Racial Injustice and Homelessness

It is hard to believe that we are nearly through June and continue to operate under essential services, providing shelter and food to more than ever before. Yet the call to serve deepens.

As an agency comprised of social workers, community healthcare providers and social justice advocates, we are saddened by the racism seen in our communities across the nation. We are well aware of the systematic oppression that has led too many folks in need of help to our door. We are conscious of the intersectionality of this oppression; the compounded discrimination of Black and Brown people, the LGBTQA+ community as well as gender nonconforming people. We know that poverty is the primary cause of homelessness. The unjust systems that have prevented equitable access to resources have also stopped the change necessary to break intergenerational poverty and thus, end homelessness.

We join all of you in this journey of learning and action. Before we talk about where we are going it is important to know where we are now; and this is startling:

This statistic underscores the barriers to achieving economic stability in communities of color. This inequity becomes even more glaring when discussing the impact of COVID-19 on the homeless population and more specifically, Black and Brown people experiencing homelessness.

A recent Yale study indicated that Black and Brown people are 3.5 times more likely to die from COVID-19. Furthermore, information such as the recent SAMHSA report cites
that Black and Latinx people have substantially lower access to mental health and substance use treatment services, often end treatment services prematurely, and experience less culturally responsive care. To say that we have “work to do” is a gross understatement; it is time for radical change.

Our Pledge and Plans for Change

The Beth-El Center joins our partners within the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness and the Milford community plus millions around the world in our commitment to fundamental change. There is internal work to be done as our Beth-El Center team grows in understanding and develops plans to ensure our spaces and services are informed by racial equity practices. And there is external work to be done to ensure our systems speak to the call to action at this time.

Over the coming days and weeks, our staff will:

- Explore themes of racial justice and strategize methods to implement equity in our food and shelter programs. Through this, we will identify our own implicit biases and support movement towards greater awareness and understanding in one another and in ourselves.

- Look critically at our programs and services, and ensure that we are responding to the unique and specific ways in which homelessness has become its own pandemic in Black and Brown communities. We will build partnerships to ensure we are creating both pathways to end and prevent inter generational homelessness for our residents of color.

It is our obligation and our honor to serve all in need, with dignity and respect and we will continue to do so, until everyone is home and all are fed.

Juneteenth: A Conversation About Race, Homelessness and Poverty

Listen to this informative panel discussion on the intersection of race, homelessness and poverty as we celebrate Juneteenth.
Client Testimonial

“I believe that what makes me special is my care for people and my desire to help others...
Being a good Christian mother and grandmother is what’s important to me.
Also, finding and keeping a stable job and begin finally planning for my positive future.
Stable housing would mean the world to me right now. With housing, I can begin to stabilize my life, finances and future.”

-Ann, age 52

Homelessness In the News

Is the state headed for an eviction crisis? To be determined....

June 10, 2020 CT Mirror

State will place 1,800 homeless in apartments, considers buying hotels

June 25, 2020 CT Insider
CT advocates to fight evictions of elderly veterans as courts open up

June 21, 2020 New Haven Register

Birdies for Charity

If you're watching the Travelers Golf Championship in Cromwell this weekend, you'll be interested to know that Beth-El Center is participating in their Birdies for Charity fundraising program!

Support Beth-El Center by making a donation and we will receive an additional 115% of each dollar we raise!

Donate online or by mail between now and June 28!

Beth-El Center COVID-19 Update

Beth El Center will continue to distribute cold bagged meals-to-go between 11:30am and 1pm daily from our 90 New Haven Avenue location. Meals are available to all.

After August 1, we will invite trained volunteers back to the Center to prepare and serve hot meals-to-go.

Here’s an update on additional COVID-19 testing protocols we'll soon have in place:

- All residents will receive bi-weekly COVID testing
- Outcomes of testing will determine where a resident is sheltered during their engagement with Beth-El Center programs and services and will include congregate, quarantine and isolation spaces.

Beth-El Awarded Multi-Year Grant
The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven has awarded the Beth-El Center with a grant for $90,000 paid out over three years. The grant will provide general operating support for the shelter, services, advocacy and community education. It was one of 36 grants awarded totaling $2.98 million.

“Our Center is proud and honored to be chosen as a responsive grant recipient,” says Executive Director Jennifer Paradis. “This funding help us provide more efficient and effective shelter programming and meet the goals of our 2019-21 Strategic Plan.”