance Grant (HHA) and Challenge Grant
 - Removing the Cap on the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund
 - Protecting Homeless People from Violence

Additional issues were added as bills were filed and included: allowing Homeless Housing Assistance grants to be used as fixed capital outlay; creating a state-wide standard for boundaries related to where sexual offenders and predators may reside; affordable housing for seniors; providing tax credits to employers who hire homeless persons; foreclosure protections for renters; mobile homes as affordable housing and related mobile home park concerns; and issues related to persons with mental illness and substance abuse.

As the start of session neared, it became clear the biggest fight would be to save homeless funding as word leaked out that all homeless funding would be cut from DCF's budget. A pre-session action alert was sent to more than 1,600 advocates throughout the state.

When the Senate Health and Human Services Appropriations committee met on day two of session, the proposed budget received from DCF included a 10 percent cut to homeless service funding. Homeless issues and funding was discussed for an hour during the meeting with one Senator on the committee stating he had received more than 1,000 phone calls, emails and letters about the need for these dollars. The Senate HHS Appropriations committee directed DCF to maintain homeless funding.

At the end of session, we were victorious in:

- maintaining most homeless funding, which is a great accomplishment given that at the beginning of the session, the proposed DCF budget removed all homeless funding.
- passing the Homeless Hate Crimes bill which adds 'homeless status' to Florida's current hate crimes statute that brings stiffer penalties for persons who intentionally seek out homeless people, just because they are homeless, to harass and physically attack. FCH wishes to thank all the current and past legislators who sponsored and co-sponsored this bill since first being introduced in 2006.

Representative Charlie Justice
Representative Ari Porth
Representative Hazel Rogers
Representative Priscilla Taylor

Senator JD Alexander
Senator Arthenia Joyner
Senator Nan Rich
Senator Jeremy Ring
Senator Chris Smith

While we were not victorious in getting all our priorities passed, progress and approval of the issues was made at many levels.

- Create a Local Homelessness Prevention grant to replace the state Emergency Financial Assistance for Housing Program (EFAHP) and a Voluntary Contribution Option for Homelessness Relief on DMV Forms. These items were included in Representative Betty Reed's (HB 923) and Senator Victor Crist's (SB 2654) homeless bill. The bill passed all its committees and the full House without objections. The Senate bill passed through its first committee unanimously and was successfully withdrawn from all other committees to be taken up by the full Senate. The Senate did not take up the bill and it died in messages.
- Remove the Cap on the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund
This was part of the bill by Representative Gary Aubuchon (HB 665) and Senator Mike Bennett (SB 262). HB 665 passed all its committees of reference and the full House unanimously. SB 262 also passed all its

committees and passed the full Senate. However, an amendment language unrelated to affordable housing passed by the Senate was not taken up by the House before session ended and the bill died.

Advocacy Activities included:

- Produced advocacy material including a “Homelessness in Florida” information booklet, and one-page briefs on agenda issues.
- Conducted four tele-trainings, including two ‘introduction to advocacy’ trainings and two trainings specific to the 2010 issues.
- Coordinated the filing of a comprehensive homelessness bill (HB 923) and SB 2654) with Representative Reed and Senator Victor Crist.
- Coordinated the annual Homeless Awareness Day in Tallahassee.
 - Held on April 7, 2010. Sixty-three (63) people signed in and at least 25 people from Universalist Unitarian Legislative Ministries (UULM) and Miami Homeless/Formerly Homeless group participated but did not sign in. Approximately 125 people attended the 11 a.m. press conference. Nearly 50 percent of state-recognized homeless coalitions participated and 28 percent of Florida’s counties were represented.
 - Press conference with the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, George Sheldon, Senator Victor Crist (Tampa), Representative Betty Reed (Tampa), Representative Mark Pafford (Palm Beach) and a Tallahassee homeless family with a 6-month old child.
 - Press releases were distributed to media outlets throughout the state. There were four known media stories about Homeless Awareness day.
 - A pre-Awareness Day briefing, attended by 29 people, was held the evening before Homeless Awareness Day to provide advocates with updates on the issues. An additional briefing was held for the UULM where 15 advocates from this group attended.
- Governor Charlie Crist proclaimed April 7, 2010 as Homeless Awareness Day in the state of Florida.
- Hired Fely Curva, Ph.D. as a lobbyist for FCH. Her connections and extensive lobbying experience with groups like Children’s Forum; FL Alliance for Health, PE, Recreation, Dance, and Sports (FAHPERDS); The Alzheimer’s Foundation of America; Florida IMPACT; and the Budd Bell

Clearinghouse on Human Services played an instrumental role in the successes during the 2010 legislative session.

- Met with all members of key committees including: Senate Health and Human Services Appropriations; House Health Care Appropriations; Senate Children, Families and Elder affairs; House Roads, Bridges, & Ports; and Senate Transportation Committee.
- A dozen action alerts were sent to advocates throughout the state.
- Collaborated with other advocacy organizations and groups on issues about housing and homelessness, including:
 - Budd Bell Clearinghouse on Human Services
 - Coalition for Fair and Comprehensive Tax Reform
 - Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association
 - Florida Catholic Conference
 - Florida Association of Counties
 - Florida Council for Community Mental Health
 - Florida IMPACT and the Council of Churches
 - Florida League of Cities
 - Florida Supportive Housing Coalition
 - Miami Coalition for the Homeless
 - Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust
 - National Center on Family Homelessness
 - Sadowski Coalition (25 partners),
 - United Way of Florida

Federal Level Advocacy

- Met with Congressman Alcee Hasting (FL) to discuss ways the Homeless Caucus could work in partnership with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the National Alliance to End Homelessness.
- Met with all Florida Congressional members and Senators in Washington D.C. to gain their support for increased funding for McKinney-Vento HUD Homeless Assistance Grant.
- Met with the National Alliance to End Homelessness and representatives from communities around the country on a model for Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing (HPRP) research and evaluation process.
- Members of Congress received more letters, emails and phone calls from Florida homeless advocates than from advocates in any other single state.

MEMBER AND COALITION SERVICES

FCH staff and board members provided needed services to local coalitions and Continuum of Care agencies, such as:

Technical Assistance

FCH has made the most of providing technical assistance via our Web site by offering:

- Links to national and state organizations
- Library of publications
- Samples for discharge planning, COC planning, Housing First, survey tools, and service delivery
- Advocacy guidance
- Grant resource

In addition, technical assistance was provided on-site and via phone interviews to local coalitions and the public throughout the state.

Education

FCH continued its partnership with the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) and the local homeless coalitions in Florida to further the Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau. The project is supported by AmeriCorps*VISTA.

Florida's Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau educates the public about homelessness and what can be done to end it. Being a member of the Bureau builds opportunities for homeless or formerly homeless speakers to advocate for themselves and others, and to build bridges within their communities. Using their own experiences, speakers put a human "face" on homelessness and dispel the stereotypes many people have. By fostering an environment of self-worth, respect, and understanding for all people, the Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau challenges us to believe that we can and should end homelessness.

Membership Communication

FCH continued to inform the membership through quarterly newsletters with state/federal legislation updates, resource information, upcoming events, and immediate issues pertaining to homelessness. In addition, time-sensitive information is sent out frequently through e-mail alerts.

Statewide Annual Conference

In 2009, FCH continued its partnership with the Florida Supportive Housing Coalition and the Florida Department of Children and Families, to host the annual Statewide Homelessness and Supportive Housing Conference in Clearwater Beach, Florida on October 26 and 27.

The Florida Department of Education provide a conference track specifically for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaisons and the Florida Department of Children and Families provided conference scholarships to all AmericCorp*VISTA's working on the Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau project in Florida.

The 2009 conference included:

- Plenary speakers:
 - George Sheldon, Secretary, Florida Department of Children and Families
 - Barbara Duffield, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
 - Jordan Press, Federal Policy Director, Corporation for Supportive Housing

- workshops presented by nearly two dozen collations and government departments from across the state and region on:
 - Best practices
 - Housing
 - Education
 - Youth homelessness
 - Legal/advocacy
 - Research/resources

BOARD AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

FCH Board

The Board of Directors is a committed working board that provides assistance to staff to further the goals of the organization.

The Board is a diverse group with representatives of local government, education, veterans' affairs, faith-based, and legal services.

The 2009-2010 FCH Board of Directors were:

- **President** - Rayme L. Nuckles, Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County
- **Vice-President** - Jackie Griffin-Doherty, Operation PAR, Inc.
- **Treasurer** - Michelle Cerrato Dominguez, Miami Coalition for the Homeless
- Lorraine Allen, Florida Department of Education
- Rita Clark, Miami Coalition for the Homeless
- Anita Cocoves, Martin County Board of County Commissioners
- Jon DeCarmine, Alachua County Office on Homelessness
- Suzanne Edwards, Catholic Charities Bureau
- Louise Hubbard, Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council
- Shawn Liu, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Christine Long, Metropolitan Ministries
- Richard Martin, Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness
- Joe Monroe, Citrus County Division of Housing Services
- Janet Riley, Legal Aid Services of Broward County
- Stephanie Shepherd, Big Bend Homeless Coalition
- Sarah Snyder, Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless
- B.E. Thompson, Life Stream Behavioral Center, Inc
- Barbara Wheeler, Mid-Florida Homeless Coalition

Policy Council

In addition, the Policy Council continued its role as a committee to recommend policy and legislative issue to be addressed by the FCH Board. Forty-two counties are represented by the 17 local homeless coalitions that were members of the 2009-2010 Policy Council. These coalitions are:

- Alachua County Coalition for the Hungry and Homeless
- Big Bend Homeless Coalition

- EscaRosa Coalition for the Homeless
- Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition of Jacksonville
- Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County
- Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County
- Homeless Services Network of Central Florida
- Lee County Department of Human Services
- Marion County Homeless Council
- Mid-Florida Homeless Coalition
- Okaloosa/Ft. Walton Continuum of Care
- Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless
- Southernmost Homeless Assistance League
- Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness
- Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council
- United Way of Suwannee Valley
- Volusia/Flagler County Coalition for the Homeless



FLORIDA COALITION

FOR THE HOMELESS

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