



NEWS ADVISORY

Jan. 28, 2019

For immediate release

Project Community Connect Set for Feb. 1

The Missoula At-Risk Housing Coalition will hold its 13th Project Community Connect event on Friday, Feb. 1, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Zootown Church, 3623 Brooks St.

Project Community Connect is a one-day, one-stop service event for people who are experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless. Participants will be able to receive free haircuts, medical and dental care, winter clothing, housing information, employment information, financial counseling, benefits enrollment, legal aid, senior services, personal hygiene packets, pet services and more. This care and outreach will be provided with the direct help of more than 75 nonprofit service providers, local businesses, churches, government agencies and more than 100 community volunteers.

We expect to provide services to more than 350 people. The event is free, and no appointments are necessary.

Objectives of Project Community Connect:

1. To connect people who are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless to core services that can help lead to self-sufficiency through a one-stop service model.
2. To connect volunteers with people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness for a day of service, as well as foster future opportunities to help people in need.
3. To connect service providers with each other to serve people who are experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless in a new and different way.
4. To demonstrate broad community support to those experiencing homelessness in Missoula and to provide human connections to people who are often marginalized.

Our local Project Community Connect is part of a national movement and historically coincides with the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Point-in-Time Survey, a homeless census, which takes place every January. This helps our community monitor our progress toward ending homelessness, and it also determines how much federal funding we receive for local housing projects. The Point-in-Time survey begins at sundown on Jan. 31 and ends at sunrise on Feb. 1 – we survey people who are staying in shelters and outside during these hours. At Project Community Connect, we survey all participants who attend the event in the hopes of surveying people we might have missed the night before. Our current homeless numbers are trending down: the January Point-in-Time homeless census in 2018 showed 319 homeless – down 7.26 percent from 2017's 344 and down nearly 20 percent over three years (344 versus 395, a 12.9 percent decrease from 2016).

Interested in helping? Project Community Connect seeks more volunteers to assist with the event, and we're still accepting donations in several categories (winter clothing, pet food/supplies and hygiene items). More information can be found by visiting the event's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MissoulaPCC/> or by contacting Theresa Williams.

About Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2124/Homeless-Initiatives>

About the At-Risk Housing Coalition: The Missoula At-Risk Housing Coalition (ARHC) is an ongoing formal task force comprised of representatives from health and human service agencies and governmental departments. ARHC works on issues surrounding low-income housing and homelessness in Missoula and coordinates the local effort to plan and provide comprehensive services through a continuum of care model.

For interviews contact:

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Rebecca Stancil, Family Self Sufficiency Director, Missoula Housing Authority and event project co-manager; 549-4113, ext. 106, Rstancil@missoulahousing.org

April Seat, Director of Outreach, Union Gospel Mission of Missoula and Point-in-Time project co-planner; 760-628-4875, outreach@ugmofmissoula.org

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