

**H.E.L.P.**  
**(Homeless Experience Legal Protection)**  
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## **I. Introduction to our Homeless Program**

Thank you for participating in our effort to provide legal consultation services and notary services for the homeless in our community. The following is what we are presently doing:

1. Legal consultation services : Lawyers are providing legal consultation services at Immaculate Conception Center (next to Jesuit Church on Baronne Street), and at St. Joseph's Center (a trailer in the parking lot of St. Joseph's Church on Tulane Avenue) every Monday and Wednesday from 7:45 AM - 8:45 AM.. They are consulting with anywhere from 4 - 15 "clients" at each center each day. Usually, no follow up legal representation is required. However, if it is necessary, the lawyer who initially consulted with the client will follow-up. If the lawyer doesn't know how to help with the particular legal issue, we have a list of lawyers who have agreed to answer questions, or even represent the person on a pro bono basis in particular areas of the law such as Social Security benefits, Veterans benefits, criminal law, etc. The lawyer can ask them for help, or obviously obtain assistance from another member of his/her firm. If all else fails, the lawyer can refer the person to the Pro Bono Project, NOLAC, or the Advocacy Center. The program began in May 2004. We now have firms who have volunteered to provide legal consultation services through the end of 2005. In September 2004 we began providing consultation services at the New Orleans Mission every Monday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. On the first day that your firm serves, we have volunteer attorneys who will be present to "show you the ropes" and to otherwise assist you. We ask that you bring your notary seal, as well as some of your letterhead stationary.
2. Notary services: One of the major problems facing the homeless is when they lose their identification. Without an ID, they can not spend the night in a homeless shelter, they can't cash their SS or VA checks, and they are even subject to arrest. It takes approximately thirty days for a person who loses his ID to obtain substantiating documentation so that person can receive a replacement identification card. The Office of Motor Vehicles (thanks to Deputy Commissioner Rosemary Fritz) is now accepting as substantiating documentation to replace lost IDs, a certified copy of the person's ID. As a result, lawyers and notaries are going to Immaculate Conception Center, St. Joseph's Center, Ozanam Inn, and the New Orleans Mission and are making certified copies of the "clients' " IDs. The certified copies are then kept on file at the particular center where they were made, and if a person loses his ID, he merely returns to the center, obtains the certified copy of his ID, and goes to the OMV. The OMV will then issue the person a replacement ID. We schedule attorneys and notaries Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:00 AM at Immaculate Conception, Wednesdays at 1:00 PM at St. Joseph's, at 1:30 PM on Thursdays at Ozanam Inn, and at the New Orleans Mission at 5:30 PM on Wednesdays. The response by the 2 attorneys and notaries has been overwhelming. We now have approximately 350 volunteers. Please remember to bring your notary seal.

The contact people at each of the centers are:

Immaculate Conception - Don Thompson 931-5365 [dthompson79@bellsouth.net](mailto:dthompson79@bellsouth.net)  
St. Joseph's Center - Sr. Vera Butler 522-3186 ext. 25 [vbutler7@bellsouth.net](mailto:vbutler7@bellsouth.net)  
Ozanam Inn - Deacon G 523-1184 [inno@bellsouth.net](mailto:inno@bellsouth.net)  
Clarence Adams 523-1184 [cjadamsr@bellsouth.net](mailto:cjadamsr@bellsouth.net)  
New Orleans Mission - Ron Gonzales 523-2116 ext. 201 [ron@ilsnova.com](mailto:ron@ilsnova.com)  
(714)206-3204

We have compiled this information to assist you in better serving the needs of our homeless brothers and sisters. If you have any questions whatsoever, please feel free to call or e-mail me anytime. You can reach me at 589-7590 (office), 834-5865 (home), and 236-4785 (cell). My e-mail address is [jay\\_zainey@laed.uscourts.gov](mailto:jay_zainey@laed.uscourts.gov).

## **II. Schedule of Law Firms Providing Legal Consultation Services at Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph's Centers**

In May 2004, when the program began the firm of Lemle Kelleher provided legal consultation services at Immaculate Conception, and attorneys Shawn Holahan, Kevin McGlone and Thomas Madigan provided legal consultation services at St. Joseph's. The following firms, members of the St. Thomas More Catholic Lawyers Association and the Louis Martinet Society have provided, and are scheduled to provide, legal consultation services at both centers on Mondays and Wednesdays.

### **MONDAYS:**

#### **JANUARY:**

Berrigan Litchfield  
(Contact person: John Litchfield)

#### **FEBRUARY**

Montgomery Barnett  
(Contact person: Phil Radecker)

#### **MARCH**

McCranie Sistrunk  
(Contact person: Burgess McCranie)

#### **APRIL**

King Leblanc  
(Contact person: David Kennedy)

### **WEDNESDAYS:**

Staines & Epling  
(Contact person: Tony Staines)

Stone Pigman  
(Contact person: Steve Bullock)

Burke and Mayer  
(Contact person: David L. Carrigee)

Hailey McNamara  
(Contact person: Mickey de Laup)

**MAY**

Lemle Kelleher  
(Contact person: Ben Grau)

Proskauer Rose  
(Contact person: Rene Thorne)

**JUNE**

Adams and Reese  
(Contact person: Christy Kane)

St. Thomas More Association  
(Contact person: Duke Williams)

**JULY**

Jones Walker  
(Contact person: Mark Cunningham)

Louis Martinet Society  
(Contact person: Kelly Legier)

**AUGUST**

Sher Garner  
(Contact person: Kevin McGlone)

Phelps Dunbar  
(Contact person Mary Ellen Roy)

**SEPTEMBER**

McGlinchey  
(Contact person: Erin Parkinson)

Lobman Carnahan  
(Contact person: Tara Mason)

**OCTOBER**

Deutsch Kerrigan  
(Contact person: Tre' Roux)

Chaffe McCall  
(Contact person: Eric Gisleson)

**NOVEMBER**

Christovich and Kearney  
(Contact person: Brian DeVoss)

Barrasso Usdin  
(Contact person: Mary Cunningham)

**DECEMBER**

Gordon Arata  
(Contact person: Gregory Grimsal)

Gordon Arata  
(Contact person: Gregory Grimsal)

**III. List of Law Firms Providing Legal Consultation Services at the New Orleans Mission and at St. John's Community Center**

The following law firms provide legal consultation services at the New Orleans Mission on Mondays from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

**JANUARY**

King LeBlanc  
(Contact person: David Kennedy)

**FEBRUARY**

Chopin Wagar

(Contact person: Dick Chopin)

**MARCH**

Liskow Lewis

(Contact person: Pat Morris)

**APRIL**

Gainsburg Benjamin

(Contact person: Gerry Meunier)

**MAY**

St. Thomas More Catholic Lawyers' Association

(Contact person: Duke Williams)

**JUNE**

Schonekas, Winsberg, Evans and McGoey

(Contact person: Kyle Schonekas)

**JULY**

Lamothe & Hamilton

(Contact person: Charlie Hamilton)

**AUGUST**

Bernard Cassisa

(Contact person: Carl Giffin)

**SEPTEMBER**

Barrios, Kingsdorf and Casteix

(Contact person: Dawn Barrios)

**OCTOBER**

Leake and Anderson

(Contact person: Dean Arruebarrena)

**NOVEMBER**

Baker Donelson

(Contact person: Mimi Koch)

**DECEMBER**

Gainsburg Benjamin

(Contact person: Gerry Meunier)

#### **IV. Schedule of Notary Services**

The following are dates and times for the provision of Notary services at the various centers:

Immaculate Conception Center TUESDAYS/THURSDAYS 11:00 AM  
St. Joseph's Center WEDNESDAYS 1:00 PM  
The New Orleans Mission WEDNESDAYS 5:30 PM  
Ozanam Inn THURSDAYS 1:30 PM

#### **V. Indoctrination**

Duke Williams, Val Exnicios, Ben Grau, Shawn Holohan and Woody Walk have graciously offered to indoctrinate members of the various law firms on their first day on the job at the homeless centers. At least one of them will meet you on your first day to introduce you to the staff and to "show you the ropes". If you would like to discuss anything with them in advance, you can reach them as follows:

Duke Williams (800) 256-1533 [duke525@msn.com](mailto:duke525@msn.com)  
Val Exnicios 245-1612 [vpexnicios@exnicioslaw.com](mailto:vpexnicios@exnicioslaw.com)  
Ben Grau 584-9145 [bgrau@lemle.com](mailto:bgrau@lemle.com)  
Shawn Holahan 569-2931 [shawnh@spsr-law.com](mailto:shawnh@spsr-law.com)  
Woody Walk 522-6090 [fwalkjr@cpla.nocoxmail.com](mailto:fwalkjr@cpla.nocoxmail.com)

#### **VI. Referral Services**

To assist you when you consult with your clients at the various centers we will be providing you with a brochure prepared by the Unity for the Homeless which is a compilation of services available to the homeless population in New Orleans. Additionally, the following attorneys are ready, willing and able to assist you with various problems which face our homeless brothers and sisters. Please feel free to call or e-mail these attorneys on any question that you may have in their particular field of expertise. The referral attorney will be more than happy to answer any questions that you may have, and will also be willing to provide pro bono legal representation for the client in the event that you are unable to do so. Please feel free to call the people listed below, or give their name and phone number to your clients. Be sure to have your clients inform referral counsel that they received the attorney's name from the volunteer lawyer at the community center.

VETERANS BENEFITS and related issues dealing with veterans  
Duke Williams (800) 256-1533 [duke525@msn.com](mailto:duke525@msn.com)

CRIMINAL DEFENSE REPRESENTATION (at New Orleans Municipal Court)  
Norman Pettingill 821-9142 [nap61@aol.com](mailto:nap61@aol.com)

CRIMINAL DEFENSE REPRESENTATION  
Kevin J. Christensen 309-6400 [kjc@kevinchristensen.net](mailto:kjc@kevinchristensen.net)  
William L. Crull, III 581-7700

SOCIAL SECURITY, EMPLOYMENT LAW, FOOD STAMPS and related issues...  
John Keeling 529-1000 ext.252 [jekeeling@nolac.org](mailto:jekeeling@nolac.org)

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY and projects to help serve the legal interest of  
indigents in the community access justice  
Idela Wilson 862-8848  
Public Law Center a joint program with Tulane and Loyola

EVICTIONS, PRISONER'S RIGHTS, and other legal issues related to the homeless  
Michael F. Vitt 568-1990 x 121 [mvitt@lawla.com](mailto:mvitt@lawla.com)

TITLE WORK, and related real estate issues:  
Jim Flanagan 837-4950 [JTF@mollereflanagan.com](mailto:JTF@mollereflanagan.com)

## **VII. VIA Link/United Way 211 Call Center - Social Service Assistance**

Below is a brief description of the information available to assist volunteer lawyers with social services issues they may run into while counseling clients at the homeless center clinics from the VIA Link Community Resources Directory and the information and referral services available from the counselors at the VIA Link/United Way 211 call center. The call center has been alerted that there may be calls coming in from volunteers and clients in this program. If anyone has further questions about the VIA Link, please call Mary Beth Meyer. Mary Beth can be reached as follows:

Mary Beth Meyer  
Christovich & Kearney, L.L.P.  
Pan American Life Center, Suite 2300  
601 Poydras Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130-6078  
DID: (504) 593-4324  
FAX: (504) 561-5743  
[mbmeyer@christovich.com](mailto:mbmeyer@christovich.com)

In order to assist clients' with their social service needs that are not strictly of a legal nature, as described by clinic volunteers, copies of the *VIA Link Community Resource Directory*, a comprehensive listing of numerous social service resources in the New Orleans area, have been

provided at each of the clinics. The online version of this directory is at **WWW.vialink.org**. The online directory is continually updated and contains the most current information on available programs and contacts.

We would also like call the volunteer lawyers' attention to the VIA Link/United Way **211** call center. **211** is the nationally designated number for easy access to community resources. The **211** call center is a valuable community service that is available to help you help your homeless clients get assistance with their non-legal, social service needs. By dialing 211, you or your client will reach counselors who can provide information and referrals for social services, including the basics of food, utility assistance, child care, etc. and numerous other social services that are available in the New Orleans metropolitan area. It is important to note that if you or your clients are using a **cell phone** or calling from one of the office buildings with phone systems that are not programmed for **211** calls, you will need to call **269-2673** (COPE) for this service (1-800-749-2673 toll free if outside the 504 calling area). Printed cards with these numbers will be available for you to distribute to your clients at each of the centers.

In addition to information and referral services, the VIA Link call center also provides suicide prevention and crisis intervention counseling 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The early morning hours when the law clinics are open are among the busiest times at the call center. The counselors are answering calls on a priority basis as promptly as possible with the resources available, however, you may have to wait to speak to a counselor; if so, your patience will be appreciated. Of course, the counselors' ability to help clients obtain utilities assistance, or to place clients in substance abuse programs, for example, will be limited by the availability of funds or services in the community at any given time. Sadly, in too many situations, the safety net is not there.

#### **VIII. Procedure to be applied if a person does not have a certified copy of identification on file at a homeless center.**

Ozanam Inn and St. Joseph's Center have a procedure to aid the homeless with obtaining new I.D.'s. The client merely brings a copy of his/her birth certificate to Ozanam Inn during regular business hours, and asks one of the staff members to complete an 'Assistance Request' form. Ozanam Inn's regular business hours are 8am - 4pm.

#### **IX. Obtaining a Birth Certificate When a Person Has No Identification**

In addition to providing legal consultation and notary services, we are scheduling attorneys to specifically handle assisting the homeless in obtaining their birth certificates. Attorneys are scheduled to provide these services at Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph's on Mondays at 11:00 AM. According to Ms. Valerie Helmstetter with the Bureau of Vital Statistics, there are three ways in which a person can obtain a birth certificate without having identification:

1. If the person was in jail, he merely needs to present a copy of his prison release papers or prison identification card to the Bureau of Vital Statistics;
2. AN ATTORNEY (such as our volunteer attorneys) can request the birth certificate if the attorney writes a letter on his/her letterhead stationary, and states that he/she represents the person for purposes of obtaining a birth certificate. (See R.S. 40:41, as amended). The attorney will have to personally submit the letter, OR, the attorney, on his/her letterhead, can authorize someone (i.e. the director of the homeless center) to obtain the birth certificate on behalf of the person. There is a fee of \$9 for a birth card, and \$15 for a birth certificate.
3. Birth certificates can now be ordered on-line at [www.vitalchek.com](http://www.vitalchek.com). Ms. Helmstetter advised me that other documents (such as an application to register to vote, or Social Security card) can be used by the person to obtain his/her birth certificate. Remember, if a person does not have an ID, and does not have a certified copy on file at the center, he/she has to obtain a birth certificate (as outlined above), and merely has to take it to Ozanam Inn. Ozanam Inn will then assist that person in obtaining an identification card.

State residents are able to order copies of birth and death certificates by using the following website: [www.vitalchek.com](http://www.vitalchek.com).

#### **X. Cover Letter to Authorize Staff Member of Homeless Center to Obtain Client's Birth Certificate**

This is a sample of the cover letter that you can use when you request the Bureau of Vital Statistics to allow Don Thompson, Sr. Vera, Rusty Wirth, Deacon G, or their designee, to obtain the person's birth certificate [see Section VIII(2)]. This should also be typed on your letterhead.

Dear Sirs:

Attached to this cover letter is a request that you issue a birth certificate to my client (name). This letter further authorizes (Sr. Vera, Don Thompson, etc.) to obtain from the Bureau of Vital Statistics my client (name)'s birth certificate.

Thanking you for your cooperation, I am

Very truly yours,

A staff member will prepare this cover letter on your stationary, and this will be included with your letter of representation which will enable the staff member, or designee to pick up your client's birth certificate.

## **XI. Transportation to the Office of Motor Vehicles to Obtain Identification Cards**

On Tuesdays or Thursdays at 8:30am the staff at Ozanam Inn, with the help of Rusty from the New Orleans Mission, will take those people wanting transportation from Ozanam Inn to Troop B to get their I.D.'s.

## **XII. TB Tests**

When the homeless are incarcerated they are administered a TB test. They have to be given a TB test in order to get into the shelters. Dr. Richard Ingles, an Orleans Parish Prison physician, has agreed to send a copy of the TB test to the staff members of the centers upon receipt of a form that he has prepared for them to complete. This cuts down on the cost of having the clients get another test. Additionally, this helps speed up their ability to get into homeless shelters and prevents the three day delay of getting another TB test - three days in which the homeless would otherwise be living "on the streets".

In the event that you meet with an individual who has recently been released from jail and who needs his TB test results, let either Sister Vera at St. Joseph's, Don Thompson at Immaculate Conception, Deacon G at Ozanam Inn or Rusty at the New Orleans Mission know, they will complete the appropriate form and fax it to the prison, and they will receive the test results to give to the client.

## **XIII. Sample Issues Being Addressed at Homeless Centers**

A number of volunteers have asked about issues being addressed at the homeless centers. The following is an excerpt from a message I received from Brad Belsome, a member of Lemle Kelleher, who, along with other members of his firm, provided volunteer consultation at the Immaculate Conception Center during our first month with the homeless program. It provides a great summary of issues that were addressed:

*“Below please find my comments/suggestions to your questions regarding the homeless legal consultation program.”*

### **(1) What issues were presented to you?**

Most of the clients I have dealt with have had a problem with SSI benefits being denied or discontinued and require help with / advice regarding the appeal process. This was far and away the most presented issue to me. I had one individual with a problem regarding VA health benefits due to a discharge from the army prior to the required two year period of service. One client had a problem with traffic tickets and a suspended drivers license, which prevented him from obtaining re-employment as a truck driver after time served in jail. An individual who needed assistance in completing SSI forms due to illiteracy. A few individuals were seeking financial assistance for

various reasons. (Energy bill, which considering this is a homeless shelter was a little strange). One client could not afford required prescription medication. Finally, a few of the people I have dealt with related stories of mass conspiracies against them; medical malpractice committed against them (based on the outrageous account delivered, I believe this story was prompted by my initially answering the question, "what type of lawyer are you"); a family fraud relating to the exact nature of a testamentary disposition contained in a parent's will for which a succession was opened in St. Mary Parish in the mid 1970's and until now he did not care that he was fraudulently induced into signing away his actual inheritance and only receiving roughly half of his claimed entitlement; and an individual who claimed to have been run over by an alcoholic doctor in Eugene Oregon only six months ago resulting in a coma which lasted until roughly the week before he consulted me.

**(2) The approximate number of people with whom each of you spoke:**

I have been to the center twice. Once with Ricky Crisler on the day you were also present and again by myself the following Monday. The first time I was there, I spoke with four individuals and the second time I spoke with six. Thus, a total of ten people.

**(3) How much time did you have to spend "away from your normal daily functions"?**

Including walking to the center from the office, seeing clients, returning from the center and preparing a summarization email to Don, I would say that I have spent roughly four hours (2 hours per day of counseling) thus far.

**(4) Suggestions:**

As I indicated to you in previous correspondence, I believe that just a lawyer's presence in the center to allow individuals to be able to voice their stories helps out. SSI and other benefit programs is definitely an issue that does and will continue to come up at the center, so volunteers with experience in these matters is a good idea. You have provided a list of contacts for these areas of concern, so that will help tremendously. Other "issues" (as described above) can be helped simply by lending an ear. Finally, the ability to keep the clients on track must be stressed to all future volunteers. If you allow the clients to ramble, they will.

**XIV. Law Student Volunteers**

We are coordinating a program with Loyola Law School students in which they will assist the homeless apply for Social Security benefits. Loyola Law School students will meet at the Centers with homeless people who are interested in applying for Social Security benefits. Copies of the application, as well as Social Security approved medical release forms will be available at the center so that the students can assist the homeless in completing the application, and so that the students, with the executed medical release forms, can obtain copies of the applicants' medical records.

Once the student has the completed application and the medical records, he can accompany the person to the Social Security office to meet with the Social Security staff member, submit the application and determine if the staff member needs any further information. Since access to transportation is very limited, plans are underway to set aside a particular day of the week (bi-weekly) for the homeless and their law student volunteer to meet with the staff members to formally submit their applications and medical records, and that transportation for the applicant could be provided from the homeless center to the Social Security office.

This procedure benefits the applicant because it expedites processing his application since he will be submitting his medical records with his application. This procedure benefits the Social Security office because it decreases the amount of time a staff person takes in assisting a person in applying for benefits, as well as the time in requesting medical records and following up to make sure that the records are received. Another advantage is that those people who fit the criteria of being in dire need will be able to receive benefits to which they are entitled in an expeditious manner.

## **XV. Reflections By One of Our Volunteers**

Webster's defines ignorance as "the absence of knowledge." Several weeks ago I wrote to you regarding the "eye opening" experiences I had encountered as part and parcel of participating in your program to help the homeless. I know that you are extremely busy, and certainly apologize for intruding on your day, but I am compelled to share with you another poignant example of just how wrong, and ignorant, my preconceived notions of "the homeless" have proven to be. Before I joined your program, the "homeless" were, in my mind's eye, this mass of humanity with neither shelter nor gainful employment, and all OBVIOUSLY due to lack of ambition, laziness, etc. After all, anyone can get a job somewhere, right? McDonald's is always hiring, isn't it? Certainly anyone with even the slightest bit of desire can get a job washing dishes, hauling garbage, digging ditches, or something, right? Well, I have learned that is not only not always the case, it can be the norm in a surprisingly large number of homeless cases. Circumstance can strike in such a manner that, despite one's best efforts, a roof over one's head, and/or a job, are impossible to attain, or maintain. Case in point: A gentleman seeking help this past Wednesday presented with the following facts: I'll call him "Benjamin." Benjamin is a 35 year old gentleman of African-American descent who, until 5 weeks ago, had never been homeless in his life. Benjamin worked 2 part time jobs to provide for himself, i.e., he worked 3-4 days/week washing dishes and busing tables at a local cafeteria, and 1 day a week for a local construction company. Benjamin never received public assistance of any kind., i.e., no food stamps, welfare, disability, etc. The income from both jobs, while not exorbitant by any means, nonetheless provided for his sustenance. In June, Benjamin was working his construction job when a pipe broke, covering him in commercial grade cement. Apparently, commercial grade concrete contains various chemical compounds/hardeners/etc. that can cause severe chemical burns. Benjamin sustained 2nd and 3rd degree burns of his chest, stomach, and arms. Because of his burns, Benjamin was unable to work washing dishes or busing tables at the cafeteria, and was fired. Hold on, you might say: What about worker's compensation? Benjamin

was certainly hurt on the job and hence is entitled to W.C. benefits. True, but since Benjamin was injured on the job where he only worked an average of 1 day per week, the law mandates that his employer only has to pay him 66 & 2/3rds % of his average weekly wage; which in Benjamin's case amounts to 2/3rds of 1 day's wages of \$56, i.e., W.C. benefits of less than \$38/week. At \$38/week, Benjamin knew he could not pay his rent. Benjamin asked his landlord to bear with him until he could get back to work; his landlord evicted him. Benjamin is now homeless, without either job ,and "earning" the total sum of \$38/week. It is Benjamin's fervent desire to return to work as soon as humanly possible. His burns, however, will prevent him from doing so for at least another 4-6 weeks. Without a permanent address, Benjamin is worried that employers will not hire him once he is fit to return to work. Even if successful in securing employment, it will take him months to save enough money for the required damage deposit, and first month's rent, even for a modest one bedroom apartment. In the interim, Benjamin reports that he has never been more scared in his life. The "streets", he reports, are a dangerous place. Most nights he has been successful in securing a room at the Ozanam Inn or other homeless shelter; some nights he has not been so lucky, being relegated to sleeping in the bushes or in public parks, on top of his remaining belongings to prevent their theft. Benjamin reports that the police have stopped and questioned him 3 times in the past week. So far, he has avoided being arrested and charged with "obstructing a public passage" for standing on the sidewalk, or "criminal trespass" for sitting on the steps of One Shell Square or other downtown hi-rise buildings. Many of his fellow homeless have not been so lucky, having spent many nights in Central Lock-up. Naturally, Benjamin fears that his days as a "free" man may be numbered. Sooner or later he believes that he too will be arrested, essentially for being homeless. An arrest record will undoubtedly further hamper his efforts to secure employment. I volunteered to help the homeless program to help the disadvantaged. At this moment I fervently believe that I have benefitted much more than those I was, and am, seeking to help. At the very least, my "ignorance" of the plight of the homeless has been eradicated. . . .Val

## **XVI. Ciara Community Services**

Ciara Community Services  
Monday -Friday 8:30 a.m. -5:30 p.m.  
1131 St. Andrew Street, New Orleans, LA 70130  
Telephone: 524-8394

No person is excluded from service because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or physical handicap.

### **For the Adult with Chronic Mental Illness**

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans, through Ciara Community Services, offers residential and supportive services for persons in the greater New Orleans area with chronic mental illness.

### *Ciara House*

Adults who are recovering from mental illness or who may be having difficulties living in the community because of recurring episodes of mental illness may benefit from residency in Ciara House. Licensed by the State of Louisiana for 12 people, Ciara House, through its professional staff, provides a full range of individualized services to assist in mastering the activities of daily living. All residents participate in day programs which vary according to their needs and capabilities. Some residents work in vocational training programs with a goal of gainful employment. Some work as volunteers. Others use the day program to increase skills, such as cooking or money management, which will allow them to live independently. Residents have ample free time to pursue leisure activities of their choice. Most residents who complete the program are discharged to independent living settings. The program is funded by the State of Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and the Office of Mental Health.

### *Hospital Diversionary Program*

The Hospital Diversionary Program provides temporary housing for adults with mental illness who experience a psychiatric or housing crisis. The program is staffed 24 hours a day and provides meals and shelter. A discharge plan must be in place prior to admission. The Hospital Diversionary Program is licensed by the State of Louisiana and funded by the State of Louisiana Office of Mental Health.

### *Independent Living*

Ciara Independent Living Program provides housing and supportive living services to adults in the greater New Orleans area who are recovering from mental illness. Clients appropriate to this program have either successfully completed a group home placement or demonstrated a capacity for independent living. They may work, receive Supplementary Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSD), or be financially supported by family. The clients of the Independent Living Program work, go to day programs, or provide volunteer services during the day. Ciara bases its services on the concept of normalization, providing the least intrusive professional assistance needed. Rent, utilities, and supportive living fees are based on a sliding scale. Fees for services in private apartments depend on the cost of the apartment, supervision needs, and the income of the client.

## **XVII. Healthcare for the Homeless: HCH Adolescent Drop-In Center**

*Pathways to Youth at Risk: A service of the New Orleans Health Department's Healthcare for the Homeless Program, the Louisiana Office of Public Health Departments of HIV/AIDS and Family Planning, Tulane University Health Sciences Center Section of Adolescent Medicine and UNITY for the Homeless.*

Timeline of the history of the Drop-In Center:

1991 - Dr. Sue Ellen Abdalian, Head, Section of Adolescent Medicine (SAM), Tulane University Department of Pediatrics partners with NO/AIDS Task Force to establish street outreach with limited on-site medical and drop-in services, funding through the Tulane-LSU AIDS Clinical Trials Unit from NIH.

1993 - Dr. Sue writes an expansion grant for Health Care for the Homeless Program to expand medical services for homeless youth and youth at risk for homelessness, funding through the City of New Orleans Health Department's Health Care for the Homeless Program from the Bureau of Primary Health Care, HHS.

1994 - Drop-In Center moves to its present location at 1434 N. Rampart. The clinic occupies the first floor and the supportive services are housed on the second floor. Candace Degenstein, NP, sets up the site to provide comprehensive primary medical care to homeless youth. Medical students and residents assist. State of Louisiana, Office of Public Health, STD Program provides STD screening and treatment supplies.

1995 - Bridge House, a substance abuse facility, assumes control of the supportive services from NO/AIDS Task Force.

1997 - Edward Bonin joins the staff as Nurse Practitioner and medical services are expanded to five days a week, 9am – 5 pm.

2000 - Drop-In becomes the clinical site for Project ARC (Access to Reproductive Care) a project of Children's Hospitals FACES program to provide reproductive health services to at risk youth who are housed. Clinic hours are expanded Wednesday evening and Saturday morning. Nurse Practitioner Students from Loyola University and Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center begin clinical preceptorships in the Drop-In Center.

2001 - Louisiana State Office of Public Health, Family Planning Program contracts with the Drop-In to provide reproductive health services to homeless youth. This is a service contract only, providing supplies for the services. LEGAL assumes control of the supportive services from Bridge House. Contract with Louisiana State Office of Public Health, HIV/AIDS program to provide prevention services for homeless youth. Health Educator / Program manager funded through additional dollars from the CDC.

2002 - Supportive services comes under the control of SAM. All services at the Drop-In Center now directed by Edward Bonin, NP. Street outreach grant awarded by the Administration for Children and Families, HHS. Outreach workers go out into the community to assist homeless youth and youth at risk for homelessness access available services. Junior II Nursing students from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center begin reproductive health rotations in the Drop-In Center.

2003 - Services provided by Project ARC now under the control of the Drop-In through a

contract with Louisiana State Office of Public Health, Family Planning Program. This contract provides for supplies and salaries. Senior II Nursing students begin community health rotations in the Drop-In Center. Dr. Thomas Eccles joins the SAM faculty.

### **Services provided by the Drop-In Clinic:**

(9am – 5pm M-F)

Primary health care for homeless youth or youth at risk for homelessness (11 – 23)

Reproductive health care for homeless youth or youth at risk for homelessness (11 – 23)

Family planning and STD screening and testing

Urgent health care for homeless youth or youth at risk for homelessness (11 – 23)

(5pm – 9pm Mon & Wed, 9am – 1pm Sat)

Reproductive health care (Family Planning and STD screening) for **all** youth at risk

(9am – 12noon Wed & Fri)

HIV rapid testing for **all** who request

### **Supportive services provided by the Drop-In Center for homeless clients:**

Case management Showers

Telephone access for clients Washer/Dryer

Internet access for clients Street Outreach

Snack food HIV/STD peer-led group sessions

### **XVIII. Pro Bono Project Intake Form**

If you have a case which will take extensive time, please contact the Pro Bono Project Executive Director Rachel Piercey at 581-4043 to request the Pro Bono Project Intake Form.