



Reardon Kicks-Off Initiative to Address Homelessness

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Mayor Joe Reardon announced his new initiative to address homelessness in Kansas City, Kansas during a Kick-off event held Tuesday afternoon, July 27th at the Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Service Offices (SRS).

The Unified Government (UG) will be collaborating with various agencies to address this growing trend that impacts children, women, and men throughout the community. Currently there are over 335 households and 723 individuals who receive emergency assistance report being homeless, according to reports from a homeless study conducted on KCK.



“We have been now for three years doing a report on the state of homelessness in Wyandotte County. We are one of the few counties that have taken on this task,” the Chair of the Wyandotte Homeless Services Coalition (WHSC), Commissioner Pat Pettey said.

More than 11,000 meals are served to individuals at the Willa Gill soup kitchen each month, including 1,550 meals to children. The report also reveals that there are approximately 2,271 homeless people in Wyandotte County on any given night. These overwhelming figures have prompted CEO/Mayor Joe Reardon to establish a Health and Community Task Force to address the issues of homelessness.

“I think the challenge for a community like Kansas City, Kansas is if we want to remain on a path of success we have to address the health and needs of our community as a whole,” said Mayor Reardon to crowd representing various community outreach agencies.

Kansas City, Kansas has only 41 shelter beds for men, women, children and their families. The WHSC’s first goal is to create additional shelter beds in Wyandotte County. The Mayor’s initiative to end homelessness is the first step toward this goal.



In addition to the lack of beds, another major challenge in addressing the needs of the homeless in KCK is funding. The UG will contribute \$300,000 in stimulus dollars to renovate a building at 17th Street and Quindaro Boulevard. This facility will be used as a nonprofit shelter for men with 20 beds. Future plans also include additional beds to house women and children. The UG is asking for support from all community organizations; private and public to address the needs of homelessness through financial contributions for annual operating costs that add up to \$188,000 each year.

“I think the critical message that I carry here today is that we can’t address this issue and we can’t move forward with making sure that everyone in our community has a home if we don’t collectively work together. It takes all of us to address the issues of homelessness,” Reardon Said. “We’re leveraging every federal asset we can along with continuum of care to address this issue. It takes funding to make ongoing operations successful. Part of my hope and my effort to you work with you is to raise those dollars to make sure as we add emergency shelter beds that we have the dollars in place to create this continuum of care along homelessness that is sustainable.”



The WHSC is planning to host a Mayor’s Pajama Party on November 19th from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Salvation Army Harbor Lights Village located at 6723 State Ave. The purpose of PJ Day is to help raise funds to pay operating expenses at the new shelter. Any additional money would be used for homeless programs in the community. They are encouraging businesses, schools and everyone throughout the community to wear their PJ’s that day in honor of the homeless.

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If you’re interested in providing your services in this effort, please contact 913-573-5120 or aabel@ycokck.org or visit www.wycohsc.org.