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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

PUBLIC HEARING

4

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD

5

DEVELOPMENT and THE HOMELESS

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, November 9, 2004
2:25 p.m.

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RESOLUTION 040796 - Resolution authorizing
the Committee on Housing, Neighborhood
Development and the Homeless to conduct
hearings on the economic impact that
homelessness has caused in the city and the
possible implementation of a plan to
eradicate homelessness in the City of
Philadelphia in ten years.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL, Chair
COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN JUAN RAMOS
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good

3 morning. We remind those who are on the
4 Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development
5 and the Homeless that we are ready to begin
6 our hearing. Again, we remind any of my
7 colleagues who are in their offices that we
8 are ready to begin Housing, Neighborhood
9 Development and the Homeless. We realize that
10 this was a resolution that has passed, but we
11 certainly invite you to come down. We are
12 ready to begin our hearings. Since the
13 resolution passed City Council on
14 approximately September 23rd, we will begin
15 our hearings.

16 This is a great day. We welcome all
17 of you who are here. This is a day I'll
18 always remember because this is my late
19 mother's birthday. So we scheduled it on my
20 mom's birthday, and it's a day I will always
21 remember. I love dealing with this issue, and
22 I loved her more than life itself.

23 Now that we've called this meeting
24 into session, we will ask the Clerk to read
25 the title of the resolution as well as the

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2 resolution itself.

3 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 040796, a
4 resolution authorizing the Committee on
5 Housing, Neighborhood Development and the
6 Homeless to conduct hearings on the economic
7 impact that homelessness has caused in the
8 City and the possible implementation of a plan
9 to eradicate homelessness in the City of
10 Philadelphia in 10 years.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
12 very much.

13 Councilwoman Miller is here. We
14 thank her for being here.

15 And let me say that this resolution
16 was introduced to deal with homelessness as an
17 issue and to talk about eradicating it within
18 10 years.

19 The Chair wants to thank Rob Hess,
20 the Deputy Managing Director of Special Needs
21 Housing and the Director of Office of
22 Emergency Shelter and Services who is here.

23 (Applause.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And we see
25 Letty and Roberta, all of them really put this

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2 about a 10-year plan to eradicate
3 homelessness.

4 We continue to say that we can do
5 that because everybody knows where everybody
6 is. We all know where our colleagues are. We
7 all know where those are who need housing. We
8 know where they are beneath the ground. We
9 know where they are still in the subways,
10 underneath bridges, and even abandoned homes.
11 Everybody knows where they are. So we have
12 the opportunity to reach out to give them the
13 support they need.

14 Councilman Juan Ramos is here. We
15 thank him for being here.

16 We're going to be holding hearings
17 to talk about what's going to be happening
18 also with the gas crisis because we're afraid
19 that we're going to have people with kerosine
20 heaters and people who can't survive the cold
21 weather and that, again, after eradicating
22 death of lack of heat, we will have those
23 problems again.

24 But back to the issue at hand. Let
25 me say that the homeless solution started in

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2 Philadelphia many, many years ago. When
3 Lucien Blackwell entered politics, he was
4 already dealing with people in need. And he
5 went in the State House in 1972 and came here
6 in 1976 when then Mayor Frank L. Rizzo was in
7 office and called a meeting in the Mayor's
8 office to deal with the issue.

9 Then Commissioner Sosnowski was head
10 of Department of Human Service, and she along
11 with the Mayor, Lucien and many other people,
12 myself included, were there to talk about the
13 issue of homelessness and what it would take
14 to eradicate it.

15 We want to say a special thanks to
16 Lou Sounder, many of you know has been around
17 a long time who works so hard --

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: -- and who
20 has helped countless Philadelphians and others
21 to certainly do what he could to help
22 everybody in need.

23 And let me finally say that this
24 time we believe we have the commitment. We
25 believe with all of the stakeholders, with Rob

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2 Hess, with Gloria Guard who has the oldest
3 shelter in the state that comes out of West
4 Philadelphia, we're pleased for that, with the
5 Archdiocese, with Sister Mary and all the
6 stakeholders that in spite of the outside
7 influences, in spite of the hard economic
8 times we find ourselves in, we truly believe
9 that we can eradicate homelessness in
10 Philadelphia within 10 years.

11 We have invited some people who will
12 be here. Reverend Wells will be here. When
13 he comes, we will let you know that we're
14 working with him. He has two properties. And
15 we talked with Rob Hess just yesterday that we
16 want to work with him to deal with people who
17 are on dialysis. They may have other issues;
18 they may have AIDS, they may be homeless, but
19 we want to help deal with people who are on
20 dialysis, and that's his focus.

21 Some years ago, we went through that
22 where he had a house to deal with people who
23 had TB. And you know, when you have TB and
24 other issues, it was very, very resistant,
25 very, very hard to deal with people with drug

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2 issues with TB.

3 So we believe that the success of
4 our problem is commitment, and we believe it
5 is in dealing with people who have specific
6 needs; those who have AIDS, those who have
7 drug or alcohol problems, those who are just
8 homeless, those who are seniors, those who are
9 families, men who are taking care of children.
10 We believe that Philadelphia breaks records
11 and receives national attention because we
12 found a way to deal with people no matter
13 where they are and to deal with their issues
14 and the problems they find themselves in.

15 So as many of you know, I consider
16 this closest to my heart in politics. It's
17 what God gave Lucien and me to do. This is
18 the part I love about being an elected
19 official because it gives me the ability to
20 help people in need, it gives me the ability
21 to deal with homelessness and housing, and
22 it's what I love most to do.

23 So we thank you all again.

24 (Applause.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Now we're

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2 going to ask Rob Hess if he would stay at the
3 witness table. If our agenda is correct,
4 we're going to start with Reggie Morrow. And
5 let me say that Reggie Morrow is -- he has a
6 day job, but he's also been our Committeeman
7 in the 46th Ward. I'm Ward Leader there, so
8 we're going to give a little credit there.
9 And he's going to certainly start us out.
10 This is Reginald Morrow. He's going to start
11 us out with the Star Spangled Banner. He'll
12 be back later because he's written a special
13 song for us dealing with people in need.

14 Reggie.

15 MR. MORROW: Good morning, Honorable
16 Councilwoman and all the honorable,
17 distinguished Councilpeople that are
18 listening. I'd like to sing a song that was
19 written back in 1842 by a young lady named
20 Francis Scott Key, and it's entitled The Star
21 Spangled Banner.

22 (Singing.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
24 Mr. Morrow.

25 Let me likewise note that

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2 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown is here.

3 And they are all members of the Housing,

4 Neighborhood Development and Homeless

5 Committee.

6 Reverend Brian Jenkins is due to

7 give us a blessing. We note he is here with

8 his wife and his twins. Again, he's the

9 reason why the Parkway is in order. He's been

10 wonderful. He has a church on Spring Garden

11 Street, and all of you know him because he

12 serves us all.

13 (Applause.)

14 REVEREND JENKINS: Good morning. If

15 we can stand for the Star Spangled Banner,

16 we're definitely going to stand up for the

17 Lord. Is that all right?

18 I know this is City Council, but if

19 we're going to make it, if we're going to

20 change the lives of the homeless and those

21 that we reach, we need the Lord on our side.

22 He said in the scripture that the poor will

23 always be among us. And, sure, we have a goal

24 to end homelessness, but the reality is, is

25 that there's always going to be somebody in

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2 need. It's important that we seek God's help
3 that we'll be able to be that answer that they
4 need in their time of need. Let us look to
5 the Lord.

6 Dear Father in heaven, we just thank
7 you, God, for this opportunity, God, to seek
8 your face. We thank you, Lord, for those that
9 you have put in authority over the City and
10 placed in places of leadership that we might
11 help those in need. We pray for Councilwoman
12 Jannie Blackwell and Robert Hess and all those
13 that are involved in this Committee to help
14 the homeless and the poor. But, Lord, we're
15 seeking your face today because we need your
16 help, we need your direction, and we need your
17 guidance.

18 We pray for help, God, for those
19 that are downtrodden, for those that are in
20 despair and those who are without hope that we
21 might be able to give them the answer that
22 they need that they may have hope. We just
23 pray, God, you would allow us to be the
24 vessels that will allow every valley in their
25 lives to be lifted up and every mountain and

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2 hill shall be made low and that the rough
3 places in their lives can be made plain that
4 the glory of the Lord might be revealed and
5 all flesh shall see it together.

6 Lord, we pray for the Mayor of this
7 City. We ask you to guide him and help him to
8 realize that all the resources need to be
9 poured out to make sure that the poor of this
10 City are taken of.

11 We thank you, Lord, for your word
12 through your servant Solomon that said, "He
13 that giveth to the poor shall not lack, but he
14 that hides his eyes shall have many a curse."
15 And we pray, God, that this City would pour
16 out its resources to make sure the poor of
17 this City are taken care of, that homelessness
18 should not be a rule but, Lord, but simply an
19 exception, God. And we thank you, God, for
20 ways being made for those that are needy. We
21 pray, God, that feeding programs would expand,
22 that people's needs be met, that housing
23 programs would expand, God, so people can have
24 a place to live. And we thank you, God, for
25 answers being made today, in Jesus' name we

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2 pray. Amen.

3 (Amen.)

4 REVEREND JENKINS: I was asked to
5 bring a singing group today, but my wife is
6 going to come and sing a very relevant song by
7 Yolanda Adams that says, "Save the World, Feed
8 the Hungry People."

9 (Singing.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
11 Ms. Jenkins. Thank you very, very much.

12 Now we'll hear from Rob Hess who is
13 a man who is living in this time in this place
14 where we need him.

15 I've been through a lot of
16 directors, and I remember when OESS was called
17 OSHA and I remember Relocation Services. We
18 can go back many, many more years than I'd
19 like to admit we can go back. But certainly,
20 we realize that we couldn't have the vision
21 and the commitment we have were it not for Rob
22 Hess, and we always applaud his leadership,
23 his creativity, and his commitment to get it
24 done no matter what.

25 So again, we thank you. We thank

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2 you for all you've done to help with this
3 hearing and for your commitment to people in
4 need across our City and certainly our
5 country. Thank you, Mr. Hess.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. HESS: Thank you. Thank you,
8 Madam Chair, Members of Council.

9 It's a humbling experience to be
10 here with you this morning and a privilege to
11 speak with you about the plight of people in
12 our community who are experiencing
13 homelessness. And I say the plight of our
14 community experiencing homelessness carefully
15 because I don't believe, as I know you don't
16 believe, Madam Chair, that homelessness needs
17 to be a condition in our society. We can do
18 better than that. We have to do better than
19 that. And in this City, I believe we are
20 doing better than that. And we are doing
21 better than that because of the commitment and
22 great leadership of this Mayor, of this
23 Managing Director, and of you. And let us not
24 forget that. People in this room should hear,
25 and I want to say publicly how much I

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2 appreciate your support. Over the last almost
3 four years, you have been tireless in your
4 support of our issues. I will tell you and
5 tell everyone in this room that I appreciate
6 it so much the times that you have answered
7 the phone at 2 o'clock in the morning, on
8 Sunday morning, on Saturday night, throughout
9 the day and throughout the night at
10 unbelievable times with issues that we
11 presented to you that we needed help on and
12 you've always answered and never said no. And
13 everybody should understand that your
14 commitment is much more than your spoken word.
15 In fact, Councilwoman, your actions speak so
16 loudly that I can't hear your word.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. HESS: We know that in you we
19 have a Councilwoman who cares more than I
20 would say any other city in this country would
21 be blessed to have that kind of commitment.
22 And so thank you so very much.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. HESS: Let me also say, everyone
25 else on your panel, all the other

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2 Councilmembers that are here share your
3 commitment, and I know that firsthand.
4 Councilwoman Brown is once again out raising
5 mittens and scarves for folks before the cold
6 weather gets here. Councilman Ramos has been
7 most recently very involved and interest in
8 the issue of domestic violence which we take
9 so very seriously. Councilwoman Tasco has
10 reached out to us on a number of occasions and
11 we appreciate that so very much.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It's
13 Councilwoman Miller.

14 MR. HESS: We have in this City a
15 commitment to this issue that I think is
16 second to none, and I say that having traveled
17 significantly in the couple of years all
18 across our great nation and meeting with city
19 councils and mayors.

20 We will hear later today from Philip
21 Mangano, the White House lead person on this
22 issue about how Philadelphia kind of stacks up
23 with the rest of the country. And I hope
24 people will listen very carefully to what he
25 has to say, because I think we stack up very

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2 well. I think we stack up well because of the
3 commitment of Council, the commitment of the
4 Mayor, the commitment of the Managing
5 Director, the commitment of a very mature
6 provider community that really cares about the
7 best interest of people experiencing
8 homelessness in our community.

9 And I also think that we've made as
10 much progress as we have because the entire
11 community has come together. If you look at
12 the makeup of the Mayor's Task Force on
13 Homelessness, for example, that's co-chaired
14 by Sister Mary Scullion who you'll hear from
15 later today and the Managing Director that
16 hopes to stop by as well. What you'll see is
17 a diverse group of businesses, community
18 associations, homeless service providers, and
19 many others that come together with one
20 purpose. The purpose being, to help eliminate
21 the experience of homelessness in our
22 community.

23 So when you say and you challenge
24 us, rightfully so, that we ought to be able to
25 end homeless in 10 years or even 5 years, then

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2 there is a group that is highly focused on
3 this and other groups in the community
4 focussed on this in a very important way, in a
5 way that distinguishes, I think, from other
6 cities across this country.

7 I would also say to you that the
8 Mayor back in June sent to the Mayor's Task
9 Force on Homelessness a letter. He sent it to
10 co-chairs, Sister Mary Scullion and Phil
11 Goldsmith, and the letter said they challenge
12 the Task Force to develop a plan to end
13 homelessness as we know it in this City over
14 the next 10 years.

15 Now, we all want to do it as quickly
16 as we can, but that's the charge from the
17 Mayor. We are in the process of holding a
18 variety of public meetings, meeting with
19 people experiencing homelessness across this
20 community, meeting with people providing
21 services, meeting with business leaders,
22 meeting with members of the foundation and
23 corporate community to fashion that plan.
24 That plan will go back to the Mayor's Task
25 Force early in the new calendar year and then

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2 go to the Mayor by early spring. And then
3 that plan, endorsed by the Mayor, will be the
4 plan that's our road map to moving toward an
5 ending of homelessness in our community.

6 So, again, we're very proud of
7 everyone that's here today. But let us not
8 continue in these hearings today without
9 recognizing the day-to-day struggles of poor
10 people in this City who are experiencing
11 homelessness and how hard they are working to
12 move out of homelessness into homes. And you
13 will hear from many of those folks today as
14 well.

15 So I am humbled and proud to be
16 here. I appreciate very much your leadership,
17 your calling of these hearings, all of your
18 Council colleagues that are so supportive, not
19 just on days like today, but every day of the
20 year. We thank you so very much.

21 With that, it's kind of my great
22 honor to be able to introduce our first
23 speaker of the day. I'm looking around to see
24 if we've had any changes. Our first speaker
25 of the day, who appropriately, is Gloria Guard

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2 from the People's Emergency Center. Now,
3 Gloria will talk to us about a variety of
4 things because she always does, and I always
5 listen carefully, but she will focus most
6 especially on the work that she and others
7 have done to fashion the beginnings of a plan
8 to address family homelessness in this City.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

10 Good morning. I'm always proud to say that
11 People's Emergency Center started many years
12 ago. They're the oldest shelter in the state.
13 We started when they were at 3311 Chestnut
14 Street in the church when it was like -- and
15 every Friday we had to make sure our folks
16 were straight when it was a weekend operation,
17 and Monday morning we had to find something
18 else to do. We go back longer than I'd like
19 to admit; however, we thank them for being who
20 they are and for their long-term commitment
21 over the years. And we're absolutely proud of
22 the fact they're the oldest shelter and that
23 they've come out of West Philadelphia.

24 Thank you, Gloria.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MS. GUARD: Thank you. Thank you
3 very much, Councilwoman.

4 Thank you, Rob, for not only today
5 but for your leadership in the office of many
6 names, because Jannie and I go back when it
7 was Adult Services.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
9 right.

10 MS. GUARD: PEC has been around for
11 30 years and, unfortunately, the problem
12 hasn't gone away. Our founders, Bob Edgar,
13 who is now the General Secretary of the United
14 Church of Christ in New York, and Jim Halem
15 really thought that homelessness was a problem
16 that could be solved in 1972. Unfortunately,
17 we're here today. And I think that given the
18 news this morning about PGW that the problems
19 are going to get worse.

20 I want to also just recognize Lu
21 Blackwell for the work he did.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

23 MS. GUARD: And we know we've got a
24 friend up in heaven looking out for us. And
25 to say good morning to Blondell Reynolds Brown

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2 and Councilman Juan Ramos.

3 I am thrilled and delighted that
4 this Committee is organized and it has the
5 kind of leadership we need on it and that
6 you're here today interested in talking about
7 homelessness and housing.

8 I want to quickly tell you about
9 family homelessness. You may be interested to
10 know that since 1980, family homelessness has
11 increased by a factor of 800 percent. This
12 year, 1 child out of 50 in America will not
13 have a home. Families with children represent
14 the fastest growing segment of the homeless
15 population and today make up about 40 percent
16 of the population.

17 I have to, off my testimony, say
18 that regardless of the leadership from Phil
19 Mangano who has a lot of people's respect that
20 I do not believe that the Bush Administration
21 is going to be a help to the City, to the
22 State or to homeless people over the next four
23 years. I think that the situation is going to
24 get worse. I think many of us in this room
25 fought not to have another four years of our

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2 current President. We lost that battle, and
3 I'm afraid we're going to have an uphill
4 battle with our folks in DC and that we need
5 to challenge them about what their real plans
6 are, what their real budget amounts are, and
7 what they plan to do on behalf of homeless
8 people, and in particular on behalf of
9 homeless families which have at the federal
10 level been relatively ignored.

11 There's been no studies for homeless
12 families paid for by HUD, there's been no
13 decent counting of homeless children by our
14 national government. Interestingly enough, if
15 you ask the federal government to tell you
16 about homeless children, they will be able to
17 tell you how many boys there are between 0 and
18 5, how many girls between 6 and 12, and how
19 many boys or girls between 12 and 18. That is
20 all they'll be able to tell you. They won't
21 tell you anything more about those kids
22 because they don't ask, they don't know, and I
23 believe they don't care. They don't know
24 whether these kids are premies or they have
25 normal birth weight, whether they're reading

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2 at the right grade level, whether or not
3 they're developmentally delayed, whether or
4 not they're on target, are they in school,
5 aren't they in school, have been inoculated,
6 haven't they been inoculated. We don't know
7 anything about homeless children nationally
8 except that information which is gathered by
9 the private sector through some private
10 research that's been done which, as we know,
11 is never going to equal the kind of research
12 that the government can pay for and has paid
13 for in the homeless arena but just not with
14 families and not with children.

15 Before I tell you a little bit more
16 about homeless families, I need to explain a
17 little bit about the housing market and how
18 that affects homeless families, particularly
19 here in Philadelphia. In the back of my
20 testimony on Page 8 is a little graphic on the
21 housing markets across the country, some
22 housing markets across the country. And what
23 this does is compare for you what's called a
24 strong housing market with a weak housing
25 market.

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2 Strong housing markets are in cities
3 like LA, New York, Boston, Washington, D.C.,
4 where all of us know if you live there, you're
5 paying 2, 3 times more than you are here for
6 your rent.

7 Well, this graphic takes what's
8 called the housing wage per hour. And this is
9 calculated on a two-bedroom fair market rent.
10 What it shows is that here in Philadelphia in
11 order to afford a fair market rent of a two
12 bedroom house, you need to be making about
13 \$17.15. To afford that very same apartment in
14 San Jose, California, you need to be making
15 twice as much, \$35 an hour.

16 So now you say, we all know this, we
17 know the difference between strong markets and
18 weak markets; what does that mean here? Well,
19 what that means here is that when you look at
20 homeless families in San Jose where you need
21 to make \$35 an hour to rent an apartment, you
22 will find a lot more families who simply don't
23 have the rent, who simply can't make that \$35
24 an hour. In fact, I dare say that lots of us
25 in this room would not be able to afford to

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2 live there. And therefore, homelessness in
3 the strong market cities often times is merely
4 a matter of affordability. Plus, there is
5 also a group of people in those cities who,
6 like homeless families in Philadelphia where
7 there's a very weak housing market and where,
8 in fact, housing is somewhat affordable
9 compared to other cities, what we see here is
10 that families who become homeless have
11 multiple problems. Affordability is not the
12 only problem; it is one of many. And so,
13 therefore, what we need to do when we look at
14 homeless families in Philadelphia is realize
15 that they have a complex array of barriers to
16 independence. It's not just the rent.

17 And consequently, in New York City
18 -- I don't know whether you saw the article in
19 New York about New York City helping about
20 5,000 homeless families by setting up their
21 own kind of parallel program to Section 8 with
22 their own money. In New York, that makes
23 sense because there's a lot of families up
24 there who just can't make the rent. It's not
25 the case in Philadelphia, and that's an

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2 important backdrop for all of us to look at.

3 What we know in Philadelphia is that
4 homeless families have a myriad of social and
5 personal problems and they're usually all
6 bundled up. There's rarely a family we've
7 seen at PEC in the last 31 years that only has
8 a rent affordability problem. The challenges
9 that face homeless families are poverty, high
10 rates of illness, high rates of developmental
11 delays among the children, academic problems.
12 We know -- and we will have a copy of the
13 study for you which is really hot off the
14 presses. This is a draft copy. We've
15 completed the first of its kind study on
16 homeless children in Philadelphia. And what
17 we know is that we see a lot of young families
18 with a lot of children who have enormous
19 amounts of problems. We also, by the way,
20 have the good news. We have very good
21 promising practices here in Philadelphia.

22 We need to look at these kids and
23 these families, otherwise, we know predictably
24 the research shows that children who are
25 homeless when they are children will come back

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2 as adults into the homeless system. So the
3 more work we can do with them today, the
4 better they are going to be in the future.
5 And I realize that we're trying to sign on to
6 a plan that says we're going to end
7 homelessness in 10 years, and God knows if
8 anyone would like to do that, I would like to
9 do that. I've devoted the last 20 years of my
10 life to this issue, and I would love to be
11 able to say we can end homelessness in 10
12 years. I am afraid that that's not very
13 realistic. We can try our best and it's
14 certainly a goal that we can look at, but in
15 the meanwhile, we need to come to grips with
16 the fact we've got families in shelters 6
17 months, 12 months, 18 months. And unless God
18 comes down and swoops down and hands us
19 thousands of Section 8's or millions and
20 billions of dollars, we're going to see those
21 families and they're going to be in shelter or
22 in transitional housing for a long time,
23 because I don't see the environment changing,
24 the horizon isn't going to change.
25 So given that backdrop, we've gone

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2 through and looked at the promising practices
3 in Philadelphia under the leadership of Rob
4 Hess, OESS, DHS, and also the private sector
5 to see what we could suggest, some low-cost,
6 no-cost ways we can change the system tomorrow
7 that would help homeless children. In this
8 document and in my testimony I lifted out the
9 recommendations.

10 We need to look at the physical
11 environment of some of our shelters. Some of
12 them are fabulous; some of them are not a
13 place that you would want a child to stay for
14 6 months, much less 12 months. We need to go
15 through each one of those facilities and make
16 it the best place, because for some of these
17 kids who are a matter of months old, saying
18 they're a year, that's over a third of their
19 lives, over half of their lives. We have to
20 make that the most child-friendly place we
21 can.

22 We have to make sure that the
23 shelters can, within their limited budget,
24 serve meals that the kids will eat and the
25 moms will eat. I know that running a

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2 facility, it's hard. It's not like a
3 restaurant. You only make one meal for
4 dinner. But we need to do as much as we can
5 to help those shelter providers and those
6 cooks prepare foods that is likely to be
7 eaten. Because when we have moms going out to
8 the local stores to get meals and chips for
9 their kids, it's money they really can't
10 afford to spend. That's a waste of the
11 resource and the kids aren't sitting down and
12 getting the right kind of nutrition.

13 We need to help our teens and
14 adolescents. There are many teens who are
15 homeless within their families. Maybe what we
16 need to do is the City needs to consider
17 having a couple of shelters that have all the
18 families with teens and let's bring some
19 programs in for those teens. Let's have some
20 active recreational things that they can enjoy
21 and do.

22 We made a lot of headway on all of
23 these areas, and I don't want to -- I mean,
24 there are some fabulous promising practices;
25 the Bright Spaces Project -- I think you're

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2 going to hear about that later. After school
3 programs. We need more. We just need more.
4 We can't have a child in a shelter without
5 something there, a program there, to help him
6 or her with his homework, with his
7 developmental steps. We need to strengthen
8 the connections between the education system
9 and the homeless system. When kids transfer
10 school as often as homeless kids transfer
11 school, what we're seeing is that they are
12 likely to end up being left behind by a year
13 just because they've changed schools so
14 frequently.

15 We need to train the staff in
16 shelters. At PEC, like in all the public
17 shelters, we can't afford to pay professional
18 MSWs to be residential staff, so we have a lot
19 of para-professionals in our shelter system.
20 But we need to make sure they have the
21 training in place to identify child abuse, to
22 help the moms so that the kids aren't sleeping
23 in the same bed with them so we can prevent
24 SIDS death. And unfortunately, as much
25 training as we do, I don't think it's enough.

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2 We need to upgrade our training and get in
3 there even more frequently than we already are
4 in there.

5 And finally on the issue of data,
6 not only does the federal government not
7 collect anything, but so far we're really sort
8 of behind the eight ball in the City as well.
9 And I know that we've got a good information
10 system on the drawing board, in fact, in sort
11 of the lab right now. I think we need places
12 to take advantage of other Philadelphia
13 resources like Philadelphia Safe and Sound.
14 They've got a great report card. Let's have
15 that report card cover homeless children each
16 year. Let's look at that group, lift them out
17 and say, "Are these children in the same place
18 as their cohort group? Are the first graders
19 able to read or know the alphabet? How many
20 premies do we have out here?" All those
21 wonderful criteria that Safe and Sound uses,
22 let's apply those to homeless children too so
23 we'll be able to know we're doing the right
24 thing and where we're not.

25 I want to say one more thing -- two

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2 more things. One is about the moms. Just
3 about every homeless mom is on welfare. The
4 federal government has changed its laws so
5 that now these welfare moms must go to work.
6 There is one and only one program in the
7 entire City of Philadelphia that helps welfare
8 moms who are in shelters get into the
9 workplace, get the right kind of training and
10 get a job. And that program which is tailored
11 only to homeless women is run by People's
12 Emergency Center. We've run that with HUD
13 McKinney funds over the last few years, and
14 I'm afraid that, among other things, this is
15 the kind of program that's going to be on the
16 chopping block when Phil Mangano says we've
17 got to cut the programs that are called
18 services-only programs.

19 This program serves hundreds of
20 women from public shelters, from private
21 shelters all over the City. If we don't keep
22 that program running or some kind of program
23 like it running, we're going to have homeless
24 women who are on welfare in shelters have
25 their welfare cut off and they'll never be

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2 able to move anywhere because they will have
3 no income.

4 So we need to act on that before
5 it's too late. We need to talk to the people
6 in Washington and say, let's not cut the
7 services-only programs. Those services are
8 essential. We've made some decisions about
9 sending women on welfare to work. Now we need
10 to support them and we need to realize that
11 women on welfare in shelters have so many more
12 barriers than a woman on welfare in the
13 neighborhood and we need to keep that program
14 going. It has a special child-care component
15 that works really well.

16 Last, I would just like to commend
17 you for this kind of overview and ask you to
18 continue to meet with us, to meet with the
19 public, to pat us on the back, tell us we're
20 doing a good job, to urge us to go forward, to
21 tell us that you know and we know that the job
22 isn't done yet, and to make life better for
23 those families and children especially and all
24 the people who are in the shelter system.
25 Thank you very much.

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2 (Applause.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
4 very much for all that you continue to do.
5 Even People's Emergency Center has come a long
6 way with the Rowan House, the Imani Programs
7 and so many programs. And that's what makes
8 the difference because we see a need and try
9 to take the next step.

10 We are very concerned. And as you
11 mentioned, we're really focused on this
12 election because we're worried about the
13 ending of the -- many of you know I'm on the
14 PHA Board, the Philadelphia Housing Authority.
15 I'm a Commissioner on that Board and we've
16 been very concerned about the issue of Section
17 8 certificates and the fact that the federal
18 government has gone the other way on us. We
19 need the individual Section 8 certificates
20 now. There's only Project Base left so that
21 units have Section 8, but we're really, really
22 been concerned about individuals losing the
23 opportunity to have Section 8 certificates.
24 And that's one of the reasons why people have
25 to be involved in voting and have to vote for

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2 people who reflect their interests. So we
3 want to make sure we mention that.

4 Are there any questions for Gloria
5 Guard?

6 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds
7 Brown.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
9 Madam Chair.

10 Good morning. Let me echo Chairlady
11 Blackwell's comments on the enormously
12 wonderful work that People's Emergency Center
13 is doing. I too remember almost 15 years with
14 the start and how you've grown and made a huge
15 difference in the lives of women and children
16 in particular.

17 Let me support and underscore your
18 recommendation regarding including homeless
19 children with the Children's Report Card. It
20 is a document that does a magnificent job and
21 it diagnoses a risk factor facing young people
22 along with a prescription on what we can do as
23 a City to diminish those risk factors. So I
24 will support Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell
25 making sure that that recommendation gets to

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2 Safe and Sound. I'm sure that it's one that
3 would be embraced.

4 My question to your promising
5 practices, does any of them include the
6 involvement of clergy and the church?

7 MS. GUARD: Actually, not
8 specifically, Councilwoman. We do have a
9 number of suggestions about how to use
10 volunteers, not just faith-based volunteers
11 but also corporations. There's a number of
12 best practices in here. One of them is
13 Wachovia Bank had a bookbag drive and supplied
14 every child in Philadelphia with a bookbag and
15 some school supplies. We believe that with
16 the leadership of the City and the Task Force
17 that we can get other corporations,
18 corporations who sit on Phil Goldsmith and
19 Sister Mary Scullion's task force to have
20 volunteer efforts after drives that will make
21 shelters and transitional housing more of a
22 home.

23 Can you just imagine what would
24 happen if every corporation in the City asked
25 its employees for Halloween costumes for

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2 homeless kids. We wouldn't have homeless kids
3 going out trick-or-treating with a paper bag
4 in their hands. Can you imagine if they were
5 asked to do a school uniform drive? Can you
6 imagine what would happen if every child that
7 was going to graduate from high school, which,
8 by the way, is a very special day for that
9 kid, was given a graduation party by one of
10 our banks or one of our companies here? We
11 have a lot of very, very big-hearted
12 businesses in this town who have not been
13 asked, in my opinion, to step up to the plate
14 as far as they need to step. We need jobs
15 from them. We need their employees to come
16 out here and help us with Philadelphia Reads
17 Program. We have Girl Scouts in some of the
18 shelters. We need more of these programs.
19 There's a lot of untapped resources that are
20 pretty cost-free and could be highly
21 effective. And it's not just the churches,
22 because sometimes I feel like we just turn to
23 our churches and synagogs for everything and
24 we forget the for-profit sector. We've got to
25 ask them to step up to the plate and help out

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2 even in the smallest way, even with a
3 Valentine party. Let's have these kids have
4 an experience that is much like the experience
5 that they do in our own homes; birthdays,
6 graduations. Let's have report card parties.
7 Let's celebrate these children who are doing
8 well in school despite all the odds.

9 And I do want to mention that we
10 have talked to Safe and Sound, both JoAnn
11 Lawer and, of course, their founder Naomi
12 Post; and they're both very ready to go on
13 this project. So I appreciate your support as
14 well.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Surely.

16 All that you've mentioned regarding
17 the corporations can also apply to other
18 members of the faith-based community because
19 they will respond if asked. And imagine the
20 scenario if every homeless shelter was linked
21 with a faith-based institution and the reach
22 and the magnitude that would come out of that
23 connection as well. So that is one I believe
24 can still benefit from the nurturing and the
25 linkages that are in place in some communities

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2 and not at all in place in other communities.

3 MS. GUARD: I appreciate that.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
5 Madam Chair.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
7 very much. Certainly, we agree with all that
8 has been said and certainly it's been on my
9 mind because we talked to a senior
10 yesterday -- and albeit, as I said, we will
11 introduce legislation calling for hearings on
12 this gas issue. I had a senior citizen who's
13 paralyzed call me yesterday because she's a
14 shut-in and she had no heat. Now, we had
15 somebody check into it last night and we had a
16 vendor go out to her this morning. But albeit
17 we're trying to help this senior and he's
18 going to do it at a reduced rate of \$2300.
19 How many times can we do that? So we have to
20 try to do what we can, and we do appreciate
21 any help we can get. We're going to try to
22 help this one senior, but there are seniors
23 all over as well as young people in
24 communities where we need help. And we have
25 to focus on people volunteering services. We

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2 were hoping that maybe this senior wouldn't
3 need a heater, that they could get her pilot
4 working but, obviously, they couldn't. And we
5 understand there are other housing problems in
6 the property. But we have a person who is
7 paralyzed and who is a shut-in and we're
8 afraid to have them there with no heat. So
9 we're going to try to do our part, as God
10 permits us to, to take care of this senior.
11 But we'll need help for others who will come
12 to us for whom we won't have resources
13 because, obviously, all who need, we can't
14 buy, but we will go as long and as far as we
15 can.

16 Having said that, Mr. Hess, one of
17 the issues that Gloria Guard mentioned was the
18 condition of shelters. And I hope that at
19 some point during the hearing we will hear
20 about Bright Spaces because that's a very
21 exciting program that should be mentioned as
22 we're dealing with shelters.

23 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, we certainly
24 will. We'll be hearing from both the Bright
25 Horizons Foundation and McNeil Pharmaceutical,

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2 who made a major investment in our City, in
3 just a few minutes.

4 I'd like to take this opportunity,
5 if I may, to introduce a woman who we'll hear
6 from this afternoon who really has done a
7 tremendous job in leading our shelter programs
8 in this City, Director of OESS Letty Hinton.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. HESS: I will tell you that the
11 shelter system today is in a transformational
12 mode. And it's because of her leadership and
13 the leadership of her staff that we really are
14 moving in a very positive direction. So we
15 appreciate all the good recommendations, the
16 comments that Gloria Guard has given us. We
17 will take a close look at those individually.
18 I can assure you that under Letty's
19 leadership, the shelter system has come a long
20 way very quickly and we're very proud of her
21 and her staff and their efforts.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
23 very much.

24 And let me say that we personally
25 work with Letty in my office daily. And in

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2 fact, when there was a fire in North
3 Philadelphia in a PHA senior citizens
4 building, Letty and I rode on the bus
5 together, went to the hotel together and met
6 Rob at Riverview to try to help seniors. So I
7 certainly know. We've known her for many
8 years, but certainly under your leadership
9 with the ability to do creative planning and
10 work with people and in a different kind of
11 manner in a way where we can help people, from
12 recreation centers and Cobbs Creek in our
13 area, Letty's been there on site and we
14 certainly thank her for her commitment to
15 helping people in need.

16 Thank you, Letty.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. HESS: It was just last week
19 that I spent some time on our streets talking
20 to people that are currently living on our
21 streets, and I came upon two young women who
22 were twins who were living on streets and we
23 wanted so much to move them indoors. So I had
24 a conversation with them and asked there where
25 they would go. Because very often when you

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2 talk to folks who live on the street, they
3 tend to want to tell you where they won't go.
4 And so we're familiar with basically where
5 they won't go. We wanted to kind of find out
6 where people would go. And in the case of
7 these two young women, they were unanimous in
8 their agreement they would go to Covenant
9 House because of the good work that's done
10 there.

11 So I'd like to invite, with your
12 permission, Madam Chair, Jerry Kilbane to the
13 witness table to talk a little bit about the
14 good work going on there.

15 MR. KILBANE: Good morning, Madam
16 Chair, esteemed Councilmembers, ladies and
17 gentlemen. My name is Jerome Kilbane and I'm
18 the Executive Director of Covenant House
19 Pennsylvania. Covenant House is an
20 international agency who serves homeless and
21 runaway youth.

22 Five years ago we were invited to
23 open a facility here in the City of
24 Philadelphia. Over that period of time, we
25 have given emergency shelter to over 2500

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2 young people under the age of 21 and through
3 all of our services have served over 7,000.

4 Over the last five years, we've
5 built continuum services which include street
6 outreach where we have workers who go out on
7 the street whose goal is to create a
8 relationship with young people and offer a way
9 off the street.

10 Secondly, we have a crisis center
11 which is located in Germantown where we not
12 only offer emergency shelter on a 24-hour
13 basis to a policy of what we call open intake
14 which means any youth under the age of 21 is
15 admitted, no questions asked the first time,
16 regardless. There, we try to create a plan
17 which addresses their immediate short-term and
18 hopefully long-term needs. We provide
19 educational services, vocational services,
20 legal counseling, psychological and, through
21 partnership with Children's Hospital, full
22 medical care.

23 The third part of our continuum is
24 our Right of Passage Program. And in a minute
25 I'd like to introduce Vivian who is a young

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2 person who is in our Rights of Passage
3 Program. That is a transitional living
4 program which provides independent living
5 skills to young people.

6 The bulk of the kids that Covenant
7 House serves are under the age of 21 and have
8 no other place to go. Most are throw-aways.
9 They have either aged out of the foster care
10 system or have been abandoned to the streets.

11 Our goal, really, is to create a
12 relationship and offer a way off the street
13 but also provide an environment which
14 emphasizes inherent dignity but also is clean,
15 safe and welcoming.

16 I stand before you from the largest
17 provider in the City of Philadelphia, private
18 provider, for homeless and runaway youth. We
19 receive very little government funding. Over
20 90 percent of our funding is privately raised.
21 However, without continued funding for the
22 many programs and if not more funding we could
23 not continue to serve the kids that we do. We
24 serve a niche. We are able to provide
25 services to kids, but without continued

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2 government support, we'd be overwhelmed with
3 the amount of service that we have to provide.

4 It reminds me of a story that our
5 former president used to tell about a great
6 saint named St. Vincent DePaul who was
7 credited with really starting the social
8 service system in France in the Middle Ages.
9 In the twilight of his life he had met with
10 the king and queen of France and they asked
11 him, "Vincent, you've been a great man. Some
12 consider you a saint. In reflection of your
13 life, would there be anything that you would
14 change?" And after a moment of pause he said,
15 "Yes, I would do more."

16 And I think that's what we have to
17 think about, because each night I go home and
18 I know there are kids on the street who we
19 cannot serve. We have overflow in our crisis
20 center. I have a small transitional living
21 program with eight beds. We would probably
22 need 50 to meet the need. So I think that
23 what we have to recognize is the fact that we
24 need to do more. However, if services are
25 provided to our young people, I think what

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2 Covenant House has shown and many programs
3 have shown is that we can make a difference in
4 kids' lives.

5 You know, much of the work that we
6 do is also addressing some of the trauma that
7 many of the kids suffer as a result of a
8 variety social problems.

9 I had a young man in our
10 transitional program speak recently, and he
11 talked about the age of 4 witnessing the
12 murder of his mother. You know, what was
13 talked about is that we're not just faced with
14 homelessness; many of our young people come
15 with a variety of problems.

16 In the last year, we went from
17 serving 30 percent of the population with
18 mental illness to nearly 60 percent.
19 However -- and I just need to make a
20 correction. We have a mother/child program in
21 our crisis center and we provide job training
22 for them, so that is also happening for the
23 young people. We have found that we can help
24 those young people come to terms with many of
25 their problems, find a job and move on.

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2 Vivian will talk about our Rights to
3 Passage Program in which we ask our young
4 people to work, to have savings, to learn
5 independent living skills, and to move from
6 there to their own apartments. However, if
7 they cannot afford a just wage to support
8 themselves, much of the work that we do is
9 naught. So it's not just homelessness; it's
10 employment, it's fair housing, it's social
11 services. And if we wrap these services
12 around the young people and the adults in our
13 systems, we can end homelessness.

14 So if you'd permit me, I'd like to
15 introduce Vivian.

16 MS. LAWRENCE: Hello. My name is
17 Vivian Lawrence. I'm 21 years old and I've
18 been in Covenant House system for a year now.
19 November will be a year. I came to the crisis
20 center after I had been homeless on and off
21 for about three or four years throughout high
22 school. I graduated in 2002. And after
23 graduation when the winter came and I had been
24 sleeping at the bus station, my lawyer who was
25 trying to help me tried to get me to go to

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2 another shelter. I didn't want to. I'd been
3 in so many other shelters. And my last
4 shelter was Eliza Shirley which I stayed at
5 one night because I felt more safe and cleaner
6 sleeping at the bus stop than at the shelter.

7 Finally, after some research, he
8 took me to Covenant House of Pennsylvania
9 where my first night I met with -- she's a
10 social worker there and she took me to the
11 shelter, showed me around, brought me to
12 introduce me to the other workers and
13 basically explained to me what the shelter
14 was. Her name is Sister Chris. She asked
15 about my Thanksgiving. I explained to her
16 that I was homeless so I didn't have
17 Thanksgiving. She took me to give me
18 Thanksgiving dinner, explained to me what
19 their Thanksgiving at the shelter was and
20 basically talked to me and gave me a tour of
21 the place and tried to get me to feel
22 comfortable.

23 When she showed me my room and I saw
24 that it was a clean space with no bugs and for
25 the first time, like, a warm bed and sheets

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2 and everything. I finally decided to stay at
3 the shelter and I slept there for the first
4 night comfortable, I'd say, in four years.

5 After speaking to her, the next
6 morning they helped me to decide what I wanted
7 to do with my life, to not go back to the
8 street, to finally decide as an adult I have
9 to do something to help myself. I explained
10 my situation to them because hard for me to
11 explain myself to someone else again. I had
12 been turned down so many times because my
13 situation was different and weird and so many
14 people did not want to deal the problem I had.
15 I was just homeless and that's the way it was
16 supposed to be because there was no one there
17 to help me. So I explained to her and she
18 decided that as long as Covenant House doors
19 are open, she was going to help me. The
20 program is about three months, you're allowed
21 to stay there three months. She told me right
22 there and then that until she could help me I
23 was never going to be turned away from the
24 shelter. So I decided to buckle down and do
25 what I was supposed to do.

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2 The next day I met with an education
3 specialist to see what my grade level of
4 reading was. They wanted to get me a GED if I
5 hadn't graduated, which I did. I met with a
6 vocational specialist who wanted to help me
7 build a resume, which I never had before. He
8 wanted to show me that -- I thought I didn't
9 have anything to put on a resume. He wanted
10 to show me that I did. I just need to learn
11 how to write it and reword it. They found out
12 that I was interested in cooking. They had a
13 culinary arts program to train me how to cook.
14 And in January, after I had gone to New York
15 which they paid for to get my stuff together,
16 I enlisted into the first Covenant House
17 Culinary Arts Program, and in March of 2004
18 became a graduate of the first Covenant House
19 program. Not only did I graduate and learn
20 the skills I needed to work in a restaurant,
21 but I got serve safe certified which means
22 that I'm able to be certified to be in a
23 restaurant and do a job. Like, if you work in
24 a restaurant, someone there has to have a safe
25 certification at all times, and I have that

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2 which is something I graduated high school and
3 never had. Now I have that.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. LAWRENCE: Thank you.

6 When I finally got certified, I was
7 able to get a job. I had a good resume. I
8 went out. They helped me to learn how to
9 dress, how to speak in public, how to make
10 sure that employers knew that I was interested
11 in work and I wasn't just some kid off the
12 street but I was an adult that was ready to be
13 a productive part of the environment.

14 So I got a job working in a
15 restaurant in New Jersey. They helped me to
16 save money enough so that now I was able to
17 leave Covenant House shelter on Armat Street
18 and go to the Rights of Passage Program.

19 Now, I'm currently in the Rights of
20 Passage Program. You have to be employed for
21 at least 30 hours per week to be in the Rights
22 of Passage Program. And in May 2004, I was
23 accepted and I moved into a house for the
24 first time in 10 years.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MS. LAWRENCE: Covenant House Rights
3 of Passage Program, which is the second step
4 after the shelter, is a community that they've
5 built in this house for us youth that have
6 decided to do something for ourselves. We've
7 decided to step up from the level of sleeping
8 on the streets and staying at the shelter for
9 however long they allow you to stay at the
10 shelter and move into this community and
11 become a part of this community.

12 They helped me understand family,
13 which I had never had before. They also
14 helped me to understand that ROP, it wasn't
15 them leading the way for me; it was me leading
16 the way but they would be there for me to
17 basically catch me if I fall, to push me
18 forward. The staff supported me. They helped
19 to guide me and to show me basically the world
20 isn't like a bummy, crappy place like I
21 thought it was. And I like that. For the
22 first time in my life I had a community of
23 people that were there to help me.

24 I like to think of the ROP Program
25 as the house of change because since I've been

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2 there -- and we have eight beds so there's
3 always eight people there -- I've learned that
4 when you realize you have a house you come in
5 and you open up and you change and you became
6 this whole different person. You come from a
7 scared child to an adult. We realize that
8 we're getting rewarded too which is very, very
9 important to me because I went through -- I
10 didn't have my family throughout high school.
11 I graduated high school by myself, sleeping on
12 the street. No one came to the graduation. I
13 was alone there. And no one ever said, "Well,
14 okay, you did this." And here, they have
15 congratulated me many times on graduating
16 culinary arts which is also only like a
17 six-month program. They've given me so much.
18 I'm just going through a six-month program
19 that no one ever did going through high
20 school. I'm sorry.

21 (Sobs.)

22 MS. LAWRENCE: I'm sorry.

23 I'm now able to work full time, take
24 care of myself, get my own transportation, buy
25 my own clothes, do my own thing; and it's only

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2 because of the help of these people. Not only
3 am I stepping forward in my life, but I get to
4 see other young adults my age that have been
5 through things that I've been through, more
6 things, less things, and they're all around me
7 every day and they're all doing good for
8 themselves. We're all a productive part of
9 the community.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. LAWRENCE: We just needed that
12 little help, and Covenant House gave that to
13 me. I've been to many, many, many shelters,
14 many programs. I've had so many social
15 workers and lawyers. And this is the first
16 time I've had a job for over a year. I've
17 lived in this house and I can see myself
18 moving into my own place right now, and it
19 feels great.

20 At the shelter also, they help you
21 learn skills like I know now that if I'm ready
22 to get my own apartment I can read my lease.
23 I know how to shop productively for food, not
24 waste any money. I know how to find myself
25 around the City, how to find the help I need

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2 to get where I need to go, and basically, the
3 other skills you need to survive as an adult
4 in the world. It's not just me. It's many
5 other beautiful, wonderful roommates I have,
6 housemates. And I just want to say that
7 through Covenant House we have an opportunity
8 to grow. I see many people, many kids around
9 me every day throughout covenant house that
10 need this program. They need this shelter. I
11 needed it. I still need it. And I just
12 couldn't imagine what we'd be without it. We
13 have an opportunity to see each other grow and
14 move on. And I just want to say that it feels
15 good to know that I have a future and it's
16 because of them.

17 That's all. Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
20 very much for your excellent testimony.

21 Councilwoman Miller.

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Hi. How are
23 you? Hi, Jerry.

24 Covenant House -- I think one of the
25 things that I'd just like to talk about is

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2 that it's an excellent facility, an excellent
3 service. And I know when you walked in there,
4 you did not believe that you were in a
5 shelter, did you? It's great. It's a great
6 looking place.

7 MS. LAWRENCE: It's not a shelter.
8 I've always told everyone I've met that I
9 walked in there and it wasn't a shelter, it
10 was a house, it was a home, it was a family.
11 They really are your uncles and cousins.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: It's
13 wonderful. One of the things that I would
14 ask, though, is that the community instead of
15 rejecting -- we had a struggle in Germantown
16 to get that zoning approved. A large segment
17 of the community did not want the Covenant
18 House facility. We thought it was a good
19 program. We thought it had a good future. We
20 needed that service, and we knew children
21 needed that service. And I want to commend
22 Jerry Kilbane and the staff there at Covenant
23 House and all the volunteers. I mean, Father
24 Rock talks about you all the time. And all
25 the people that are connected with Covenant

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2 House, I think you are an excellent asset in
3 Germantown. And it's unbelievable that we
4 have to go through the struggles that we have
5 to go through sometimes to get zoning because
6 we have such large opposition. And you know
7 that we had a very large segment of the
8 community that did not want the Covenant House
9 facility there on Armat Street. But I'm glad
10 we hung in there and persevered. You got
11 zoned, you opened, you're running, you're not
12 causing any problems, you're doing a lot of
13 positive work, and this young lady can now
14 cook.

15 So thank you, and thank you for
16 coming in. I just hope that at some point
17 people become more sensitive to the needs to
18 have these types of facility in neighborhoods
19 and instead of rejecting, open arms and
20 embrace it.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. KILBANE: And I just want to
23 publicly again, thank you, Councilwoman, for
24 your support and that to say that you can take
25 as much responsibility for Vivian as we can

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2 because if it wasn't for you, we would not
3 have been there.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
7 very much.

8 We certainly say thank you to
9 Councilwoman Miller as well.

10 Are there any questions from Members
11 of the Committee?

12 (No response.)

13 The Chair also notes that Councilman
14 W. Wilson Goode is here, and we thank him.
15 Thank you very much.

16 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, Members of
17 the Committee, I think we've heard a little
18 something about hope and how when we provide
19 hope, that's truly a hand up. People grasp
20 it. And so we're so proud of the good work
21 going on at Covenant House and around the
22 City. And we have to remember that the reason
23 it's possible is because of the support that
24 we get from the Mayor and from you, and we
25 can't put any of that support at risk. Any of

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2 that support being at risk would absolutely
3 threaten many of the great programs you're
4 hearing about today that are getting the great
5 results that your hearing about today.

6 Another example will be our next
7 individual to present testimony, Rachel
8 Falkove of Northwest Interfaith Hospitality
9 Network. I will tell you that a year or so
10 ago I had the privilege of joining Rachel and
11 her families in the Mount Airy area. We were
12 at a synagog that night for dinner, but she
13 has pulled together the faith community in a
14 very meaningful way to support families
15 experiencing homelessness in that community.
16 And so we're proud of her work and we look
17 forward to hearing from her.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
20 morning. Welcome. Identify yourself for the
21 record and begin your testimony. Thank you
22 very much.

23 MS. FALKOVE: I'm Rachel Falkove,
24 and with me is Donna Laws, our Program
25 Director. I'm the Executive Director of

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2 Northwest Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality
3 Network, which is a congregational-based
4 shelter program for homeless families
5 supported by 24 hosting congregations in
6 Northwest Philadelphia along the Germantown
7 Avenue corridor.

8 And where did Councilwoman Miller
9 go?

10 Okay, there you are, because you're
11 right there with us on Germantown Avenue.

12 Our families call us the shelter
13 that's not like a shelter because we're a very
14 small and intimate program that's child and
15 family centered. We only house up to five
16 families at a time and generally shelter and
17 care for about 20 families every year because
18 we provide each family with their own room in
19 the privacy and quiet of congregational
20 buildings. We provide hospitality and
21 companionship using an extensive network of
22 volunteers, very dedicated congregational
23 volunteers, and we're proud to say that we
24 have over a thousand volunteers in our
25 organization focussing their energies on these

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2 families. We're one of the few shelter
3 programs that can accommodate families of all
4 configurations, including intact couples,
5 families headed by single fathers and single
6 moms with adolescent male children.

7 And while we've run out of tiny
8 little family shelter for 12-plus years, the
9 demand for service has never been any greater.
10 Across the nation we know that family
11 homelessness has increased 20 percent for each
12 of the past three years. And in Philadelphia,
13 families make up approximately 66 percent, is
14 that correct, of the shelter population?
15 Would you say 66 percent?

16 MR. HESS: It varies, but it's
17 close.

18 MS. FALKOVE: And most of these
19 shelters were not designed to accommodate
20 families. And in the past year, at least 200
21 families have contacted us for help and
22 placement. Many of these families call us
23 regularly over a period of months to tell us
24 that they are still waiting to be admitted to
25 an appropriate shelter, and many are getting

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2 the same answer, the family shelters are full
3 especially the ones that offer a range of
4 services and connect people to transitional or
5 permanent housing opportunities. And while we
6 can only take in a limited number of families,
7 we do our best to listen, assist and refer
8 families. And that's what Donna next to me
9 does on a daily basis.

10 Our organization wants to make sure
11 that public support for homeless families and
12 the services that they require continues. And
13 we're very grateful to present the testimony
14 before you today, and we commend the Mayor's
15 Task Force on Homelessness and the process
16 shepherded by the Office of Emergency Shelter
17 and Services to develop a comprehensive
18 10-year plan to end homelessness.

19 Adequate funding for OESS and the
20 public support for our programs is critical to
21 assure that 2500 men, women, and children have
22 a place to sleep each night. We know that the
23 current resources are not adequate to the
24 task. And given what this Council and
25 Administration have been through during the

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2 past few budget cycles, I don't have to sit
3 here and tell you this. We all realize that
4 the burden to adequately fund services is very
5 difficult, given the current federal and state
6 housing policies combined with the current
7 financial and economic constraints facing our
8 City. But the alternative to not paying
9 attention to the needs of families creates an
10 enormous problem for the City and an enormous
11 problem for its citizens for generations to
12 come.

13 We need to recognize that today's
14 homeless families and unstable-housed children
15 are likely to be tomorrow's chronically
16 homeless. Federal policy right now is focused
17 primarily on the small population of
18 chronically homeless adults defined fairly
19 narrowly as those with physical and mental
20 disabilities which includes addictions and
21 documented histories of abuse. But in fact,
22 as we've heard today from the people who have
23 come before me, that the charge to
24 municipalities in becoming eligible for
25 funding is to have a 10-year plan in place for

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2 ending chronic homelessness. But this policy
3 has unintentionally resulted in diminishing
4 funding for programs that serve families and
5 has inadvertently pitted one population of
6 homeless against the other.

7 The federal decision to focus
8 service dollars on the chronic homeless
9 population is based on the argument that the
10 chronic population uses a disproportionate
11 percentage of services. And our Board and
12 constituents believe that today's homeless
13 children are likely to be tomorrow's
14 chronically homeless. We've come to that
15 conclusion because of what we've learned from
16 the people who sat before you today and also
17 gave their testimony.

18 I asked Donna to come and share one
19 story about a family we met last week.

20 MS. LAWS: Good afternoon, Madam
21 Chair, Councilwoman and Councilman. My name
22 is Donna Laws, and I am the Program Director
23 for the Northwest Philadelphia Interfaith
24 Hospitality Network.

25 A family called me, as many times

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2 they do. But this particular family was a
3 little unique in that like many times I find
4 that I can't get them placement. I wanted to
5 place the family together. However, the
6 father and the mother -- they had two
7 children. I was unable really to place them
8 together because there was no place available
9 at the time. So what I ended up having to do,
10 which really was disheartening was I had to
11 place the father at Ridge and I had to place
12 the mother and the children at People's
13 Emergency Center. Although I was very glad
14 that I was able to do that because this family
15 was living on the streets and they had run out
16 of money -- they were living in a hotel, but
17 they ran out of money and they were living on
18 the streets. Although I was glad because the
19 mother -- I didn't tell you -- is 8 and a half
20 months pregnant and she's never had any
21 prenatal care. So it was really important to
22 connect this family. The only problem was
23 that the family had already been through one
24 system, didn't really particularly work out
25 that well at that system, so they ended up

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2 having to leave because of fault of their own.
3 So they couldn't go back to OESS for 180 days.

4 I guess the main thing that I want
5 to say about this family and the main reason
6 why I pulled this family is because the mother
7 had chronic homelessness. Her mother had been
8 homeless, her sister was homeless, and now her
9 children are homeless. And I feel like I
10 wasn't able to do enough for the family
11 because I wasn't able to keep them together.
12 And that is very disheartening to me because
13 the families that need each other for support
14 need to be able to stay together. So that was
15 one thing that was very important.

16 And when I was driving them down to
17 the shelter and I had to take the father to
18 one place and the mother and the children to
19 another, it was almost like pulling something
20 apart that was glued because the mother was
21 very upset and it was just really a
22 disheartening situation.

23 So what I'd like to say is that I
24 hope that there would be more family-oriented
25 shelters to help the families and the children

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2 because the children don't really deserve to
3 live on the street and be in these situations
4 that we find them in. And I run into that
5 quite a bit. But this particular family,
6 although OESS ended up taking the mother and
7 the children back, the father still didn't
8 have a job, the father still didn't have what
9 he needed. So I don't know if we call that a
10 solution because we got them off the street or
11 do we call it a solution when we have a story
12 like the lady that just gave her testimony,
13 which is truly a success story.

14 So that's all I really want to say.

15 MS. FALKOVE: I wanted to just say a
16 couple more things.

17 The sad reality is that most of the
18 families that show up at our doors have indeed
19 experienced homelessness and instability as
20 children. So for all these reasons, we really
21 commend our City's commitment to include
22 families in the 10-year plan to end chronic
23 homelessness.

24 Most shelters are very frightening
25 places for families, and they'll do everything

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2 possible to avoid bringing their children to
3 live in them. And so as a result, they really
4 actually will put themselves at more risk by
5 remaining in abusive relationships, by living
6 in substandard housing, by living with people
7 who they know are not good to be around their
8 children, but they do it because the known
9 hell is better than all of the unknown risks
10 and they prefer to take their chances and drag
11 things on and hope against hope that their
12 chance in PHA or Section 8's lottery will come
13 up.

14 A comprehensive plan to create
15 affordable housing is one component of ending
16 family homelessness. But affordable housing
17 alone cannot do the trick. Some families
18 arrive to our system -- in fact, many of the
19 families arrive to our system needing a range
20 of services, including health care, work
21 readiness, financial literacy, life skills,
22 education and parenting.

23 And so, you know, I'm sitting here
24 in front of you telling you we need funding,
25 we need money, we need more. And next week

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2 the libraries will be here and they'll want
3 more and the rec centers and everybody's going
4 to want more, and there's only so much of a
5 pot. But people get confused by talking about
6 needing more money as opposed to a discussion
7 of how we can spend whatever we have more
8 effectively and more wisely. So we have a
9 couple of suggestions for you.

10 First, the system for assessing and
11 screening and assigning families to shelter
12 and transitional and subsidized housing
13 programs is inefficient and ineffective,
14 especially given the current shortage of
15 available beds and housing units. We know
16 that OESS is doing the best they can with what
17 they've got. They're trying really hard. But
18 we think that because families are so afraid
19 of the public shelter system that OESS doesn't
20 get to give their great advice to everybody
21 who really needs it, and they have good
22 advice.

23 Separating the assessment and
24 counseling process from the shelter placement
25 process might really be helpful. It needs to

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2 be considered. I'm not saying that that's a
3 definite answer, but it needs to be studied.

4 Requiring demonstration of
5 competency for subsidized housing, just like
6 the Good Neighbors Program does, that might be
7 a way to make sure that the capable families
8 get placed in permanent housing and the ones
9 who can't are placed in the services that they
10 need.

11 Also, sheltering families with
12 serious problems with families who simply need
13 an affordable place to live serves no one
14 well. That's why people are scrambling to get
15 into our shelter. So mixing adults and their
16 teenage children who just might be down on
17 their luck because of job loss but they might
18 be appropriate home managers with post foster
19 care adolescents with babies and insufficient
20 life skills or even worse with families who
21 might have active addictions and untreated
22 mental illness creates an unmanageable
23 situation in the shelters. And that's why
24 nobody wants to go to them. So in these
25 cases, the staff of the shelters have to cater

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2 to the populations that really require the
3 most structure. And we're giving more
4 services to people who might not need it.
5 That's inefficiency.

6 Also, I'd like to ask that we not
7 undo what works. We have some excellent
8 models that have come before us today;
9 Covenant House, PEC, and we're going to hear
10 from some others today as well that offer a
11 range of programs and supports that address a
12 variety of needs. And we need to know that no
13 one-size-fits-all approach in shelter or
14 transitional housing is effective or
15 efficient.

16 We need shelters that offer privacy
17 that families require so that we can
18 accommodate the kinds of families that Donna
19 was telling us about, and especially families
20 whose members include teenage boys and men.
21 Different family configurations require
22 different paths for ending the cycle of
23 homelessness. And a comprehensive approach,
24 including subsidized housing, a variety of
25 transitional housing programs, supportive

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2 housing programs, they're all needed.

3 We thank you, Councilwoman Blackwell
4 and the Council Committee for the opportunity
5 to participate in today's session, and we look
6 forward to continued involvement in the
7 process of developing the City's 10-year plan
8 to end homelessness. We encourage everyone
9 present to continue working on the larger
10 systemic issues so that every man, woman, and
11 child in our City has a place to call home.

12 We also encourage each one of you to
13 take a little bit of your personal time to
14 become involved up close and personal in
15 volunteer efforts like ours offering
16 encouragement and friendship to our neighbors
17 who are homeless. Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
20 very much. Thank you for your statements and
21 suggestions.

22 Mr. Hess can correct me if I'm
23 wrong, but I do believe that we try to focus
24 on those who need DNA, those who have mental
25 health issues. We've done a lot more -- in

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2 the old days, everybody was kind of put
3 together. Now, if you come at night and
4 you've got to get a bed, that's different.
5 But we do try to specialize within the system
6 to try to get people in places where they need
7 to minimize that condition you mentioned. I
8 believe we focus a lot on that now.

9 MS. FALKOVE: You do it very
10 effectively.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
12 Councilwoman Miller.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.
14 Thank you for coming today to share
15 your information.

16 One thing I do want to say, earlier
17 I believe someone asked a question about the
18 faith-based community and their involvement.
19 And I'd like to thank the congregations that
20 got together and put Interfaith Hospitality
21 Network together. We have pretty progressive
22 churches in the Northwest.

23 MS. FALKOVE: We're lucky.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We're very,
25 very lucky. And, Rachel, you care, you

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2 understand what's going on.

3 Thank you, Donna, for coming in
4 also. And just thank you for your service.
5 Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
8 very much.

9 Any other questions?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, we are
12 pleased to tell you that we have quite a list
13 of distinguished individuals and groups that
14 are with us today that want to share comments
15 with you and so we're just going to move it
16 along as quickly as we can.

17 With your permission, I'll invite to
18 the witness table Elaine Fox from PHMC to talk
19 about some of the really outstanding work that
20 PHMC is doing with respect to healthcare for
21 people experiencing homelessness in our City
22 and case management and a variety of other
23 programs.

24 MS. FOX: Good afternoon. I'm
25 Elaine Fox from Philadelphia Health Management

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2 Corporation, and thank you very much for the
3 opportunity to testify before City Council
4 this afternoon.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

6 MS. FOX: I am a Vice President at
7 the Philadelphia Health Management
8 Corporation, known as PHMC. PHMC has been
9 involved in issues related to homelessness
10 since 1977 when we wrote the first Study of
11 Homelessness in Philadelphia. Primarily, as
12 Rob stated, we provide healthcare and social
13 services to homeless men, women and children
14 on the street, in shelters, in transitional
15 housing, in Section 8 and in newly constructed
16 low-income housing. In addition, I and my
17 colleagues are the chairs and co-chairs of
18 many committees in the City that deal with the
19 specific needs of homeless families and
20 homeless children. Because I have the
21 advantage of over 20 years of experience
22 working in this area, I think I'm in a unique
23 position to see the changes in both the
24 population of who is homeless as well as the
25 changing approach to addressing these needs.

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2 It seems as though it was only
3 yesterday that the homeless population was
4 comprised of single men predominately,
5 economically marginalized and often with an
6 overlay of behavioral health issues. Now the
7 population is made up of families comprised
8 primarily of single women and their children
9 in addition to the already-mentioned single
10 male adults.

11 Our strategy and policy as a City
12 and as individual providers also has changed.
13 Rather than create more and more shelter beds
14 with more and more quick fixes, we have moved
15 to a system that has as its end point the
16 creation of more permanent housing to provide
17 permanent housing to homeless families while
18 emphasizing skills that encourage
19 self-sufficiency. The City's 10-year plan
20 gives testimony to the strategy as well as to
21 the many excellent providers who are part of
22 the planning process.

23 I have to say in my work with
24 healthcare for the homeless, I travel and meet
25 with other providers of homeless services

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2 quite a bit. And compared to other cities,
3 Philadelphia has a well-evolved partnership
4 between the public and the private systems.
5 And as one of the partnership's agencies,
6 we're fortunate to have the opportunity to
7 work with City agencies.

8 Just briefly, in 1978, as a provider
9 community, all of us were simply trying to
10 learn who the homeless were. By the early
11 '80s we are engaged in a seemingly endless
12 pursuit of trying to find enough beds to
13 shelter the many people who were seeking
14 refuge from the street. As the end of the
15 '80s drew near, we clearly recognized that
16 services were needed for each population of
17 the homeless, the single adults, families who
18 were now flooding the system, the mentally ill
19 and substance abusers.

20 By the mid-'90s, we had developed
21 many excellent examples of targeted services
22 and a continuum of care that went from the
23 street to permanent housing. More recently,
24 we moved to create more transitional housing,
25 of which there are many excellent models, and

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2 made a paradigm shift to aggressively
3 encourage the development of housing,
4 recognizing that without permanent housing as
5 an end point, the cycle of shelter would be
6 repeated.

7 And now in 2004 and going forward,
8 we recognize that housing often is the
9 beginning point, yet it must be combined with
10 targeted services that are an essential
11 component to build the skills necessary to
12 create self-sufficient adults and healthy
13 families. Now we're at a point where
14 Philadelphia is creating a 10-year plan to
15 truly end homelessness, not only for single
16 adults as in many of the other cities but,
17 apparently unique to Philadelphia, for
18 families as well.

19 I really applaud that effort, as do
20 my colleagues, and would like to offer some of
21 our comments and recommendations as we move
22 forward together.

23 The first concern, shelter beds.
24 Shelters have been commented on as long as
25 I've been around, and that's been a long time.

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2 And we see that while shelter is no longer an
3 end point as it was years ago, it is an
4 essential first step for many families, and we
5 urge that these beds not be cut. Although no
6 one wants their loved ones to experience life
7 in the shelter even for a day, it is often the
8 immediate alternative for many families and
9 can offer the opportunity for a family to be
10 stabilized, educated, connected with job
11 training, educational skills, and healthcare.
12 Again, this is not the end point but often is
13 a necessary first step.

14 The second point is services. All
15 of us, public and private providers, advocates
16 and citizens have learned a lot about what
17 makes someone homeless. We also have
18 considerable experience in knowing what works
19 to end homelessness. The formula of housing
20 combined with services is needed now more than
21 ever. Housing plus services is critical if
22 families are to maintain their housing and to
23 achieve skills necessary for self-sufficiency.
24 All of our staff have reported seeing clients
25 with more complicated problems and especially

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2 mental health issues and more young families,
3 both of which compound the client's ability to
4 accept and utilize services.

5 The third point sounds like jargon
6 but isn't, it's collaborations and
7 partnerships. Collaborations among the
8 various departments of City government and
9 private providers have proven to be the most
10 effective way of assuring that the clients'
11 needs are met and that services are integrated
12 not duplicated but targeted to address
13 complicated areas. PHMC has long been a
14 partner with the City in many endeavors, and
15 we're confident that our services in concert
16 with the City services greatly expand the
17 range of services that can be offered to
18 homeless people. I'll briefly illustrate two
19 of these collaborations: PHMC's Healthcare
20 For the Homeless Program and Help
21 Philadelphia.

22 First is Healthcare For the
23 Homeless. PHMC, since 1985, has administered
24 the Healthcare For the Homeless Program for
25 Philadelphia which is funded largely through

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2 federal dollars, partly through the City and
3 partly through foundations. Through this
4 program, we provided essential healthcare,
5 case management and social services in many
6 family shelters run by the City. Through
7 Healthcare For the Homeless, PHMC also manages
8 the Mary Howard Health Center which is the
9 City's only primary care health center for
10 homeless people. The center has comprehensive
11 primary care in addition to behavioral health
12 and social work services on site and it's
13 accessible and available to all homeless
14 people regardless of ability to pay. To focus
15 specifically on the healthcare of families, as
16 part of our Healthcare For the Homeless
17 Program, we have healthcare clinics in some of
18 the family shelters. These clinics also
19 provide a full range of healthcare, family
20 planning services, and education to consumers
21 and providers.

22 Of particular importance is
23 Healthcare For the Homeless strong public
24 health focus. As one example of this, PHMC
25 has developed a partnership with the Health

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2 Department and OESS an immunization program
3 based at the City's intake site that brings
4 each child and parents under 18 entering
5 shelter as up to date as possible on
6 immunizations. I'm proud to say that homeless
7 children are now immunized at the rate of 92
8 percent and receive even more immunizations
9 that are necessary for entry into school than
10 the non-homeless children. In 2003, over 2000
11 children were evaluated for immunizations and
12 1,745 received at least one immunization. I
13 think there were about 3,000 shots given in
14 the year.

15 The additional benefit of this
16 program is that it has essentially ended the
17 shelter closings necessitated by outbreaks of
18 vaccine-preventable illnesses. Often, as you
19 well know, shelters had to be closed to new
20 admissions for six to eight weeks as outbreaks
21 were brought under control.

22 This program would not be possible
23 without the full cooperation of the City whose
24 vision for the future certainly includes the
25 special needs of children.

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2 I'd also like to mention our Help
3 Philadelphia Program which is a transitional
4 housing program with enriched services.
5 Again, through OESS and federal funding, PHMC
6 has been a partner in Help Philadelphia, a
7 transitional housing facility for homeless
8 families in West Philadelphia funded in large
9 part by OAS and helped 50 families receive
10 housing or receiving the very services that
11 support them in becoming independent. In
12 other words, families are not in a holding
13 pattern but receive comprehensive healthcare,
14 family planning, employment and educational
15 services to support them in acquiring the
16 skills to be better parents and become much
17 more likely to be employed. Over 200
18 volunteer organizations have provided
19 additional services at Help. This special
20 relationship between volunteers and Help
21 Philadelphia is shown in our copy of
22 directions which is included at the back my
23 testimony.

24 And while we often see homeless
25 issues as problems, I'd like to point to the

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2 success of this program with, at last count,
3 54 graduates who are now successfully raising
4 their families, living in independent housing,
5 going to college in many cases, and working.

6 I just wanted to briefly mention
7 permanent housing which everybody will be
8 commenting on today. I just wanted to mention
9 that while we provide in-home case management
10 service for homeless people moving into
11 Section 8, PHA conventional housing and even
12 newly developed housing constructed by Prime
13 Properties, a private developer, what we've
14 been hearing from developers is that many of
15 them are willing to create permanent housing
16 slots if some of the red tape and barriers
17 presented by government entities, particularly
18 the federally funded projects, can be reduced
19 or eliminated. We encourage all of us to
20 aggressively work toward reducing some of that
21 red tape.

22 Last, I want to mention the special
23 needs of homeless children, which is near and
24 dear to our hearts. While much work has been
25 done to end homelessness, there is much more

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2 to be done. Recently, PHMC in concert with a
3 number of agencies sponsored the City's first
4 conference on homeless children. The
5 conference was held in late September at the
6 Community College of Philadelphia. The
7 conference highlighted the work that had been
8 done thus far on behalf of homeless families
9 as well as the gaps that exist and must be
10 addressed in order to bridge the gap between
11 homeless and non-homeless children.
12 Unfortunately, despite our best efforts,
13 homeless children often fall through the
14 cracks and they suffer from many deficits by
15 virtue of their transience, their parent's
16 ability to effectively provide for them, and
17 the stigma they face as a result of being
18 identified at school and at play as the
19 homeless children. PHMC's conference
20 highlighted four issues that were carried out
21 in workshops. The first is education,
22 highlighting educational issues and problems
23 of homeless children and teens; healthcare,
24 including in addition to physical and
25 developmental needs of homeless children, some

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2 of the nutritional issues that affect homeless
3 children as well as all of our children;
4 trauma, the effect of trauma and violence on
5 homeless children; and the special problems of
6 teens, a growing population. And it focused
7 on runaways, sexual minority, and aging out of
8 foster care kids.

9 The findings of these workshops will
10 be highlighted in a report to the community
11 that will recommend further actions that we
12 hope can be worked in the continuing 10-year
13 plan process. The needs of children clearly
14 have to be addressed when we talk about ending
15 homelessness.

16 It occurred to me -- I forgot to
17 acknowledge my two colleagues who are here,
18 Debra McMillan who is our Deputy Director of
19 Social Service Programs and Shirley Robinson
20 who is the Director of Help Philadelphia.
21 They're both here today.

22 We commend, and particularly Rob
23 Hess, for his leadership in the development of
24 services to the homeless and for spearheading
25 Philadelphia's 10-year plan and to end

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2 homelessness. This is an exciting time that
3 finally brings us all together to build on
4 past efforts and move towards greater success.
5 Much has been done, and with public will, much
6 more can be done. We hope that Council
7 continues to play an important role in
8 supporting the plan and in monitoring its
9 outcomes.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 (Applause.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
13 very much.

14 Where is the Mary Howard Health
15 Center?

16 MS. FOX: It's at Ninth and Sansom
17 Streets. It's right on the corner. The
18 address is 125 South Ninth Street. We have
19 special hours for appointments and we also
20 have walk-in appointments. And any homeless
21 person is welcome there.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
23 great.

24 Let me thank you for your continued
25 work over the years. We've interacted with

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2 one another on many issues over the years.

3 Thank you very much, Ms. Fox.

4 MS. FOX: Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

6 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good afternoon.

8 Let me thank you for your testimony. All of
9 the testimony has been extremely compelling
10 for me. I continue to have a laser beam
11 interest in what's happening with kids in our
12 City. And so I'm encouraged to hear that
13 simply because a child is homeless does not
14 mean they should not receive some of the same
15 fundamental basic services that children
16 require, like immunizations. So let me
17 commend you for the great work that's been
18 done with that.

19 I'm sorry I missed that conference
20 at Community. I wasn't aware of it, so I'll
21 look forward to the recommendations that came
22 out of that because that becomes great
23 instructions for us on this side of the table
24 in what we can do to further help the cause.
25 This is a great newsletter. Thank you.

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2 MS. FOX: And I just wanted to
3 mention one thing about the immunizations.
4 That program wouldn't have started without the
5 full cooperation of the City, because it was
6 actually the need for seeing our nurse that
7 was actually built into the intake process.
8 So that's part of what someone has to do
9 before they can be placed in shelter. And we
10 haven't had a case of Hepatitis A since the
11 late '80s. So the City deserves just as much
12 congratulations on that.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It sounds, too,
14 like a continuing challenge, and it's very
15 similar to a conversation I had this morning
16 earlier with Shirley Ransom Garner regarding
17 foster children who, for reasons that we
18 understand, do not get access to services like
19 immunizations and such. And my question to
20 her was the linkage, the tie with the
21 Philadelphia School District. And it sounds
22 like that might be a gap here, so maybe that's
23 a challenge that we can talk about in greater
24 detail at another time to see how we can
25 tighten the linkages with the School District

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2 who are in touch with kids and, I would think,
3 have some level of responsibility in bringing
4 children who are homeless to the attention of
5 those that can change that circumstance.
6 Would you agree?

7 MS. FOX: Yes, I certainly do. And
8 I'd be glad to talk to you at anytime.

9 Thank you very much for your time.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're welcome.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, we are very
13 fortunate to have a group of folks that Joy
14 Sacco is going to introduce us to from the
15 Woodstock Family Facility next up.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
17 morning. Thank you for your patience.
18 Identify yourself for the record and begin.
19 Thank you very much.

20 MS. SACCO: I'm Joyce Sacco, the
21 Director of the Blueprint to End Homelessness.
22 As part of the Mayor's Task Force planning
23 process, I, as well as some folks from the
24 Office of Adult Services --

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Would you

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2 talk into the mike? We can't hear you.

3 MS. SACCO: Certainly. We went out
4 to many facilities in Philadelphia to talk to
5 consumers and residents of facilities to find
6 out what they felt was important. These
7 women, Kiya Becote and Volette Taylor, are
8 from the RHD Woodstock Family Center in North
9 Philly. They were part of the first focus
10 group and then they participated in the second
11 round of planning meetings in this building in
12 October. Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
14 Please identify yourself and then begin.
15 Thank you.

16 MS. TAYLOR: Good afternoon. My
17 name is Volette Taylor. I'm currently staying
18 at the OESS shelter that's run by RHD
19 Woodstock. At the last meeting, there was a
20 lot of talk about lumping people together.
21 But I want to tell you, everyone's situation
22 is different.

23 For example, I had two deaths within
24 two months of each other; my husband, my
25 mother. I was living in my mother's house.

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2 And when my mother died, my sister changed the
3 deed so she would be the owner and my sister
4 decided to put me and my two girls out in the
5 cold. So I had to make a decision to enter
6 the shelter system. I was depressed. I
7 cried. I was grieving over the two deaths of
8 my mother and my husband, not to mention that
9 my sister turned her back on me and my
10 children. We became homeless because our
11 network of support fell apart.

12 Since we've been in the shelter, I
13 have seen many women with children in
14 different crises and situations like victims
15 of domestic violence, victims of fire, women
16 without enough education or support to take
17 care of their family, substance abuse, and
18 women who just had too many kids and don't
19 know how to cope with them.

20 The life skill classes that I took
21 at Woodstock, especially the Each One Teach
22 One Program, gave me a chance to vent and
23 learn how to put my needs and the needs of my
24 children first. Because of this situation, it
25 has helped me grow in terms of not letting my

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2 family take advantage of me. I took time off
3 from work because it was hard for me to take
4 care of the people. I'm a licensed CNA. And
5 going through the situation where my mother
6 and my husband being in intensive care, it was
7 very hard and for me to deal with that at the
8 same time. I think a grievance support of
9 counseling would help get me through a lot of
10 the pain and the loss of my family and also
11 the betrayal of my sister.

12 I believe the support services like
13 GED programs, housekeeping skills, food skills
14 services like Philabundance Program and our
15 parenting classes were very helpful for me.

16 The activities for the children like
17 Girls Night and Boys Night, and they also have
18 rap groups for boys and girls on different
19 nights, gave my children an outlet to help
20 express themselves, to learn positive life
21 skills, and develop their creative side. It
22 let them talk about how they felt while they
23 were in the shelter system, too, and how not
24 only I was grieving, but they were grieving
25 for their grandmother and their father. Where

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2 I'm at, they gave them the opportunity to talk
3 along with just other peers about how they
4 felt, and it helped them.

5 The most important thing that I
6 think the City could do to fight homelessness
7 is to develop affordable housing or repair all
8 the houses that are rundown around here to
9 make it available for low income families.
10 Everybody's situation is not the same.

11 And to those who believe that low
12 income families do not keep up their living
13 spaces, they can come see my room at the
14 shelter, because it's clean. We have room
15 check every day. And I have two girls who
16 help me clean my room. They are learning how
17 to be clean young women and to rely on each
18 other and be a family.

19 That's all I got to say. Thank you.
20 (Applause.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

22 MS. BECOTE: Good afternoon. My
23 name is Kiya Becote. I am also a resident at
24 RHD Woodstock. I started off in the New York
25 City shelter system and moved to Philadelphia

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2 due to lack of assistance.

3 In my opinion, the Philadelphia
4 shelter system is off to a very good start.
5 I'm offered opportunities here that I wouldn't
6 fathom getting in New York. In addition to
7 help with housing, I can get help learning to
8 save my money and, if need be, parenting, life
9 skills and other such programs which give me
10 the opportunity to grow as an individual and
11 put an end to the cycle of dependency.

12 My observation is that everyone in
13 the shelter system needs help, but the main
14 concern should be focussing on the children.
15 By this, I don't mean simply child care or
16 recreational activities. I mean showing them
17 that there is more to life than just
18 surviving, showing them that there's more to
19 life than a 10-block radius in a lousy
20 neighborhood. If you want it and you feel
21 it's something worthwhile, you have the power
22 to obtain it. Find a way to help these
23 children step out of their neighborhood and
24 experience new things and see new things, meet
25 and network with new people.

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2 I always thought the Big Brothers
3 and Big Sisters Programs were excellent. The
4 problem is that there are a lot of young girls
5 with children upon children who have never
6 been taught. How do we expect someone who has
7 never learned independent thinking and to take
8 responsibility for themselves and their
9 actions to teach the next generation something
10 they've never learned themselves?

11 The most important thing the City
12 can do to end homelessness, in my opinion, is
13 to go into the schools, community centers, go
14 into the budget and put more money in
15 programs, link up with the not-for-profit
16 sector that wants to help these children, go
17 to whoever it is you need to go to, find
18 whoever it is you need to find to make the
19 children want more. It's called the ghetto,
20 but it doesn't have to be the ghetto. If you
21 change the mindset, then you change the
22 environment.

23 I want the world for my son,
24 Malachi. Help me give it to him. Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes, these two
3 testifiers deserve a round of applause because
4 it takes a certain level of courage to come
5 forward, acknowledge your circumstance, but to
6 also say implicitly in your testimony that you
7 recognize that children, above all, are the
8 ultimate victims in this circumstance.

9 We thank you, Bob Hess, and those
10 who just provided testimony for being willing
11 to come and enlighten us even further on this
12 circumstance. Thank you very much for your
13 testimony.

14 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, thank you
15 for your support. We have so many wonderful
16 people here today that want to have an
17 opportunity to address this distinguished
18 body.

19 I am jumping around a little bit to
20 try to be sensitive to the time that folks
21 have available today, and I apologize ahead of
22 time for that.

23 I want to introduce to you a woman
24 who has been really dedicated to assisting us
25 in this City on this issue for a number of

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2 years as a volunteer. She comes to us from
3 Keystone Mercy Health System. But what she
4 has recognized from the beginning is emergency
5 shelter should be a point of entry into a
6 system, not a point of destination. And so
7 she has dedicated her volunteer efforts to
8 Chairing our McKinney Application Committee
9 which brings in about 20 million federal
10 dollars into our City each year and is
11 focussed on providing services, but most
12 importantly, for providing housing
13 opportunities of a transitional and permanent
14 nature to people that are in our system. And
15 so we so we appreciate her work. It's a
16 privilege for me to introduce to you Maria
17 Battle.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good afternoon
19 and welcome.

20 MS. BATTLE: Thank you,
21 Councilwoman, for being here. I want to give
22 greetings to Honorable Jannie Blackwell and
23 all of the Council. Of course, both of you
24 know me very well and know where I'm from, so
25 I just wanted you to know that, as Bob said, I

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2 am in partnership with Bob and OESS. I'm the
3 Chairwoman of the McKinney Strategic Planning
4 Committee for the Office of the Adult
5 Services. And I'm appearing here before you
6 today to provide testimony in support of
7 maintaining and improving services for the
8 homeless families and children.

9 We all serve the same vulnerable
10 at-risk population. That's what I serve at
11 Keystone Mercy Health Plan. And many of the
12 people that are in these shelters are on my
13 plan.

14 I believe that improving the quality
15 of life for the most vulnerable members of our
16 City betters all of our lives. One of the
17 ways to protect the most vulnerable members of
18 our community is to become involved and, as
19 Bob said, and become an advocate. So I,
20 therefore, participate on the McKinney
21 Supernova Committee, and that is a passion
22 that I'm bringing to it.

23 It's important and key to
24 strengthening and enhancing the continuum of
25 care of many public and private partners.

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2 This ensures that progress towards improving
3 the quality of life of the Philadelphia
4 community, and it's our shared goal. The
5 public and private partnerships encompasses a
6 broad spectrum of associates. Such
7 collaboration produces benefits for all
8 concerned. Our local financial institutions
9 provide financing for housing developments and
10 receive tax credits. Homeless individuals and
11 families, therefore, receive affordable
12 housing. A marriage between a local
13 foundation and local high tech company
14 producing a needed learning center and
15 technology labs that guarantees the digital
16 divide is kept to a minimum for that
17 community. And I think we've heard testimony
18 earlier today speaking about our children and
19 what they need.

20 The collaboration of private and
21 public healthcare systems produces an easily
22 accessible continuum of care from preventative
23 to acute treatment for the community members,
24 such as enhancing the intake process
25 consisting of a physical health assessment by

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2 linking with the existing services such as the
3 Philadelphia Department of Health Centers and
4 private health centers including linking with
5 community behavioral health centers.

6 Although our accomplishments have
7 been impressive, we have much work ahead to
8 complete in order to maintain and prevent
9 homelessness in the future. During the past
10 seven years, we have reduced the chronic
11 homeless population living on the street by 75
12 percent. From the summer of 1997 to recently,
13 the number has gone from 824 to the most
14 recent low of 147.

15 There are several keys to our
16 success. There's been an influx of new money
17 and support for housing and service,
18 innovative outreach efforts, our new housing
19 first agenda aimed at reducing the incidence
20 of chronic homelessness in Philadelphia, and
21 the successful collaboration of private and
22 public sector.

23 As Bob mentioned earlier, we
24 recently submitted our 2004 HUD McKinney
25 application. We requested \$23,244,192 for 46

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2 projects, including Shelter Plus Care renewals
3 which are funded separately from this
4 competitive part of the application. And this
5 also includes a \$2 million bonus which
6 Philadelphia's eligible for because of our
7 size and because we put permanent housing
8 projects in the number one slot. This request
9 included 9 new projects with a funding level
10 of approximately \$10 million. The new
11 projects will produce 130 new units, providing
12 housing for a minimum of 260 individuals. It
13 includes a mix of one-third of the units are
14 for chronic homeless individuals, including a
15 safe haven for 18 people. One-third of the
16 units are for families, including large
17 families. And one-third of the units are for
18 homeless youth, including those who are aged
19 out of foster care. Since 1996 when McKinney
20 funding started, there has been more than
21 1,000 supportive housing program units
22 created.

23 Effectively utilizing the limited
24 public and private resources requires our best
25 efforts. Strengthening the collaboration and

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2 implementation of services provided by
3 businesses, foundations, local, state and
4 federal government for the benefit of mutual
5 consumers in Philadelphia community is first
6 and foremost. Let's not forget the
7 strengthening of inter-departmental
8 collaboration, encouraging the
9 cross-pollination of programming services
10 through the effective use of information
11 sharing regarding Philadelphia-funded services
12 for our mutually targeted populations.
13 Department of Health, DHS, behavioral health,
14 PHA are a few of the City agencies servicing
15 this population. It is key to promote the
16 direct dialog between program managers to
17 develop a listing of all providers that are
18 funded and the services they provide. By
19 doing so, managers can then easily identify
20 common strategies for servicing targeted
21 populations. This would demonstrate and
22 strongly support the efficient use of limited
23 resources.

24 Our efforts are one of a few which
25 has successfully leveraged public and private

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2 funding with such dramatic results. The
3 community needs our energy to continue the
4 process until homelessness is eliminated in
5 the City of Philadelphia.

6 I thank you for allowing me to
7 appear before this distinguished Council, and
8 I ask that you continue to support our efforts
9 with all the resources at your disposal.
10 Together, we can help. Together, we can give
11 them hope. Together, we can give them a home.
12 And I thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
15 very much.

16 Any questions?

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Define chronic
18 homelessness for me versus homelessness.

19 MS. BATTLE: I'm sorry. I didn't
20 hear you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Define chronic
22 homelessness, because you cited that in your
23 testimony.

24 MR. HESS: I'll try to take a shot
25 at that, Councilwoman. And I'll probably get

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2 it wrong, but my staff will correct me. I
3 think chronic under the federal definition
4 refers to an individual who has been homeless
5 continuously for a minimum of a year or has 4
6 or more occasions of homelessness over the
7 last 2 years -- 4 and 3. See, I knew I would
8 get it wrong, but thank goodness they're
9 there.

10 So it's kind of the high flyers in
11 our system, if you will. The people that have
12 the longer record of experiencing
13 homelessness.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You stated it
15 is the McKinney project? Is that a revenue
16 stream?

17 MR. HESS: Yes, it's a federal
18 revenue stream.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see. Under
20 which federal agency?

21 MS. BATTLE: Under HUD.

22 MR. HESS: Each year as a City we
23 have to compete for those funds nationally.

24 While Maria is here, she is the
25 volunteer Chair of this public/private

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2 partnership group that sets the priorities for
3 our City. And we're so proud of her work. I
4 also would be remiss if I didn't mention
5 Dainette Mintz from OHCD who's worked so long
6 and hard on this issue. Roberta Sharp from
7 our office. Roberta is over here. Maybe she
8 can stand up. She works on the McKinney
9 Project. And Emily Camp Landis from our
10 office.

11 MS. BATTLE: And our new person
12 Laura.

13 MR. HESS: And Laura.

14 I also want to take a moment, if I
15 may, Madam Chair, to recognize two other folks
16 that Maria indirectly referred to in her
17 remarks. The first is Marcella Mills.

18 Marcella, stand up.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. HESS: Marcella runs the unit
21 that runs all of our transitional housing
22 programs in this City, but she also has a unit
23 that 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is running
24 around this City handling emergency
25 relocations as they're needed and just does a

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2 fabulous job.

3 And I want to also finally introduce
4 you to Dr. Marchella McGuire (ph).

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. HESS: Dr. McGuire has the
7 distinction of being the first and, to the
8 best of my knowledge, the only Director of
9 Chronic Homeless Initiatives in America.

10 We have moved the numbers of people
11 living on our streets down from a high when
12 this Administration took office of around 824
13 just in Center City to something less than 200
14 on the streets of Center City today. It's
15 because of the leadership of the Mayor,
16 Council, the support of all the integrated
17 service providers across from non-profits to
18 different government departments working in
19 harmony and led by a focus with a director
20 that's been very important to this effort.

21 And so we're proud of the work
22 that's been done there. We think it's a
23 model. You'll hear more about that later, but
24 I wanted to mention it while Maria was here
25 because she's helped us set priorities within

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2 our McKinney application that have had this
3 effect.

4 MS. BATTLE: And I would say that
5 from the mission of the Mayor to the vision of
6 Bob Hess, we've been able to be very
7 successful in moving that forward. And we
8 really hope and continue to make homelessness
9 -- everyone has a home, that's what we really
10 want, especially for the chronic. So please
11 keep us there in your hearts and in your minds
12 and in your pocketbooks. Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you very
14 much for your testimony.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, with your
17 permission, I'd like to now invite Alicia
18 Christian to the witness table. Alicia, as
19 you know, started in the business of helping
20 people experiencing homelessness when I think
21 she was about age 3, so you'll remember
22 because I think it was probably about the same
23 time you started.

24 (Laughter.)

25 MR. HESS: And has done this work

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2 for many, many years in our great city and is
3 here to share with us today.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

5 MS. CHRISTIAN: Thank you for the
6 opportunity to testify today.

7 As Rob indicated, I am the Director
8 of Dignity Housing, a non-profit agency that
9 provides affordable project-based Section 8
10 subsidized housing and social services for
11 homeless families and individuals in
12 Philadelphia. We were established in 1988,
13 and we have helped more than 1500 formerly
14 homeless men, women, and children attain
15 self-sufficiency goals. Many have moved from
16 Dignity to viable employment, home ownership,
17 private market rentals, residency and
18 non-service-enhanced affordable housing and
19 many have attained higher education
20 objectives.

21 I'm pleased to offer testimony in
22 support of the implementation of a concrete
23 plan to end homelessness in Philadelphia
24 within a decade. Dignity is a member of the
25 Public Private Task Force on Homelessness, the

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2 Blueprint to End Homelessness, the
3 Philadelphia Association of Community
4 Development Corporations, and the Leadership
5 to End Homelessness. Our agency strongly
6 supports housing and other goals stipulated in
7 the blueprint and the work plan of the
8 Corporation for Supportive Housing. We
9 further support and urge Council action on the
10 call of PACDC for the creation of a \$20
11 million housing trust fund which can be used
12 to leverage \$50 million annually from federal,
13 state, and private investors.

14 No doubt today, you have heard a
15 litany of statistics, facts, figures on the
16 scope of homelessness in our City and on the
17 need for a fundamental, permanent solution.
18 At Dignity Housing, each day we see the
19 detrimental impact of the City's failure to
20 heed the call of homeless individuals and
21 service providers and concerned administrators
22 for an end to this problem. Every month, we
23 receive more than 100 calls from beleaguered
24 homeless individuals and service providers
25 seeking transitional or permanent housing

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2 options. And we can only serve a fraction of
3 that number. In fact, our current rental
4 inventory has been reduced from 160 units in
5 1994 to 121 units today. We've recently
6 instituted a fairly broad freeze on accepting
7 new tenant applicants through January.

8 We provide long-term transitional
9 housing, two to five years. And we're
10 immensely proud of some of our newer
11 developments; Dignity II, Dignity III, in the
12 Germantown community. And if you're familiar
13 with the area at Wayne and Hansberry, you have
14 seen a number of fairly impressive Dignity
15 newer developments that are having a
16 tremendously positive impact in that two to
17 three-block corridor. However, we are faced
18 with the problem of maintaining our aging
19 inventory. More than 100 of the Dignity
20 Housing homes and apartments scattered
21 throughout the City are owned by the
22 Redevelopment Authority and are aging. They
23 were brought on line around 1988.

24 Our contract Section 8 rents, our
25 subsidized rents, were established in 1988 and

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2 they were established at below market rate
3 levels. In Cobbs Creek, we managed a
4 four-bedroom unit and received less than \$600
5 per month. On William's Avenue, 8100 Williams
6 Avenue, we manage units that receive Section 8
7 contract rents fully 200 to \$300 per month
8 below prevailing rates. We have, as the map
9 indicates -- and unfortunately I only brought
10 the one laminated map -- we have a City-wide
11 inventory on both sides of the Schuylkill. It
12 is admittedly one of the most difficult kinds
13 of subsidized rental inventories to maintain.
14 Units that were brought on line in 1988 need
15 substantive capital repairs. Our Section 8
16 rents have been consistently so low, that
17 we've been unable to save, unable to amass
18 resources for capital maintenance and
19 refurbishment.

20 The situation became so desperate in
21 2003 that we announced the probable closing of
22 Dignity Housing, an agency that had been in
23 existence nearly 16 years. We announced the
24 closing of Dignity Housing at a time when,
25 according to a number of reports, more than

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2 6,000 individuals experienced homelessness in
3 the City of Philadelphia at some point during
4 the year and more than 120,000 experienced
5 affordable housing crises.

6 We are grateful to Members of City
7 Council who came to our aid who are familiar
8 with the mission and the achievements of
9 dignity housing. And the heart of the
10 agency's achievements lie in the
11 accomplishments of our tenants. Dignity
12 housing has produced more than 122 homeowners,
13 more than 73 graduates of associate and
14 bachelor degree programs.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. CHRISTIAN: It has produced one
17 formerly homeless drug addicted individual who
18 now has her Ph.D. and two masters. It has
19 produced one formerly homeless teenager who
20 with her mother entered the Dignity Housing
21 Program in the mid-'90s and resided in the
22 program and received supportive services for
23 five years, she is now a Ph.D./M.D, medical
24 doctor.

25 We believe that given the resources

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2 and the mentoring and given the commitment,
3 clients can indeed -- a number of clients can
4 become colleagues. We bear witness to that.
5 Former Dignity tenants work for sister
6 agencies including the People Emergency Center
7 and formerly the Philadelphia Health
8 Management Corporation. A former Dignity
9 tenant is now an IRS supervisor, supervising a
10 staff more than 30. She entered Dignity
11 Housing in 1990, left the program in 1995,
12 received our scholarships, is a homeowner now
13 and a parent herself of a foster child of a
14 drug addicted homeless mother.

15 Dignity can work and does work well.
16 We've learned a range of things as a result of
17 difficulties experienced in 2003, and really
18 now more than ever support the mandates in a
19 number of plans that have been discussed
20 previously. Section 8 rents and vouchers
21 should be set at levels more consistent with
22 fair market rates. In some instances, given
23 the age and location of the rental housing
24 stock, additional subsidies are required.

25 Pre-development planning funds and

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2 start-up operational planning grants may be
3 required as they pursue management of
4 affordable housing units.

5 Consolidated development of
6 affordable housing units in specific
7 neighborhoods on contiguous blocks is
8 preferable, so long as the numbers served are
9 not too large to support diversity and
10 cohesiveness in a neighborhood. As noted
11 earlier, Dignity's developments in a
12 three-block corridor in Germantown, Wayne,
13 Hansberry, Pulaski Avenue has succeeded in
14 reducing neighborhood blight by more than 30
15 percent in that corridor and it has spurred
16 additional housing investment by others.

17 There must be a significant
18 expansion of the number of rental subsidies.
19 There are a number of families now ready to
20 move beyond Dignity. They are not yet ready
21 to become homeowners. They need additional
22 subsidies and permanent -- I mean, they need
23 options to continue pursuit of their goals in
24 permanent, affordable housing. They need
25 Section 8 subsidies or vouchers which are now

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2 not readily available.

3 In preparing this testimony, I
4 reviewed the work plan that resulted from the
5 two meetings of the Mayor's Task Force on
6 Homelessness. But I also perused more dated
7 materials produced over the past two decades.
8 In the mid-'80s homeless activists called for
9 an end to homelessness. We called for a
10 maximum effort to limit a family's stay in
11 emergency shelter to 90 days with intense
12 assessment and case management and guaranteed
13 movement thereafter to transitional housing or
14 permanent housing. In 1998, the Blueprint to
15 End Homelessness called for the development of
16 an additional 500 units per year. In '84 we
17 called for the creation of 10,000 units. In
18 1990, Jack Kemp, then head of the US
19 Department of Housing and Urban Development
20 under the elder President Bush visited the
21 Dignity Housing Program, commended us on
22 exemplary efforts and promised to commit a
23 percentage of all foreclosed HUD housing stock
24 to housing the homeless. That promise was
25 never kept. Most recently, President Bush,

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2 the junior, has committed to an effort to end
3 homelessness. And I have no more faith that
4 that promise will be kept without concerted
5 political advocacy, no more faith that that
6 promise will be kept than the promise of the
7 elder Bush Administration.

8 This City Council, along with
9 concerned service providers and private sector
10 officials, must work to ensure that the
11 10-year plan to end homelessness does not
12 become yet another study on the shelf
13 gathering dust. I reviewed 42 of them prior
14 to the testimony today, all admirable, all
15 with goals well worth achieving and within our
16 means. There simply has to be the collective
17 will.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
19 very much. We thank you for your excellent
20 testimony. Obviously, your reputation
21 precedes you. We were happy to fight for your
22 agency and its survival and continuance.

23 We agree with you. This is the
24 second plan that I'm living through. The
25 first one didn't end; we didn't take a whole

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2 10 years. And we agree it has to be real and
3 that all of us are committed to making it
4 happen.

5 It is unfortunate that we're having
6 this issue at the federal level even in terms
7 of Section 8 certificates. And I don't know
8 how we get out of that. I know we're all
9 struggling. Hopefully, we'll get some break,
10 but that's a real problem. And as you know,
11 it's already happened. They've already cut
12 the individual Section 8 certificates, and
13 that's a real, real problem. So we have to
14 continue to battle --

15 MS. CHRISTIAN: And explore creative
16 means of developing internal subsidies. It
17 may be necessary to mix market rate units
18 leased to private renters to generate
19 subsidies for homeless and other low income
20 families.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I think
22 we're doing that as well. And even PHA is 50
23 percent home ownership even in the Lucien E.
24 Blackwell Homes is 788 homes in Mill Creek as
25 well as many other places. So I agree, we

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2 have to continue to be creative. And I
3 believe locally we are trying to do that.
4 Even with OESS, and Rob Hess can speak for
5 himself, renting private places for people in
6 need. So I think we're doing a great job
7 here. If we get a little help from on high
8 from those Feds, I think we'd be okay.

9 MR. HESS: I think one of the things
10 we should probably put on the record, it is
11 true that the President's federal budget
12 request has a gap in the Section 8 budget of
13 \$1.8 billion dollars.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: 1.8?

15 MR. HESS: Billion dollars has been
16 cut out of the President's proposed Section 8
17 budget. That may be a question we may want to
18 ask Mr. Mangano about when he arrives later
19 this afternoon. Certainly, that's an issue
20 that we're all very concerned about.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
22 again very, very much.

23 Any questions?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, with your
4 permission, I'll invite Ted Weertz from
5 Kirkbride who is the Executive Director of
6 Traveler's Aid to the witness table to join
7 us.

8 I will tell you that about two years
9 ago, we had a crisis situation with respect to
10 families. And literally within hours of a
11 phone call to Ted Weertz, we were able to move
12 into Kirkbride largely because of his
13 organization and your leadership which allowed
14 us to do that so very quickly, and we
15 appreciate that.

16 Ted.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
18 We certainly concur that he does a great job
19 there. In fact, I talked to Tom Flemming
20 yesterday, and this minute I forgot why. I
21 think I was supposed to do something, Ted. So
22 it reminds me, I'd better think and follow-up.
23 But thank you for your leadership there. And
24 at every meeting and gathering and
25 groundbreaking you're always there and you do

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2 a fine job. We thank you.

3 MR. WEERTZ: Thank you very much,
4 Councilwoman Blackwell. We try to be
5 responsive. We try to be responsive to OESS.
6 They said 10 minutes; we will do that in 10
7 minutes.

8 We did two years ago bring in within
9 a matter of about eight hours, 80 persons who
10 were parts of homeless families and we did
11 that because we were out there looking for
12 shelter and it's very difficult to find
13 shelter and we have to plan, I think, more
14 ahead. And I'll get to that in a minute.

15 Traveler's Aid has been considered
16 sometimes the best kept secret in the City and
17 in the nation, and many people don't
18 understand what it is about. It's actually
19 the oldest non-sectarian social service agency
20 in the country. We started in 1851 in St.
21 Louis, and that was where the 49ers were
22 gathering -- not the 49ers of San Francisco,
23 but the 49ers of 1849 -- tens of thousands of
24 them in tents and covered wagons to go to
25 California. And typhoid fever came through

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2 and many became very, very sick, and the Mayor
3 of St. Louis gave them \$500,000, which you can
4 imagine in 1851 how much money that was, to
5 start the first Traveler's Aid to help
6 travelers, which means immigrants which means
7 people who are homeless.

8 We started in 1901 mostly to serve
9 families, mostly mothers with children and
10 young women who were coming to the shores
11 usually directly from boat, sometimes by
12 train, who did not have any means, who did not
13 have any home and, of course, with very little
14 communication available at that time. We
15 found them housing. We found them employment.
16 And we set them up so that they could live
17 permanently in the country. And that's really
18 what we've been doing since 1901 mostly with
19 people from out of town and either they're
20 stranded in the City and need to move on to
21 someplace or else they're coming to the City
22 and need help. Many of them are families, and
23 we provide that kind of assistance. Now, some
24 103 years later, we've done about a half
25 million of those families and individuals. So

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2 we've been very adept at helping people who
3 are in the midst of a homeless crisis.

4 What we found right around 1991-92,
5 it became apparent that the homelessness that
6 had started about 10 years later was not going
7 away, and we decided that rather than be
8 working simply with the poor, stranded
9 travelers in Philadelphia, we were going to
10 focus on now the indigenous homeless and,
11 again, back on to the families. And we
12 particularly decided that a group that was
13 really not being well-served was the large
14 homeless families.

15 Now, the statistics vary from year
16 to year, but every year perhaps 2,000 families
17 come into the system. About 150 of them have
18 five or more children. If you add it up,
19 that's where most of the children are in the
20 entire system, in the large families. And
21 when you have a large family, it's not just a
22 small family but a lot more. It's an entirely
23 different situation that you're in. And if
24 the City needs a 10-year plan to eliminate
25 homelessness, each family with five or more

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2 children needs a 10-year plan because it's not
3 going to be for 10 years that most of the
4 children are grown and have left the family
5 and are now independent. So we've found that
6 niche. And one other niche that we worked in
7 is homeless persons with physical
8 disabilities, and that's what we've been
9 working on largely.

10 Now, the homelessness for families
11 is rising, and it's rising because of the cost
12 of rent and the cost of utilities has been
13 skyrocketing and the amount of income of
14 families has remained relatively flat. In
15 Philadelphia, we've seen rises of maybe 4 or 5
16 percent. In other cities, especially where
17 there are high rents, it's been rising much
18 more sharply. And just in meeting two weeks
19 ago with colleagues from Boston, they put 500
20 families every day in motels in the Boston
21 area. New York City is very much the same
22 kind of situation. And I'm afraid
23 Philadelphia is going to become that situation
24 too unless we plan with more housing and
25 certainly with housing trust with every effort

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2 that we can because once the housing starts
3 increasing more sharply, the numbers of
4 families and especially the numbers of large
5 families is going to increase, and it's going
6 to increase very rapidly. And that's what we
7 are trying to avoid.

8 We've started with five units of
9 transitional housing in West Philadelphia in
10 1993. It's now 33 units of housing owned
11 and/or leased by us, mostly with grants from
12 HUD. We have two large grants from HUD.
13 Recently, we've also gotten 22 vouchers,
14 project-based vouchers, Section 8 vouchers
15 from PHA. Certainly, it has been very good
16 for OESS to be able to provide us with
17 matching money, but largely the money has been
18 coming from federal sources and we need those
19 sources badly.

20 We work with the families out of the
21 shelter into transitional housing. We try to
22 get them into permanent housing and then
23 follow them, especially if they go into public
24 housing, for years to come to make sure that
25 their success lasts. And we think that's the

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2 only thing we can do, again, with large
3 families.

4 Permanent housing, we started our
5 own permanent housing system in which what we
6 do is when they go into transitional housing,
7 we leave them there. Unless they want to move
8 out, we leave them there, they get their own
9 Section 8s, they get their own incomes, and we
10 just go out and get another transitional unit
11 because usually two to three times the
12 family's moved before the shelter and then
13 another move into the shelter, a move out of
14 the shelter into transition another move.
15 It's really not fair to the children, and
16 that's what we have set the whole thing up for
17 is the children. Our families average four to
18 each family. We take families of every kind,
19 of every age, of every composition. So we
20 have small families but we also have families
21 with three, four, five, six, seven, eight,
22 nine, ten, and in another month, eleven
23 children. We've asked that mother not to have
24 anymore children but we haven't succeeded at
25 that point, and that family needs help and

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2 will need help for a considerable period of
3 time.

4 We've also just gotten a HUD grant
5 to do 10 physically disabled individuals who
6 are homeless, and that is also a special need
7 of finding those kinds of units and making
8 sure that they're there for them.

9 We have also developed temporary
10 housing for people who are trying to move
11 straight from the streets into permanent
12 housing. We have four units of that because
13 it takes a little while to get through all the
14 paperwork so we bring them immediately into
15 some housing until all the paperwork is done
16 and two months later they can go away.

17 We also have community voice mail
18 which is a way in which everybody who is
19 homeless can sign up and get messages on their
20 own phone number from wherever, from a
21 landlord, from family members so that even if
22 they're out in the streets, they can have
23 telephone messages wherever they are.

24 The big thing that happened two
25 years ago is that we did start a shelter, and

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2 we started it at Kirkbride. Kirkbride, of
3 course, is West Philadelphia. We brought in
4 70 people in October. Then later in October
5 we brought in another 70. In January we
6 brought in another 70. And then again in
7 September and again in August we increased it,
8 and now we are the largest shelter in the
9 City. It is some 300 people. We think, in
10 fact, it is a nice sprawling location and we
11 think it is a model of what you should have
12 which is a campus for a shelter, not a
13 building with a lot of streets around it
14 because what the kids need is a secure
15 setting. They need a place where they can
16 feel safe. They need a place where they can
17 roam around. They need someplace within a
18 neighborhood, not someplace surrounded by City
19 streets and a lot of traffic. And that's what
20 we have tried to build there. The size, we
21 don't think has been that much of a problem
22 because it is a large campus, 26 acres, with
23 numerous other agencies in them.

24 What we had asked for you to do is
25 the airport the other day, and that has been

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2 very helpful. We want to get back in the
3 airport because we also help just the general
4 public who have trouble in transportation
5 centers. That's what you probably think of
6 when you think of Traveler's Aid. You go to
7 an airport and you say, "Oh, well, could you
8 tell me which gate it is?" And they'll tell
9 you what gate it is. But there are also every
10 day a couple people who have lost their
11 wallet, who have lost all communications, who
12 are victims of domestic violence, and you help
13 those people as well and they are homeless as
14 well.

15 We have a program dedicated to the
16 youth. I try to provide structure and
17 planning. Melcher Monk who is the head of the
18 student enrichment program provides
19 inspiration. And Victor Sinanan provides all
20 meaning and purpose of it. And I give it to
21 them.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

23 MR. MELCHER: We find that as the
24 families --

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Introduce

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2 transitional housing or facilities,
3 difficulties in school enrollment and
4 registration due to both the transient nature
5 of homelessness and/or lack of current
6 academic and medical records, and a family's
7 daily demands of coping with food, shelter,
8 family violence or health problems which may
9 push children's educational needs aside.

10 For example, this year the start of
11 the school year, we dealt with a young man
12 who, prior to becoming homeless, had a
13 superior academic record. He attended a
14 specialized school for academics here in
15 Philadelphia for his ninth grade year. And
16 his family fell to the issue of homelessness.
17 And because of his inability to get to school
18 every day, be it that he didn't have tokens or
19 a trans pass and the transient nature of being
20 shifted from house to house before they
21 actually had nowhere to go, he failed. And
22 when they came to the shelter and it was time
23 for us to intervene, get him back to school,
24 he lost that opportunity for that school.
25 These are the kinds of issues that we face.

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2 He is now currently enrolled in another school
3 and is performing academically, soundly
4 academically. However, that opportunity was
5 taken from him because of the issues of
6 homelessness.

7 For those homeless children who are
8 enrolled in school, the outcomes are alarming.
9 21 percent of all school-aged homeless
10 children are forced to repeat a grade because
11 of frequent absences. 14 percent must repeat
12 because they move to a new school. Within a
13 school year, an average of 40 percent of the
14 homeless children attend two different schools
15 with an incredible 28 percent attending three
16 or more schools. Homeless children in the
17 United States have 4 times the average
18 childhood rate of delayed development, twice
19 as many are diagnosed with learning
20 disabilities as their non-homeless
21 counterparts. Three times as many children
22 have emotional and behavioral problems with an
23 average suspension rate twice that of other
24 students. Influencing these indicators are
25 emotional stresses caused by family

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2 instability, violence, poor nutrition and
3 sleep and the stigmatization of severe poverty
4 in comparison to children's peers.

5 I don't want to read a lot of
6 statistics and figures. I want to give you an
7 idea of what it is that we are doing and seek
8 to continue doing through our student
9 enrichment program. Traveler's Aid of
10 Philadelphia has developed a structure
11 year-round student development program
12 beginning -- it began in August of 2000 to
13 promote the academic and emotional recovery of
14 children and youth in homeless families. The
15 student enrichment program provides
16 after-school and summer camp programs every
17 day. Even when schools are on holidays, we
18 take the kids in and we continue to provide
19 programming for that entire day, and during
20 vacation breaks to the school-aged children of
21 the program, the Traveler's Aid Family Shelter
22 and to low-income community residents. The
23 program is a joint venture of Traveler's Aid
24 Philadelphia, the Lombard Central Presbyterian
25 Church and the Mayor's Office of Health and

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2 Fitness. The program is conducted in the
3 local elementary school, the church facilities
4 and the grounds at 4201 Powelton Avenue in
5 West Philadelphia and the Kirkbride Center.

6 Traveler's Aid Philadelphia hires
7 school teachers, nutritionists and youth
8 developers to instruct the children
9 academically, to train them in modern health
10 and fitness habits and to expose them to a
11 wide range of life-enrichment experiences.
12 The program draws hundreds of volunteers from
13 the City, for example, the Wharton School of
14 Business students; the region, the Shipley
15 School students; and the nation, for example,
16 the church groups from Harrisburg, Michigan,
17 and New York. The program serves
18 approximately 100 to 120 students each week.
19 It receives major funding from the 21st
20 Century Grant, the City's Children Investment
21 Strategy, HUD, and numerous foundations,
22 charities and corporate and individual donors.

23 Our desire. We seek to have the
24 continued means to provide academic, physical,
25 social programming for children and youth that

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2 is fun, provides accountability, is credible
3 and serves to empower all of our participants
4 and to provide sustainable support for all of
5 those who come through our program.

6 We have a student who has come
7 through our program. He is a graduate, a high
8 school graduate that we kept with us and we
9 keep him now -- he's going to tell you about
10 himself. His name is Victor Sinanan.

11 MR. SINANAN: Good afternoon. My
12 name Victor Sinanan.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Would you
14 spell your last name, Victor?

15 MR. SINANAN: S-I-N-A-N-A-N,
16 Sinanan.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

18 MR. SINANAN: I'm just one of the
19 many children in this City that has been
20 through the transition of being homeless. My
21 family moved into the shelter in the summer of
22 2003.

23 Moving into the shelter and being
24 labeled as homeless affected me greatly. I
25 was affected by it socially. I no longer

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2 wanted to talk to the friends I knew or
3 anybody I came in contact with. I felt as
4 though they would know where I lived, and I
5 didn't want anyone to know that.

6 I used to go out to movies, parties,
7 basketball court, and I no longer did this.
8 The after school program, they had trips going
9 on, going to New York, Bush Gardens, and that
10 attracted me. So I went and started doing
11 that.

12 I had a youth development with Mr.
13 Shawn. He would come to my school and do
14 things my parents couldn't do for me. He
15 would pick me up and drop me off at my school
16 trips, check on my grades, get some of my
17 attendance records and see from my teachers
18 where I needed help from and where I could do
19 better in. The after school program gave me a
20 comfort zone, somewhere I could feel
21 comfortable from 3:00 to 6:00. At the end of
22 the year, I felt so comfortable that I had no
23 problem of picking me up in front of the
24 shelter. They threw me a little party for
25 prom that all the residents came to. Now,

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2 with the help of them, I'm enrolled in
3 Community College of Philadelphia and I have a
4 job at the after school program. Now I have a
5 chance to give back --

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. SINANAN: Now, with the job, I
8 have a chance to give back to the kids, and
9 I'm someone they can relate to since I've been
10 in the same situation as they have. Thank
11 you.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
14 very much. We're so proud of you. And we're
15 always here for you. My office is at the end
16 of the corridor, 408, and certainly I know I
17 speak for Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds
18 Brown, any way we can support you, we're happy
19 to do that. Congratulations.

20 Ted, I have one question for you
21 that my staff gave me. Do you still have the
22 community voice mail system?

23 MR. WEERTZ: Yes, we do. We kind of
24 take care of that ourselves, it's on our dime.
25 But we have 1500 people at any time on

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2 community voice mail and it's part of a
3 50-City effort.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's
5 great.

6 How do clients access it?

7 MR. WEERTZ: Really, usually they
8 get it through their case manager. And if
9 their case manager isn't signed up for it,
10 they can just call us up and we'll get it.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
12 very much. Thank you again.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If you are
14 looking for an internship opportunity, come up
15 to Room 580. We'd love to have you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, as luck
18 would have it, I looked to my side over here
19 and I'm blessed by seeing Reginald Morrow has
20 rejoined us. We wondered if this might be an
21 appropriate time to allow him to share his
22 second song with us.

23 At the same time we ask Paul
24 DiLorenzo and our good friends from Bright
25 Horizons to move to the witness table.

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2 (Applause.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
4 very much. Again, we applaud Reggie Morrow.
5 His is a family that is filled with talent.
6 He has a wife who writes poetry and daughters
7 who dance, so they're a pretty talented group.

8 MR. MORROW: Just before I sing this
9 next song, I just want to give a quick
10 testimony. I'm eternally grateful to the
11 homeless foundations and the City of
12 Philadelphia because I can honestly say I was
13 homeless at one time. And it was back in the
14 '50s or early '60s rather, around 1960 my
15 mother was pregnant with my youngest sister,
16 and she was pretty sick. So she had to go to
17 the hospital and they kept her in the hospital
18 for 12 weeks. Well, Philadelphia agencies,
19 they put me in a wonderful place. Back then
20 it was called the Stenton Child Care Center
21 right off of Stenton Avenue. And some of the
22 greatest times I ever had in my life was at
23 the Stenton Child Care Center. I learned to
24 socialize with other people, people of
25 different gender and race because people were

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2 there from all over the place. And they took
3 care of us. It was one of my sisters and I.

4 About a year ago, I went back to the
5 Stenton Child Care Center. They changed the
6 name since then. And I had an opportunity to
7 sing this song that I'm about to sing for you
8 guys now.

9 (Singing.)

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, there may
12 have been a time for a hearing where this
13 Chamber has had the opportunity to hear
14 greater song than they've heard today, I don't
15 know when that would have been. Between
16 Reverend Jenkins' lovely wife and Reginald, we
17 certainly thank them for joining us and being
18 so inspirational.

19 Speaking of inspirational, we used
20 to have a director in the Office of Children
21 in the City of Philadelphia who reached out to
22 all children. He's no longer with the City,
23 but it's my pleasure to thank him publically
24 and introduce him today. It's Paul DiLorenzo.

25 Now, Paul, unlike some other folks,

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2 when I reached out to him, embraced the idea
3 of helping homeless children or children
4 experiencing homelessness in our City and
5 brought to us the Bright Horizons Foundation.
6 Wonderful people. They're doing great work.
7 They came in and said they could create a
8 Bright Space in one of our shelters, and we
9 said that is very, very generous and nice, but
10 how about putting one in every one of our
11 shelters in this City? How about helping us
12 to become the first city in America that had
13 Bright Spaces in every family facility in this
14 City?

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. HESS: And with Paul's
17 leadership and Bright Spaces commitment, they
18 reached out to McNeil Pharmaceutical, and
19 you'll hear about this. McNeil stepped up
20 with \$100,000, and they're doing just that.
21 They're opening Bright Spaces in every family
22 facility in this shelter, and I'd like to
23 thank them all for that, as I introduce Paul.

24 Thank you, Paul.

25 MR. DILORENZO: Good afternoon. My

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2 name is Paul DiLorenzo, as Rob said. I am the
3 former Director of Children's Policy for the
4 City of Philadelphia. I served in the first
5 term of Mayor John Street. Now as a
6 consultant to a number of children's programs
7 both locally and nationally, I've had a chance
8 to work with such organizations here as the
9 People's Emergency Center and Lutheran
10 Settlement House, both of whom operate model
11 programs.

12 During my tenure in City government,
13 I had the opportunity to work closely with Rob
14 Hess, as Rob said, and a number of his great
15 staff on the issues related primarily to
16 children living in emergency shelters. It was
17 during this time that I met the wonderful
18 people from Bright Horizons Foundation who had
19 already begun developing Bright Spaces in
20 selected shelters throughout the country.

21 I met with the representatives of
22 the foundation and asked if they would be
23 willing, as Rob said, to make Philadelphia a
24 model for the development of Bright Spaces,
25 taking the program to as many as 10 to 20

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2 shelters and perhaps every shelter in the
3 City.

4 Rob and I were obviously very
5 excited when they agreed to do so. And I'm
6 happy to report that this is one reason why
7 Philadelphia is now seen as a leader when it
8 comes to innovative services for children who
9 live in shelters.

10 What I'd like to do today is share
11 with you just a few thoughts about our
12 challenges and opportunities as it relates to
13 this population of children and to encourage
14 you to fully support the creative and
15 relatively low-cost enhancements that continue
16 to be made in shelters throughout the City.

17 The Bright Spaces Program is one
18 example of how kids can benefit when city
19 government and the private sector work
20 together.

21 First, as Rob repeatedly would
22 remind me and still will say that the 1,000
23 youngsters living in shelters every evening
24 are not necessarily homeless children, rather
25 they are children who happen to be living in a

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2 homeless shelter. This is not just meant to
3 be a turn of a phrase to catch your attention.
4 To me, it indicates that these children all
5 have the same needs as any other children, the
6 need for adequate health care, quality
7 education, consistent parenting and a safe
8 place to live. However, what does make them
9 remarkable is the fact that these children
10 enter the shelters with significant
11 challenges, emotional, educational, and
12 medical, many times the result of the chaos
13 they experience prior to entry to the shelter.
14 It isn't the shelter experience alone that's
15 traumatic, it's the compelling set of
16 circumstances that accompany family
17 homelessness that put these children at a
18 disadvantage.

19 Second, in my current work as a
20 consultant to a couple of shelters in
21 Philadelphia, I see that there is an
22 inconsistency in the type, quality and
23 quantity of services to children across the
24 City's shelters.

25 OESS has done a remarkable job of

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2 providing resources and incentives for the
3 shelters as they attempted to upgrade their
4 services to children. Still, the City, State,
5 and federal dollars are not enough to ensure a
6 steady level of interventions. The shelters
7 are also dependent upon private dollars for
8 their efforts to develop creative approaches
9 for children.

10 Some shelters have done a remarkably
11 good job for children and creating a
12 family-friendly atmosphere. Others barely
13 meet the standards as developed by OESS and
14 its partners. This inconsistency, in my mind,
15 is one of the most significant problems facing
16 the shelters. The irony is that in our City,
17 not all shelters are created equal even though
18 all children who live in them are. Thus, a
19 priority for this coming year should be to
20 support the expansion of the promising
21 approaches that exist and to ensure that all
22 shelters have an equitable level of support
23 for children's programs.

24 I would call your attention to the
25 impressive outreach going on in selective

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2 shelters with programs such as Effective Black
3 Parenting and the innovative outreach by the
4 Girl Scouts. These do not cost a great deal,
5 but they can make a difference in the life of
6 a child.

7 Third, the desire to identify a
8 single cause or solution to family
9 homelessness is short-sighted and misleading.
10 The lack of affordable and permanent housing
11 is undoubtedly a cause in the solution for
12 most families. However, children who are in
13 the City shelters this very day are there
14 because of domestic violence, poverty, the
15 lack of employment opportunities and a
16 decreasing safety net.

17 I mention these factors because this
18 issue continues to split the well-intended
19 providers of services to families in shelters.
20 The causes of and the solutions to
21 homelessness are reflective of the deep-rooted
22 problems facing families and the system
23 itself. Unfortunately, the disagreement among
24 ourselves and the adult professionals on these
25 issues has a direct impact on the children in

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2 shelters.

3 These children are best served when
4 OESS and its private partners develop
5 strategies that address the short and
6 long-term solutions related to homelessness.
7 But that will take more resources, not just
8 redirected ones.

9 Fourth, I would recommend that City
10 Council fully support the effort by OESS to
11 build a system of services for children and
12 their families who are living in shelters.
13 This is where the Bright Spaces Project is
14 instructive and could be an excellent model
15 for how we expand the good work that's already
16 been done.

17 Allow me to point out a few lessons
18 of the Bright Horizons Bright Spaces work.
19 Bright Spaces has been a wonderful
20 public/private collaboration, combining the
21 City's limited dollars with the resources of a
22 private foundation and a local corporation.
23 The recognition early on was that no one
24 entity could provide this necessary support
25 needed to take this program to scale. But

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2 even more importantly, we were successful in
3 the development of Bright Spaces because we
4 were joined by so many other partners inside
5 and outside City government.

6 When asked to take on very specific
7 tasks, these partners provided staff,
8 volunteers and other resources such as books
9 and toys for children. OESS sent the message
10 that they needed a variety of local resources
11 in order to leverage the private dollars from
12 a national foundation and a major corporation.
13 The partners responded. There's no reason to
14 think that they would not respond again if the
15 message remains consistent and everyone resist
16 the temptation to assume the spotlight.

17 Having a neutral party as the facilitator for
18 the process helps to maintain the momentum.

19 Bright Spaces has offered a
20 straightforward and very practical approach
21 based on one important assumption. In our
22 planning work, we agreed that the Bright Space
23 should be more than simply a child care space.
24 We recognize that it could also be a spot for
25 parenting support groups, arts and recreation

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2 spaces, homework assistance, and even a place
3 for early intervention assessment could take
4 place. Our assumption was that if you want to
5 sustain the unique and effective projects for
6 children and their families, you need to have
7 broad support for comprehensive approaches
8 which respect the many challenges facing
9 children.

10 Next, Bright Spaces has done an
11 excellent job of telling its story, a story
12 which can appeal to everyone who cares about
13 kids living in less-than-desirable
14 circumstances who would otherwise have pretty
15 poor outcomes. This has been successful
16 because it has had some unusual champions in
17 the form of corporation executives, foundation
18 managers, and community volunteers. Would we
19 have been as successful if people identified
20 this effort with Rob Hess or just me or some
21 other human service professional? Perhaps.
22 But there's been something uniquely compelling
23 about these non-traditional folks spreading
24 the word.

25 OESS and the providers of service to

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2 homeless children could stand to have a few
3 more champions as it attempts to expand the
4 set of services. Councilwoman Blackwell has
5 been such a champion, but we could use more
6 help. The next step is to identify one or two
7 other high profile individuals who are willing
8 to speak up on behalf of families and
9 shelters. Preferably, these champions would
10 be from outside the world of human services to
11 explain what we're trying do in plain English.
12 Other cities that are a part of this
13 initiative have embraced it oftentimes with
14 the Mayor or business leader as one of the key
15 spokespersons.

16 One of the final lessons is this:
17 Bright Spaces was never conceived as a pilot
18 program. From the outset, we anticipated that
19 we would take this program to scale so that as
20 many children as possible would benefit from
21 what we believed would be the best practice.
22 We've committed ourselves to an approach that
23 can be replicated across the City in a variety
24 of settings with respect to the unique set of
25 partners that made it possible.

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2 As OESS and other providers of
3 services to families in shelter consider it
4 enhancement of services and support, I would
5 caution that we avoid the temptation and the
6 development of pilot programs. We should not
7 force ourselves into deciding which kids
8 should get a service that's unique and
9 desirable and which ones should not. We
10 should fund all of this work as if these were
11 our own children.

12 My final point is a simple one.
13 Philadelphia is undoubtedly a leader in the
14 nation when it comes to services to families
15 in shelter. The Bright Spaces project is only
16 one example of many strategies that have been
17 applied in the City over the last several
18 years. Efforts to provide social service
19 support, employment training and a unique set
20 of mental health and substance abuse services
21 have been impressive. However, much remains
22 to be done on behalf of children living in
23 shelter. The good news is this: We know what
24 we need to do. We know that this is a finite
25 number of children. What we need to do, we

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2 know. And we need, finally, to marshal the
3 deep set of experiences among the
4 professionals who serve these families.

5 Entering a shelter can provide a
6 family with stability and support that they
7 might have been lacking for some time. On the
8 other hand, the wrong shelter experience can
9 be a harbinger of damaging outcomes for
10 children as it relates to their educational,
11 medical and emotional well-being.

12 I recently co-authored a report on
13 children living in Philadelphia's shelters.
14 It confirmed for me that the shelters are the
15 intersection point for every problem and the
16 possibility a youngster might face in our
17 City. We know it works and we have the
18 capacity to carry the work forward. We need
19 your full support to make it happen.

20 Now I'm happy to introduce my friend
21 Dave Gleason from the Bright Horizons
22 Foundation. I know you are all somewhat
23 familiar with the work that the foundation's
24 doing here in Philadelphia. The same
25 excellent work is going on around the country.

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2 There are now 60 of these Bright Spaces spread
3 out nationally. The success of the Bright
4 Spaces initiative is in large part the result
5 of Dave's effort. We've been fortunate to
6 have Dave as a friend of Philadelphia.

7 MR. GLEASON: Thank you, Paul.

8 I am Dave Gleason, President of the
9 Bright Horizons Foundation for Children. We
10 are a corporate-sponsored foundation sponsored
11 by a public company called Bright Horizons
12 Family Solutions. And Bright Horizons
13 specializes in managing high-quality, on-site
14 child development programs for companies
15 throughout the country. We have about 500
16 clients where we manage centers on site for
17 their employees and their employees' children.

18 Having worked in Bright Horizons for
19 many years before I retired to start the
20 corporate foundation, our success was because
21 we had a formula that combined the financial
22 resources of the sponsoring company, companies
23 like Johnson & Johnson, PNC Bank, every major
24 company you've heard of in the United States,
25 their financial resources with the talent and

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2 expertise of the people we hired and trained
3 to provide high-quality services for the
4 children of the companies' employees, children
5 fortunate enough to be born into families who
6 were fortunate enough to work for these
7 companies.

8 As we moved forward with our
9 foundation, we said, well, can we take this
10 same formula and try to provide help for
11 children most in need in the country, children
12 who were not lucky enough to be born into
13 those families. So we came up with a model
14 that's evolved into Bright Spaces where we ask
15 our sponsor, the clients who sponsor centers
16 for their own children to donate money to the
17 Bright Horizons Foundation for Children.
18 Along with our own employees, we have 2500
19 teachers who give a little bit, a dollar a
20 week to the foundation and we take the
21 financial resources of our clients, the talent
22 and energy and commitment of our teachers, and
23 we go look for children in need. And here in
24 Philadelphia, we've found children in your
25 system of homeless shelters.

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2 So we're doing Bright Spaces around
3 the country. The thing that's most
4 interesting here in Philadelphia was our
5 relationship with the City because it brings a
6 third partner into the formula that really
7 enables us to do a lot more. And the first
8 time I came here to meet Paul and Rob, I have
9 to admit after 32 years in early childhood
10 education, many of them working with cities,
11 that really I was coming to see my mother who
12 lives in West Chester because I didn't think
13 any City would really get this idea. And we
14 spent an hour together and went and visited
15 one of our centers, and I walked away saying,
16 "We got the ingredients here. These guys get
17 it. Their staffs get it. We can really
18 accomplish something here." So we really
19 have.

20 And we have a video that we're going
21 to leave that talks about Bright Spaces around
22 the country. We use this video to go after
23 our other clients who have not yet contributed
24 money to this effort. So we show it at client
25 conferences that we run and to new perspective

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2 clients who are attempting to set up an
3 on-site center for their own employees. We
4 say "Part of that package is giving back to
5 the community. So we'll manage your on-site
6 center, but you also need to work with us for
7 the kids down the street who aren't so
8 fortunate as your employees' children."

9 So when we came here that first day,
10 I was challenged by these two gentlemen to not
11 do 1 but to do 20. And I went back to our
12 CEO, a man named Dave Lissy and I said, "This
13 is going to take a lot of time and effort of
14 our employees in our 15 centers in
15 Philadelphia."

16 And Dave said, "You know, I grew up
17 in Philadelphia and I now am the CEO of this
18 company headquartered in Boston. And I am so
19 sick and tired of Patriots fans because I
20 still wear my Eagles hat. So we're going to
21 make this happen."

22 Then I went out to McNeal Consumer
23 and Specialty Pharmaceutical Company that's
24 headquartered in Fort Washington, a suburb of
25 Philadelphia, and met with their CEO, Bill

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2 McComb and said, "Bill, let's think big here.
3 What if we did this whole thing and we help
4 put your name on it?"

5 And he thought of his advertising
6 budget for Baby Tylenol, one of their
7 products, and this surrounding area, so he was
8 able to contribute the money. So I've talked
9 to Dave and Bill in the last week. They both
10 send their regards. They're both very
11 committed to this. Dave is still committed to
12 release time for our employees to work on the
13 projects, and Bill is still writing the
14 checks. So we're going to continue. We're
15 working on the 10th Bright Space and we're
16 just going to keep going here.

17 But I would like to up the ante for
18 a challenge back. Every time I come to
19 Philadelphia to one of the Bright Space ribbon
20 cuttings -- and thank you, Madam Chair, for
21 coming to many of them.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
23 for giving me that opportunity.

24 MR. GLEASON: I'm delighted by the
25 event. It's the Christmas the children may

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2 never have experienced in their life. It's a
3 great thing for the kids. I walk away saying
4 to myself, this is great, but it's not enough.
5 It's not enough to really change the life
6 trajectory for these children. They need
7 more. They need more services.

8 And so my challenge would be to see
9 -- and the Bright Horizon Foundation for
10 Children will be glad to work on this with
11 you, is if we company put together a model
12 program here in Philadelphia that actually
13 brought early childhood education services to
14 the preschoolers in the shelters in the City.
15 And here are the ingredients. We have a
16 head-start program; we get federal dollars.
17 See if we can do some of that. In Harrisburg
18 they're talking about a pre-K initiative. We
19 focussed on low income children; we got some
20 potential there. We got leadership in the
21 City here. We have a client, PNC Bank, that's
22 headquartered in Pittsburgh but has many
23 offices here in Philadelphia that just put
24 together a hundred million dollar fund to
25 focus on early childhood education throughout

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2 the state. We have a Philadelphia-based
3 foundation, the Pew Foundation, which is the
4 leading foundation in the philanthropic world
5 of early childhood education nationally. We
6 have the ingredients to put together a program
7 that would focus a laser beam on these
8 preschool children to get them ready for
9 school. So I think we can do a national
10 model.

11 And let me share with you why it
12 would be a great investment. I'm on the Board
13 of Directors of the High Scope Educational
14 Research Foundation which is located in
15 Michigan. High Scope has done the landmark
16 research of the effectiveness of early
17 childhood education for improving the chances
18 of success in life for children. It was
19 started 40 years ago by a man named Dave
20 Weichert (ph), a great American who passed
21 away a year ago. Forty years ago he got a job
22 as a school psychologist in a middle school in
23 Ishpeming, Michigan, primarily a low-income
24 African-American community. And he was
25 stunned by the lack of achievement, by the

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2 drop-out rate, by the behavior he saw going on
3 in this middle school. So he rallied people
4 to see what company we do to improve this
5 school. And by the end of his working with
6 teachers, the answer was, you got to go help
7 the elementary school because when they come
8 here they're not ready. So he went to the
9 elementary school, and the fourth grade
10 teachers said, you got to go talk to the third
11 grade teachers. And the third grade teachers
12 said, talk to the second grade teachers.
13 Eventually got to kindergarten teachers, and
14 they said, "Well, if the kids don't come
15 ready, it's really difficult to progress them
16 through."

17 So he started a preschool program
18 called the Perry Preschool Project, and he
19 took 125 children with the same economic
20 background, social characteristics pool; and
21 half of them had a high-quality early
22 childhood experience in their third and fourth
23 years, and the others didn't. And then he
24 followed them for 40 years. And next week,
25 we're going to be announcing in Washington the

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2 results of our study of these children who are
3 now 40-year-old adults. We refer to this as
4 the toothpaste study: These kids brushed
5 their teeth for two years, these kids didn't;
6 now let's look at the teeth, the teeth will
7 tell the story.

8 So these children now 40 years old
9 did better in school throughout. They did
10 better in academics, in language, in literacy
11 achievement tests, more of them graduated from
12 high school than the control group. Of the
13 girls, 84 percent of the girls who experienced
14 the early education graduated from high school
15 versus 32 percent of the girls who did not
16 have the experience. As they grew up, they
17 had success in school, they learned life
18 skills, they had self-confidence, they learned
19 how to solve problems, they did better in
20 life. Now they're 40. 76 percent of them
21 have full time jobs. More of them own their
22 own homes. They make more money by 6 or
23 \$7,000 than the children that did not brush
24 their teeth or did not have that early
25 childhood experience, and they are being much

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2 more successful in life.

3 When we do an economic analysis of
4 the money spent on the Perry Preschool
5 Project, for every dollar spent, the public
6 sector saved \$17. So investing in a program
7 for preschool children in the shelters to get
8 them ready for school is, in my mind, the
9 single best investment you company make to try
10 to end homelessness over time in Philadelphia.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. HESS: Councilwoman. The
13 gentleman has convinced us to take a closer
14 look at this, and we're certainly willing to
15 do that.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well, we
17 certainly want to say thank you. We are so
18 impressed. And the children and the parents
19 and everywhere we go, everybody's just so
20 pleased with the Bright Spaces Program.

21 We thank you for all you've done and
22 continue to do in our City. And we're just
23 grateful for all the youngsters who benefit
24 and whose lives we try to save from this.
25 We're just grateful and we say thank you very

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2 much.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I would be
4 remiss not to offer my huge thank you in a box
5 with the Liberty Bell on top for making a
6 difference in the children in the homeless
7 shelters. And we want to take on that
8 challenge, don't we, Paul? I saw you writing
9 with regard to the Perry Study and the
10 challenge that you offer. So trust that we'll
11 do the follow-up with Paul and Bob Hess on
12 seeing how we can get our City to access what
13 you just spoke about.

14 Do you have a document that speaks
15 to that study and some of the results?

16 MR. GLEASON: We'll be releasing it
17 on the 18th of November, and I'll submit it
18 formally to you as my testimony.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you very,
20 very much.

21 Currently, our City has how many
22 Bright Spaces?

23 MR. GLEASON: We've opened nine. We
24 have 20 funded, so we're --

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: On our way.

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2 MR. GLEASON: Yes.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
5 very much.

6 We were intending to go through, but
7 we have to be mindful of the stenographer and
8 the gentleman who runs the microphone. We'll
9 take a 10 minute break and then we'll be right
10 back.

11 (Brief recess.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I think
13 we're ready to resume our hearing.

14 Mr. Hess.

15 MR. HESS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
16 I'll be very brief and succinct and just turn
17 you over to our Monument Village host for
18 introductions. I was very excited we were
19 able to build some permanent housing. You
20 have had the pleasure of being at this site, I
21 know. And we get an opportunity briefly to
22 hear from a couple residents. Thank you very
23 much.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

25 I want you to know I brag about this

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2 all the time. We're so very impressed about
3 how far we've come and the direction that
4 we're going in in our City. Thank you.

5 MS. PENNINGTON: Madam Chairman,
6 this is Glenda Wells --

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Introduce
8 yourself first.

9 MS. PENNINGTON: I'm Lucy
10 Pennington, the Director of Residential
11 Services for Methodist Services of
12 Philadelphia. Recently we've had the
13 opportunity to open a permanent housing
14 initiative for single females and their
15 families. We're very excited, and these are
16 two of our residents, probably in residence
17 about a month. So this is Glenda Wells and
18 Aleah Foreman.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
20 Welcome. Thank you for your patience.

21 MS. WELLS: How ya'll doing? My
22 name is Glenda Wells. I'm a resident in
23 Monument Village. Thanks to Monument Village,
24 I get to spend our Thanksgiving and Christmas
25 with my children, which I didn't get to do

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2 last year. I started off through the shelter
3 system. It's a wonderful program. It got a
4 lot to offer my children and also my baby
5 that's on the way. And that's I have to say.
6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

8 MS. FOREMAN: Good afternoon,
9 Councilwoman.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
11 afternoon.

12 MS. FOREMAN: My name is Aleah
13 Foreman. I have been in the shelter for a
14 while now, and I just moved to Monument
15 Village. I had loss my husband, and that was
16 the cause of me going into a shelter. With
17 two children, it was hard for me to be one
18 dependent parent without any help. It was
19 hard for me to go into the shelter thinking
20 about how my children would feel going to
21 school, thinking about how other people would
22 look at me. But once I went into the shelter,
23 they brought me in with open arms. That was
24 St. Barnabas. St. Barnabas introduced me to
25 this lovely young lady here.

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2 I went to about maybe three meetings
3 getting my hopes up high, thinking that I
4 would get a home, making sure I kept myself
5 clean without being on any type of drugs. And
6 the shelter helped me with that. It helped me
7 get into my goals and know what I wanted. It
8 showed me how to appreciate my kids and the
9 life that I had.

10 Monument Village, when I first came
11 to Monument Village, it was such a surprise.
12 They've given us furniture. They've given us
13 beds to sleep on after we have lost everything
14 in our life in that quick minute of time.
15 Losing everything was so hard. They made sure
16 that my children was able to have a wonderful
17 Halloween party. They gave us food for those
18 who didn't have at the time. And they also
19 gave us clothing if we needed any donations.
20 And I am so thankful and grateful for it. I
21 am feeling so blessed.

22 I have now started going to school
23 to get my nursing license back to be able to
24 give to others like the blessings was given to
25 me. And thank you for your time.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
3 very much.

4 And we will say Monument Village is
5 just fabulous. You know, what is so wonderful
6 is that it is permanent housing and so it
7 looks like permanent housing; it's just
8 beautiful, fully furnished, everything
9 brand-new, brand-new house, brand-new
10 furniture, brand-new everything. It gives you
11 a chance to have a brand-new life. So we wish
12 you well, congratulate you, God bless you.
13 And thank OESS for this level of commitment.
14 Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. HESS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
17 We look forward to the day when we have
18 Monument Villages opening all across our great
19 City.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And as
21 everyone knows, that's 61 apartments there,
22 61. That is phenomenal what we're doing in
23 housing.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. HESS: Thank you. At this time,

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2 I'd like to invite Bia Vieira from Lutheran
3 Settlement and Cynthia Figueroa from Women
4 Against Abuse to the witness table.

5 And while they're en route, let me
6 say that we are privileged to work with folks
7 like Cynthia and Bia. Lutheran Settlement
8 House, as you may recall, Councilwoman, had
9 the church collapse next to it. It was only
10 by the grace of God that no one was injured or
11 killed that night. But Bia and her staff were
12 just phenomenal in helping those folks, over a
13 hundred women and children, move out of that
14 facility into other facilities and continue
15 their support. Both Bia and Cynthia are
16 really the two champions in the domestic
17 violence fight here in Philadelphia and doing
18 tremendous work, and we're honored to work
19 with both of them.

20 They've now arrived. Cynthia will
21 take my spot and we'll start with Bia and her
22 colleague.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
24 very much. I pass that every single day. So
25 I watch it. Now they've got the fence all the

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2 way up and the crane out there to try to
3 remove some of the bricks. So I'm reminded of
4 it every single morning. I pass it every day,
5 and certainly concur with what Mr. Hess has
6 said. We're grateful we were there then. We
7 just saw the program. We were there
8 registering people to vote before voter
9 registration ended, and we're very, very sorry
10 about the tragedy and hopeful that life will
11 be better for all of those women and children
12 who resided there. Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. VIEIRA: My name is Bia Vieira.
15 I'm the Executive Director of Lutheran
16 Settlement House in eastern North
17 Philadelphia. I just wanted to talk a little
18 bit about our philosophy and our mission and
19 why we're here.

20 We were founded in 1902 to serve
21 vulnerable children, adults and families and
22 senior citizens living in Philadelphia
23 regardless of race or creed. Since our
24 inception, our internal and external
25 circumstances have changed in both small and

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2 dramatic ways, including the collapse of the
3 shelter very recently. Despite these changes,
4 our mission, the core of our mission remains,
5 to empower individuals, families and
6 communities to achieve and maintain
7 self-sufficiency. Our accomplishments are
8 grounded in our belief that all families and
9 individuals deserve education and economic
10 opportunities and have the right to live
11 safely and with dignity.

12 In partnership with the public and
13 private sectors, our communities and clients,
14 we do make a difference in the lives of those
15 most vulnerable members of Philadelphia. Our
16 mission of empowerment is just as relevant
17 today as it was in 1902.

18 I will not go over what we have
19 experienced since August 3rd at 10:30 when the
20 shelter did collapse. I just would like to
21 share, as many of you know that we had a
22 hundred people with us that night. Of that
23 hundred, 63 were kids, including 8 newborns.
24 And as Rob Hess has mentioned, that really was
25 extremely lucky that no one got hurt.

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2 I also would like to take this time
3 to thank and really express our deepest thanks
4 to the Office of the Managing Director, to
5 yourself, to Rob Hess, to Letisha Hinton, to
6 Kevin Brissoe and Kevin Schaeffer for all the
7 work they have done. As you can imagine, with
8 a hundred people homeless for a second time,
9 it's really been a tremendous joint effort,
10 and I do want to thank the City for all that
11 you have done.

12 It's been very impressive to see the
13 teamwork between Lutheran Settlement House and
14 OESS. All staff from all areas pulled
15 together to do everything from setting up the
16 cots to feeding babies to organizing food and
17 clothing distribution. It's been a proud time
18 to work with the City of Philadelphia.

19 I want to talk a little bit -- and
20 actually, I'm going to ask Rachel Neff to talk
21 a little bit about our new initiative that we
22 are working with the Office of the Managing
23 Director and Rob Hess.

24 MS. NEFF: Good afternoon. My name
25 is Rachel Neff, and I am the Program and

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2 Policy Analyst at Lutheran Settlement House.

3 As the Program Analyst, I ensure that the
4 programs that LHS implements are properly
5 developed and meet the needs of our clients.

6 In October of 2004, Lutheran
7 Settlement House entered into an agreement
8 with the Office of Emergency Shelter Services
9 to provide supportive services to clients who
10 had successfully navigated the shelter system
11 and were ready to move into housing. An
12 agreement was made between OESS, Prime
13 Property Realty, and LSH to embark on the
14 prime initiative project. The outcome for LSH
15 is that we will provide services for up to 30
16 families, housed in Prime Property Realty, as
17 they transition into permanent housing.

18 The clients whom LSH serves have
19 spent the past several months in the shelter
20 system and were selected by OESS to become
21 part of their program due to their previous
22 successes in the shelter system. Each family
23 currently pays a subsidized rent payment to
24 Prime Property Realty every month to remain in
25 these properties. While in shelters, these

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2 families have opened savings accounts and
3 saved money, gained employment or entered in
4 job training classes, engaged in educational
5 opportunities, and have proven themselves to
6 be capable of transitioning into permanent
7 housing.

8 In order for this program
9 description to be devised, best practices from
10 Housing First Programs were gathered to
11 provide supportive information on how
12 organizations implement similar programs
13 throughout the country. Housing First
14 Programs have proven to be successful in
15 California, Indiana, Illinois, and Washington,
16 D.C. in moving homeless clients from shelters
17 into permanent housing in a short amount of
18 time. A common element of the Housing First
19 approach is to identify a family's immediate
20 needs and provide intensive case management
21 services to them during their transitional
22 time period.

23 Best practices from this program
24 indicate that the aim of case management
25 home-based services is to link participants

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2 with mainstream social services, ensure that
3 kids are enrolled and attending school,
4 provide crisis management assistance, and help
5 participants work towards case management
6 goals developed at the outset of program
7 participation.

8 LSH has adapted these ideas from the
9 well-known Housing First Case Management
10 System and have incorporated them into our own
11 model. One unique aspect of our program, as
12 Bia has mentioned, is that we work with all
13 homeless families, a distinctive group of
14 homeless individuals who need to receive
15 intensive services. Forming a collaborative
16 relationship with the family is overwhelmingly
17 important, as it will empower our clients to
18 recognize that they are the most important
19 piece of the case management relationship.
20 Empowerment is at the core of our case
21 management structure.

22 Our families need a number of
23 services that range from housing counseling to
24 overcoming poor credit histories to finding
25 parenting programs or receiving domestic

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2 violence services. We realize that
3 partnerships with other mainstream social
4 service organizations are vital, dependent
5 upon each individual family's needs. We
6 ensure that our clients receive effective
7 supports and connections to community
8 resources.

9 In closing, there are three
10 significant partners that will make this prime
11 initiative program successful for us: Prime
12 Property will continue to provide the
13 necessary housing units for our families. LSH
14 will continue to provide quality case
15 management and supportive services to move
16 families towards the goal of independence and
17 self-sufficiency. Finally, OESS will continue
18 to properly manage the shelter program and
19 protect the resources in the City of
20 Philadelphia.

21 Working together, these partners can
22 adequately care for the homeless families in
23 the City and move families into more permanent
24 housing.

25 Thank you.

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2 MS. VIEIRA: Part of what we wanted
3 to talk about is that each family's story is
4 unique. However, we do know there is a thread
5 with all of the families that we see. Part of
6 what we want to talk about is that we are part
7 of a large network, including the City of
8 Philadelphia and Women Against Abuse, People's
9 Emergency Center and Project Home. We impact
10 the lives of many, many people in
11 Philadelphia. Part of what we want to say is
12 that there is not one answer to end
13 homelessness, but many answers. We need each
14 other to be able to do this. So I will make
15 that my segue into Cynthia Figueroa and Women
16 Against Abuse just to say that extreme poverty
17 and domestic violence are one of the two
18 threads that we see together in our family
19 shelter and Women Against Abuse.

20 MS. FIGUEROA: My name is Cynthia
21 Figueroa and I'm the Executive Director of
22 Women Against Abuse, which is the largest
23 domestic violence program in the State of
24 Pennsylvania and currently the only specific
25 domestic violence shelter in Philadelphia.

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2 I want to begin by thanking City
3 Council and addressing the efforts
4 specifically about economic impact of
5 homelessness in Philadelphia and recognizing
6 the support and need to support homeless
7 services and the key initiatives.

8 I'm here to testify in support of
9 protecting the budget needed to operate
10 services, particularly looking at the funding
11 to the Office of Emergency Shelter Services
12 provides shelter services to over 2500
13 individuals in Philadelphia and relocations to
14 families. This is an immediate need and
15 critical need that actually the domestic
16 violence community uses more than I think
17 people are aware of.

18 I'd also like to highlight the
19 correlation between domestic violence and
20 homelessness, demonstrating again that there
21 are limited resources available to battered
22 women in Philadelphia. Battered women who
23 live in poverty are often forced to choose
24 between an abusive relationship and
25 homelessness. In a study of 77 homeless

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2 parents, the majority of whom were mothers in
3 10 cities, 22 percent of the mothers said that
4 they left their last residence because of
5 domestic violence. In addition, 34 percent of
6 the cities surveyed in the U.S. Conference of
7 Mayors identified that domestic violence is a
8 primary cause of homelessness. Through a
9 study of the entire country, though, shows
10 that approximately one-half of all women and
11 children experiencing homelessness are fleeing
12 domestic violence.

13 Locally, the statistics for domestic
14 violence are overwhelming. In a nine-month
15 period of January 2003 through September 2003
16 in a press release issued by the Mayor, there
17 were 82,427 911 calls that had to do with
18 domestic violence. There were over 10,000
19 crimes that were coded domestic in nature.
20 And there are more than 47,000 reports where
21 the police returned to the same residence at
22 least two times. In addition, there were
23 15,000 protection from abuse orders filed in
24 Philadelphia in 2003.

25 We know that we're only reaching the

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2 tip of this iceberg. As the fifth largest
3 City in the nation, we have actually the most
4 limited resources. WAA runs the only domestic
5 violence shelter with a capacity to serve only
6 47 individuals. WAA has to rely heavily on
7 other community partners, such as OESS,
8 People's Emergency Center, Project H.O.M.E.,
9 and Lutheran Settlement House to provide
10 shelter to battered women.

11 To give you an example of other
12 cities, Chicago has 1 domestic violence
13 shelter bed for every 13,744 residents. New
14 York has approximately 1 shelter bed for every
15 5,330 residents. However, Philadelphia has
16 approximately 1 domestic violence bed for
17 every 23,076 residents. WAA's emergency
18 shelter, again, as I said earlier, can hold
19 only 47 women and children. Our transitional
20 housing program consists of only 12 units.
21 WAA receives approximately 15 shelter-related
22 requests per day. On several occasions, we
23 have to refer our families who are in crisis
24 to other organizations, including OESS and
25 domestic violence shelters in other counties.

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2 OESS shelters often are not
3 appropriate or suitable placement for a victim
4 fleeing a violent relationship due to safety
5 and the additional support needed for women
6 and children.

7 At this time, as Bia did, I'd like
8 to recognize the efforts of OESS, particularly
9 Robert Hess and his staff in the Adult
10 Services Office. Their need and their support
11 to the domestic violence community and
12 bringing the issue of resources to the
13 forefront are commendable and I thank them as
14 being partners in the City.

15 There's an initiative that we're
16 currently working on that was supported by the
17 Mayor and also City Council in previous City
18 Council testimony that we'll be doubling the
19 shelter beds in Philadelphia for domestic
20 violence. This initiative, we hope, will
21 occur in this fiscal year and would provide at
22 least a hundred beds for domestic violence
23 services for women and children. This is a
24 crucial and necessary expansion for our City,
25 and this is the type of service that must

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2 continue to be maintained and supported.

3 In addition, WAA has been fortunate
4 to receive support from PEC through their jobs
5 program. The jobs program is one of many, as
6 Bia mentioned earlier, in a multifaceted
7 approach to working with the homeless
8 community. Programs such as the job program
9 and other job readiness programs need to be
10 protected because shelter alone is not the
11 answer. We have to be working towards
12 self-sufficiency through education, safety,
13 and job placement. The linkages between these
14 types of service is crucial because the safety
15 of women and their families and the needs of
16 that family need to be the primary issue. If
17 she is not safe and the family is not safe,
18 you cannot work towards self-sufficiency.

19 I want to share with you an example
20 of a family in which -- and she's not here
21 today because she would like to protect her
22 identity. She's a recent client of ours. She
23 came to us through our emergency shelter and
24 stayed with us 45 days and moved into our
25 transitional housing. She then started

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2 volunteering in the area and actually got an
3 internship with Rosita Youngblood. She's
4 actually now on her staff earning a salary of
5 over \$30,000. They helped her in actually
6 expunging some of her parking violations
7 because she had to get a City vehicle, and
8 she's working full time. She's now
9 volunteering for our services. This a family
10 in which a traditional homeless shelter would
11 not have been an appropriate place for her
12 because of the safety placement for her
13 because of the safety needs.

14 To support and end homelessness is
15 complex and must be multifaceted. WAA is
16 committed to ending domestic violence and
17 preventing battered women from becoming
18 homeless. Please support and protect the
19 homeless services that we have in our City
20 today. Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
23 very much. Thank you for all that you do.

24 MR. HESS: Madam Chair before Bia
25 leaves, let me just say that the prime

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2 initiative that they spoke so well about would
3 not have been possible -- and the public needs
4 to know this -- without your direct
5 involvement and support.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

7 MR. HESS: We're able to do a couple
8 of these demonstration projects in West
9 Philadelphia solely because of your leadership
10 and reaching out to developers to work with
11 us, and we appreciate it so much.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
14 Thank you.

15 MR. HESS: In speaking of great
16 development. I'd like to invite Nora Lichtash
17 to the witness table, along with Sue Sierra
18 and Judith Robinson.

19 And as they're making their way, let
20 me just say to anyone that hasn't been up in
21 Nora's area of North Philadelphia, they need
22 to make that trip because the work that's
23 going on up there by the Women's Community
24 Revitalization Project in terms of community
25 revitalization and development and housing

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2 development and development of affordable
3 housing is just outstanding and a tribute to
4 her leadership and that of her staff.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
6 We do agree. Thank you.

7 We'll ask you to identify yourself
8 for the record and begin, and thank you for
9 your patience.

10 MS. LICHTASH: My name is Nora
11 Lichtash, and I work with the Women's
12 Community Revitalization Project that's also
13 known as WCRP.

14 At WCRP, we understand the City has
15 limited resources and that sometimes it's
16 really hard making decisions about how to
17 divide up those resources. But I'm here today
18 to offer our support to you because you know
19 that it's not in anyone's interest to cut the
20 funding that goes to homeless families and
21 children.

22 I want to do three things in my
23 testimony: Frame the issue and let you know
24 what we see everyday in the neighborhood day
25 in and day out; describe the costs to our City

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2 and to all of us if we don't provide the
3 needed resources to help families get
4 permanent housing, permanent affordable
5 housing; and also talk to you about our
6 experience, what we think needs to be done to
7 continue to build a momentum to address the
8 problem of family homelessness.

9 In terms of the issue, 1 out of
10 every 3 households in the City lives on
11 incomes of less than \$20,000. I know you know
12 that. Many of those families are in shelter,
13 but there are also families that aren't in the
14 shelter system. They find temporary housing
15 with family or friends; they move from one
16 situation to the next; they are afraid that
17 they might be wearing out their welcome, so
18 they just move on.

19 As of the year 2000, in that census,
20 there were 31,000 households in Philadelphia
21 that were living in overcrowded conditions,
22 and that was up 20 percent from the 1990
23 census. In that same period, 25,000 were
24 doubled or tripled up households.

25 We also know that many households

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2 are on the verge of homelessness. 130,000
3 households, greater than 1 out of every 5
4 households in Philadelphia pays more than they
5 can afford for their housing costs. Many
6 families are living in housing, whether
7 they're renters or homeowners, that are
8 falling down around them. In 2002, there were
9 more than 64,000 houses with open City Code
10 violations. So that's the issue.

11 The costs. We think the costs are
12 great. We all know the costs are great in
13 terms of human beings and in terms of money.
14 But the cost of managing and not solving
15 homelessness seem to be really great.
16 Spending on temporary shelter and emergency
17 services, although they're important, without
18 investing substantially in permanent
19 affordable housing doesn't get to the root
20 program. The cost of breaking up families --
21 almost everyone who's testified talked about
22 families breaking up or family instability.
23 The strain on families who can't find
24 affordable housing means lots of times DHS has
25 to come in, and that costs a lot to us in the

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2 City, those services. The cost of chronic
3 health and education problems in kids, I mean,
4 what we know is that families who can't find
5 permanent housing -- there's a whole litany --
6 they are more likely to lack good healthcare,
7 suffer chronic illness, visit emergency rooms,
8 go hungry, suffer emotional and psychological
9 problems and have serious learning and
10 discipline problems in school. All of these
11 costs are really too much for us, even those
12 of us who are well housed.

13 So now in speaking about what needs
14 to be done, based on a recent study that was
15 completed by the University of Pennsylvania,
16 they've estimated that about 57,000 more
17 affordable units of housing are needed in
18 Philly, and it's clear that we need to act now
19 to ensure that a substantial portion of our
20 resources are used to create permanent and
21 affordable housing for low income families.

22 One mechanism to do this and
23 increase the pool as well -- I know you know
24 about -- has been developed jointly in
25 conjunction with you through the Philadelphia

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2 Affordable Coalition and the Philadelphia
3 Association of Community Development
4 Corporations and it has a lot of support from
5 others. It's the Low Income Housing Trust
6 Fund voted on and passed by Council this year.

7 In closing, I wanted to take the
8 opportunity to read the testimony of someone
9 who couldn't be here today but who understands
10 firsthand the need for resources for
11 affordable housing. Her name is Stacy Moore
12 and she's my boss, she's the Co-Chair of
13 WCRP's Board of Directors. In her words,

14 "I'm a mother who raises my
15 15-year-old son on my own. I work for the
16 State as a seasonal energy assistance worker
17 under the LIHEAP Program, and I'm formerly
18 homeless. I'm a Section 8 voucher recipient
19 who is very grateful for the stability that is
20 provided by having a roof over my head, the
21 head of myself and son.

22 You'd think that I would be
23 satisfied and just keep quiet, but I realize
24 that there are many, many other folks like me
25 going through their own housing crises. They

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2 may be in a shelter waiting for a Section 8 to
3 come through for them like I did. They may be
4 staying with relatives or friends, perhaps in
5 an already overcrowded house until they can
6 afford their own home. They may not even be
7 that fortunate, maybe totally homeless with
8 nowhere to go.

9 "I'm writing this testimony because
10 the City cannot afford to cut back on services
11 to homeless families and must go further in
12 its efforts to create permanent, safe,
13 affordable housing that all of us deserve.
14 Thanks."

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

16 MS. SIERRA: Good afternoon, Madam
17 Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to
18 testify. My name is Sue Sierra. I'm the
19 Policy Coordinator for the Philadelphia
20 Association of Community Development
21 Corporations.

22 There's been a lot of testimony
23 before mine drawing the link between
24 homelessness and the staggering shortage of
25 affordable housing in the City. And I know

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2 it's an issue that you're extremely aware of
3 yourself, Councilwoman. So I don't want to
4 take a lot of time reiterating what other
5 people have said. Let me just point out two
6 facts:

7 One is an article that appeared in
8 the Inquirer last summer pointing out that
9 families were staying in transitional housing
10 for years, in some cases, because of a lack of
11 permanent, affordable housing for those
12 families to move to. And I know that you saw
13 that article.

14 And secondly, that in our area, the
15 housing wage, the amount of money that a
16 renter needs to earn in order to be able to
17 afford a basic two-bedroom apartment is
18 currently more than \$17 an hour. So that's
19 more than 3 times the minimum wage. And we
20 can see why we have such a drastic shortage of
21 affordable housing here in Philadelphia.

22 The members of PACDC deal with this
23 every day. We develop affordable housing.
24 Many of our members directly serve homeless
25 families. Others serve low income families in

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2 general, whether or not they have been
3 homeless. And we're aware of the huge need
4 for affordable housing, the desire on the part
5 of the City's leaders to do more to create
6 affordable housing, and the lack of resources
7 that is making it difficult to solve this
8 problem. So that's why PACDC developed the
9 proposal to create a housing trust fund in the
10 City of Philadelphia.

11 We're very glad to have support of
12 more than a hundred organizations in the City
13 that are joining us, like WCRP, like the
14 Philadelphia Affordable Housing Coalition,
15 like many of the folks here, to call for the
16 affordable housing trust fund. And we're very
17 glad, Councilwoman, to have your support and
18 the support of the City's leaders in making it
19 happen. It's an idea, I think, whose time has
20 come.

21 If we had a housing trust fund in
22 this City, we could create 400 more units of
23 affordable housing every year. We could
24 repair more than 1200 occupied homes every
25 year. And we could prevent 1300 families from

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2 becoming homeless every year. This is
3 something we need to do. I think there are
4 only a few details that are still being worked
5 out between advocates and Members of Council
6 and the City.

7 I would like to close by quoting
8 from an editorial that the Philadelphia
9 Inquirer published this summer supporting the
10 housing trust fund. The last sentence of the
11 editorial said that "If the City of
12 Philadelphia does not have a housing trust
13 fund, homelessness is a feared possibility for
14 many."

15 Too many folks in our City are
16 already facing homelessness. We need to
17 create more housing for those people, and I
18 urge Council and the Administration to
19 continue working with advocates to iron out
20 the last few issues. Let's make the housing
21 trust fund part of the City's plan to end
22 homelessness. Let's start building the
23 affordable housing we need so badly in the
24 City.

25 Thank you very much for your

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2 support.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. HESS: Councilwoman, one of the
6 biggest benefits of today, personally, may be
7 the hearing from so many great folks on very
8 important subjects with such great ideas. It
9 is very inspiring as we do the planning
10 necessary to move forward in a very positive
11 way. So again, we thank you for your
12 leadership to make the day possible.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

14 MR. HESS: At this time, tragically
15 and unfortunately, Reverend Wells will not be
16 able to join us. He's delayed in a hospital,
17 and so our thoughts and prayers go out to him
18 and his family and we'll pray for his speedy
19 recovery. Linda Hicks, however, is here and I
20 think will join us at the witness table.

21 MS. HICKS: Hello, Madam Chair.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome.

23 MS. HICKS: Linda Hicks, CEO of the
24 One Day At a Time organization, ODAAT, Inc.,
25 and I am speaking for Reverend Wells who is

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2 unable to be here. However, I do have my
3 personal experiences with the homelessness
4 services in this City and have been working,
5 as you know, with the homeless for almost 11
6 years now.

7 I don't have a prepared speech. I
8 don't want to make it long. I just want to be
9 real brief and concise in saying that having
10 migrated to this City, having lived in a
11 number of other cities, coming here from our
12 nation's capital, I have long been impressed
13 with the dedication of the folks here in this
14 City, including yourself, to making sure that
15 people have a place to sleep, that people have
16 a roof over their head and just the bare
17 necessities that I'm sure God wants all of us
18 to have. I've always been impressed. And
19 once I got the blessing I received in this
20 City, and thanks to Reverend Wells and his
21 program, was never in danger of being homeless
22 because he's a person that is dedicated to
23 making sure that people keep a roof over their
24 head.

25 But as we try to continue our work,

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2 we realize we can't do it alone. We can't do
3 it like in the old days, just take an
4 abandoned house. You know there are a lot of
5 danger, there are a lot of things. We have to
6 have money to provide safe, affordable
7 housing, and that's something we've learned
8 over the years.

9 And as far as the shelter services
10 are concerned -- and we refer to them as
11 havens. In all the years that I've been
12 working with OESS and COODAP and the
13 provisional services, our beds have never been
14 empty. And having personally been able to
15 talk with and spend time with a lot of those
16 people, it's not because they just love being
17 there, even though we have some pretty nice
18 places, for most of them it's because there
19 are other services that they need and they
20 need the help that we work so hard in this
21 City to provide.

22 But, of course, that means funding.
23 It means having funds to do it. And while I
24 admire and believe that there's a good effort
25 in this City to have funding available to

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2 provide services for the homelessness, of
3 course there could be more; of course we need
4 more.

5 One of the areas that continues to
6 be a concern to myself and the One Day At a
7 Time organization is that when we look at our
8 drug and alcohol recovery program -- and,
9 Jannie, you know, a lot of you know the good
10 work that Reverend Wells has done there.
11 Those aren't shelters, but we keep people off
12 the street. But the thing is, after we get
13 them off drugs, they do need the system
14 because the housing market in this City is out
15 of reach for someone who is receiving
16 assistance or who's getting minimum wage.
17 It's just very hard to find affordable
18 housing. And often what we have to do is find
19 rooms for these people. And I know that they
20 fair better in staying clean and sober when
21 they are in a structured environment even
22 after they leave our environment.

23 So transitional housing and programs
24 like Ready Willing and Able are programs that
25 we need because most often it's not just

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2 enough for the average person to get them off
3 of drugs and say, "Go on your own." So the
4 housing services are needed. The programs are
5 needed. All of these supportive services are
6 needed, not just for the person who is
7 immediately homeless, but for folks who have
8 already progressed through the system. It
9 needs to be continue funding available for
10 continuum of care.

11 I don't know how many people survive
12 who make less than \$10 an hour when you look
13 at what the housing costs are. I have
14 personally now taken care of a family that I
15 personally moved out of an apartment where
16 they had no running water and there were five
17 children. There was, thanks to the City,
18 somewhere for them. But I was in a position
19 to do something for them and so I did. And
20 I'm looking at all the other services
21 available. So I took care of their immediate
22 homeless situation, but now that they have a
23 roof over their head, which is temporary, I'm
24 depending upon the City and services that we
25 provide through OESS to find them a

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2 transitional apartment and some affordable
3 housing. Otherwise, they'll be right back
4 where they started.

5 We do need to keep the funding in
6 place for our shelter service and for
7 transitional housing. And we are proponents
8 of funding added that would provide and expand
9 the transitional housing services in the City
10 so that you're able to keep more people ending
11 right back at square 1, needing emergency
12 housing. We haven't provided the services
13 that are needed in the continuum of care to
14 give them affordable housing and a structured
15 environment they need for an extended period
16 of time.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
20 very much. Certainly, I'm sure that Mr. Hess
21 will work with you with that family and any
22 other.

23 And let me also say that we visited
24 Reverend Wells on Thursday. We were at his
25 house Thursday at about 5 o'clock, and we talk

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2 about two homes. I've spoken to Mr. Hess
3 about them, the two homes in North
4 Philadelphia where he wants to do dialysis
5 homes. So we're already talking about that.
6 Mr. Hess has agreed to work with him on that.
7 And let Rev know we'll be in touch with him,
8 but we're on the case. We're trying to do our
9 part to make life better for those who are on
10 dialysis in spite of other issues they may
11 have like homelessness or AIDS, et cetera. So
12 we know that's the new move, and we're on the
13 case.

14 Thank you, Ms. Hicks.

15 Mr. Hess.

16 MR. HESS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

17 The next group we'll invite to the
18 table, with your permission, are
19 representatives from SELF, Incorporated, led
20 by Nate Robinson.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
23 very much.

24 Many of you might not know, but they
25 help us every week. You know, we have a

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2 program at Malcolm X Park. And Malcolm X Park
3 is at 52nd and Pine Streets in my district.
4 And we fought really, really hard. I don't
5 allow my colleagues to brag about other things
6 they have because then I make sure my area has
7 it.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Certainly,
10 we have worked hard to have a wonderful -- we
11 have a jazz program there from Memorial Day
12 until after Labor Day and every other week.
13 We have had it every other week for the last
14 several years. And they're there. They help
15 us. They support us. They help us maintain
16 the park. They help us support the community
17 in every way they can. And let me say thank
18 you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. ROBINSON: You're quite welcome.

21 Good afternoon, Councilwoman. It is
22 always a pleasure to see you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

24 MR. ROBINSON: On behalf of SELF,
25 Incorporated, and Dr. Sylvester Outley, we'd

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2 like to thank you for this opportunity to
3 testify and give you some brief testimony
4 about what we're doing. Also, we'd like to
5 give special thanks to Mr. Rob Hess and Ms.
6 Letty Hinton --

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. ROBINSON: -- for their current
9 efforts in what they're doing in addressing
10 homelessness in the City of Philadelphia.

11 For more than any other city, we
12 are, I believe, ahead of any other city or
13 nation in addressing this population of
14 people.

15 Recently, I had the opportunity to
16 go to Washington, D.C., for a conference. And
17 what I'd seen was worst than what we ever
18 could have imagined. But then it also reminds
19 me, Councilwoman, how things were back in
20 1990, early '90s, when we were suffering with
21 the blight of homelessness in our concourses
22 in subway stations and around the libraries
23 and throughout the City Council area of
24 Philadelphia. And it's a point where we need
25 to keep in mind that if we do not continue to

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2 provide resources to help us in addressing the
3 homeless population -- you know, we don't want
4 to go backwards; we want to move forward, and
5 I think we are doing exactly that.

6 Currently right now what we're
7 doing, we're working with individuals in four
8 shelters that we are contracted by the Office
9 of Emergency Shelter and Services. And our
10 largest site is the Outley House located at
11 6901 Woodland Avenue.

12 We recently, about a year ago, was
13 awarded a contract by the City to provide
14 service to females. And I think that is one
15 of the populations that kind of like have been
16 left in the dark. Recently, through the funds
17 of OESS, we recently received a contract to
18 provide scatter site housing for single
19 females at the TJ Properties, and we are very
20 excited and know that this is going to be a
21 model that is going to take us towards ending
22 homelessness within the next 10 years.

23 What I brought today is two of our
24 current clients to talk to you about their
25 experience in homelessness.

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2 MS. SAUNDERS: Hello. My name is
3 April Saunders, and, like he said, I'm a
4 client of SELF, Incorporated. I'm also a
5 candidate for the TJ Reynolds Project for
6 transition, I guess you would call it.

7 I appreciate what SELF,
8 Incorporated, has done for me personally,
9 teaching me how to manage my money and make a
10 commitment to myself. I'm looking forward to
11 this because I've never lived alone. I've
12 always had to take care of either my children
13 or somebody else. So when I do get there, it
14 will be the first time I even had a place of
15 my own. I need to say I'm very grateful for
16 that and I'm glad.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. SAUNDERS: I have no doubt that
19 I'll be able to maintain it because they
20 taught me well.

21 That's all I have to say.

22 MR. REVIS: Good afternoon,
23 Councilwoman Blackwell. My name Steven Revis,
24 and I'm also a resident at the Outley House
25 facility, 6901 Woodland Avenue. What I'd like

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2 to say is that I really appreciate the
3 existence of the SELF, Incorporated, Outley
4 House because through my life-style choices, I
5 had burned or, as a matter of fact, blown up
6 bridges of relations between friends and
7 family. So when I was released from
8 incarceration earlier this year, I had
9 nothing, really no place to go. I would have
10 been homeless again. But while I was
11 incarcerated, I had made up my mind that just
12 as I had done anything and everything to
13 continue abusing different substances, drugs
14 and alcohol, that I was willing to do anything
15 and listen to someone that I had faith in to
16 direct me to get my life back in line with the
17 rest of society.

18 Again, I say I was fortunate because
19 when I was released, I was referred to the
20 Outley House through the Gateway on Ridge
21 Avenue. And I said fortunately because there,
22 they saw something in me while I was being
23 interviewed that they felt that I could
24 benefit from participation in their recovery
25 program on the fourth floor.

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2 Since participating in that program,
3 I've been able to maintain sobriety for 14
4 months. As a matter of fact, tomorrow will be
5 the 14th month anniversary day.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. REVIS: And I've also clung to
8 the idea that Dr. Outley told us that -- you
9 know, when I first came out, I thought that if
10 I could just get a job and a place to stay for
11 a couple months I'd be all right. I was
12 worried about getting a job and doing my own
13 thing, but I embraced the idea that the best
14 possible thought I ever came up so far to this
15 point in my life ended up with me a bed at
16 Outley House. And my decision-making process,
17 my gain in that area was lacking, so I had to
18 learn to listen and listen to live.

19 I've also -- since that time, I've
20 gotten my medical problems, my high blood
21 pressure addressed through the medical staff
22 that's available at the shelter. But more
23 importantly, I've gotten together all of my
24 identification and I have gotten my
25 self-esteem. I've got a renewed self-image

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2 because I'm getting ready to go into
3 transition because of what they seen in me. I
4 made that transition from being "I ain't" to
5 an "I am." And that's all the results of
6 listening to the people, to the staff, at
7 Outley House.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. ROBINSON: Again, Councilwoman
10 I'd just like to thank you. I just wanted to
11 add in closing that, you know, even though we
12 have come a long way, we still have a long way
13 to go. We need to continue to do what we're
14 doing. We need more resources to continue to
15 provide service to address the homelessness in
16 the City of Philadelphia. Again, thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
19 too. Thank you all. God bless. We thank you
20 for what you do, to provide services not only
21 to me but to the citizens of West Philadelphia
22 and across the City.

23 SELF has always been there. We've
24 never called on you where you haven't come.
25 We thank you for your services and wish you

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2 both all the best. Godspeed.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, we continue
5 to hear a number of recurring themes today.
6 The one theme is "we need more." Another
7 theme is that all of our new programs and
8 projects seem to have your stamp on them.

9 As they were talking about the new
10 demonstration project in West Philadelphia,
11 you, of course, also introduced us to Mr.
12 Thomas and made that happen as well. So
13 again, we thank you very much.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
15 Thank you, Mr. Hess.

16 MR. HESS: The next folks we'll
17 invite to the witness table are Ed Speedling
18 from Project H.O.M.E., Anthony Gindraw from
19 St. Elizabeth's, and Jim Wormer formerly from
20 Ridge Avenue.

21 Let me just say as they're coming up
22 that with respect to Ed Speedling's role as
23 acting director of the outreach teams that are
24 coordinated through Project H.O.M.E., this
25 City is blessed in so many ways, and this is

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2 one. Literally, the finest outreach teams in
3 America reside here in the City of
4 Philadelphia.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. HESS: Mayors, councilmembers,
7 the administrators, non-profit executives from
8 all across our great country come here to look
9 at the great work that they are doing. And we
10 are just so very, very proud of that work.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. HESS: They are the folks that
13 give me the hope and the inspiration to know
14 that not only can we be, but we will be the
15 first City in America to end the need for
16 anyone to sleep on our streets; anyone.

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
19 Thank you all for what you're doing.

20 MR. HESS: And with that, I'll
21 introduce Ed Speedling.

22 MR. SPEEDLING: Before I speak, I
23 want to say that -- Rob asked me to speak
24 first, but nothing that I could say would
25 equal the achievements of the people at the

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2 table with me. So I'm going to let these
3 fellows speak first and then I'll say a few
4 things afterwards.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

6 MR. GINDRAW: Good afternoon, Ms.
7 Blackwell.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
9 afternoon.

10 MR. GINDRAW: My name is Anthony
11 Gindraw. I am currently homeless at this
12 time. Sometimes I find myself facing
13 discrimination in society where people try to
14 look down on you. I've been rejected from a
15 lot of jobs due to not having a permanent
16 location to reside. But I'm here today to
17 tell you there is hope for people such as
18 myself and others because at this present time
19 I reside at 1518 Croskey Street, a Project
20 H.O.M.E. facility at St. Elizabeth, a program
21 which will help you build up your self-esteem
22 and will help educate yourself being a
23 responsible and productive member of society.

24 I am here today asking you for your
25 help with funding for programs such as Project

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2 H.O.M.E. and other programs such as Ready
3 Willing and Able and Blueprint and a lot of
4 other ones. Upon completing these programs,
5 there's transitional and affordable housing
6 for single men, because it's very for single
7 men to get affordable housing due to low wage
8 jobs and also better healthcare programs and
9 also better job skill programs for guys
10 working the 12-step program.

11 Thank you very much.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

14 MR. OCERO: Good afternoon, Mrs.
15 Blackwell.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
17 afternoon.

18 MR. OCERO: I'm presently residing
19 at 1850 Croskey Street. I would like to say
20 something about homelessness.

21 Homelessness is a condition of
22 living that sometimes forces a segment of the
23 population to lose contact with taking on life
24 on the real side of that condition. The
25 conditions of depressed socialized functions

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2 of the times due to loss of employment and
3 communicational regards for neighborhoods and
4 other areas adjacent on the small or large
5 scale of those functions will cause a
6 condition of dissension and disease called
7 homelessness.

8 I have spent on and off 10 years or
9 better being homeless on the streets. I have
10 also been living in conditions that have not
11 been for my betterment because of policies. I
12 have spent two years with the Salvation Army.
13 And it was a very good condition where I
14 learned to have my priorities set in order.
15 But in order to get better help, I had to go
16 to Project H.O.M.E. at St. Elizabeth's. I had
17 a problem with substance abuse and also mental
18 health conditions, and I got the help that I
19 really needed there at St. Elizabeth. So I
20 would like to see the work go on and for
21 something to be done, and in parting, mostly
22 about the homelessness that we see everyday
23 here on the streets in Philadelphia.

24 Thank you very much.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. WORMER: Good afternoon, Madam
4 Chairman. My name is James Wormer. And from
5 July of 2002 through April of 2003, I was a
6 resident or consumer at the City of
7 Philadelphia's Ridge Avenue Shelter for
8 Homeless Adult Men.

9 By way of background, I was born in
10 Philadelphia in 1948. Both my parents are
11 deceased. I'm divorced, unmarried, and have
12 no genuine family connections. I was last
13 fully employed in 1995 and money has been a
14 problem since about that time. Additionally,
15 I suffered from high blood pressure, diabetes,
16 and I'm addicted somewhat to nicotine. By
17 December of 2001, I was involuntarily
18 committed through the Hall Mercer facility to
19 the psychiatric ward of Pennsylvania Hospital
20 with a diagnosis of depression. In June of
21 2002, in the course of being evicted from my
22 apartment, I attempted suicide. Following
23 surgical intervention and a stay in Hahnemann
24 Hospital's psychiatric ward, I was discharged
25 with the instruction simply to proceed to the

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2 Ridge Avenue Shelter.

3 It is my sincere hope that someone
4 from the Hahnemann University Hospital system
5 or the Tenet Health Corporation will discover
6 the outreach services provide by the City of
7 Philadelphia.

8 The Ridge Avenue Shelter, as you
9 probably know, is one of the largest men's
10 shelter in the City with some 306 beds and 4
11 distinct groups. The first step has some 31
12 beds for men with severe mental health
13 problems, dual diagnosis cases, men who are on
14 constant medication and barely able to
15 function outside of a supervised community.
16 It is almost kind of a travesty, but I suppose
17 it's the best we can do for people with
18 serious mental health problems.

19 Clean and sober on the second floor
20 with a hundred beds attempts to rehabilitate
21 men who are suffering from drug or alcohol
22 abuse. And it's my understanding it's one of
23 the more successful programs of its type.
24 However, I was not in that group.

25 The first floor has an additional 75

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2 beds for short-term men, including some 12 for
3 a program called Connections, in which I was
4 involved, and another 12 for another program,
5 which I eventually wound up, called the
6 Philadelphia Health Management Corporation.
7 We were known as the PHMC 12.

8 Finally, in November 2002, the third
9 floor of Ridge Avenue was opened for something
10 called the Winter Initiative which was an
11 attempt, as I understood it, to reach out to
12 the long-term homeless population who are
13 generally men who will not come into shelters,
14 given the choice. They often are found
15 residing in obscure parts of the City, perhaps
16 north of the International Airport, in the
17 Eastwick section, perhaps a few sections of
18 parks such as Fairmount and Pennypack. It was
19 my understanding that some effort was being
20 made at that time to try to find long-term
21 placement for them.

22 When I entered Ridge back in July of
23 2002, I was not in particular good shape.
24 Unlike many of the other men who had a good
25 deal of anger and frustration, I was rather

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2 depressed and having no little difficulty
3 adjusting to some of the antidepressant
4 medications as well as some serious problems
5 with even being able to sleep at night. And I
6 was physically ill. I had developed
7 cellulitis very quickly in both feet. In
8 fact, before leaving Ridge that fall, I
9 managed to suffer from cellulitis, sinusitis
10 bronchitis, pneumonia and by the winter I was
11 back with sinusitis and bronchitis. This is
12 hardly the high point of my residential
13 experience, as you might imagine. However,
14 the medical care provided by the shelter, and
15 in particular Fairmount Health Center, works,
16 along with some support from certain of the
17 hospitals in the area, notably Temple
18 University Hospital and to some extent
19 Hahnemann.

20 When I left in April of 2000, I was
21 able to move into transitional housing where I
22 still am, and that was provided by yet another
23 organization not present today, John F.
24 Kennedy Community Mental Health and Mental
25 Retardation Center, which has been doing some

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2 good work in trying to get some of the
3 mentally ill people into transitional homes at
4 least. There is -- and I agree very much with
5 what some of the other witnesses have said --
6 a very severe shortage of affordable housing.
7 Basically, we're now putting people long-term,
8 at best, into transitional housing.

9 Surviving Ridge wasn't easy. It
10 really drew on my wits and also my experiences
11 in the Army. And there were times when,
12 frankly, I considered the option of not
13 surviving. That having been said, two of the
14 programs were very important in helping me to
15 survive. The first of those was Connections.
16 This is a focus of about 12 men who have been
17 diagnosed with some form of mental problems,
18 the full of extent of which may not be known
19 or apparent when they first wind up at Ridge.
20 There is a mixture of screening, supporting,
21 interviewing with psychiatric workers and case
22 managers. I was fortunate. I found it was
23 fairly helpful for me. I realized I was not
24 alone, that some other people had problems
25 even worse than mine, or at least that was

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2 their perception.

3 The case manager that I had turned
4 out to be sound. She provided direction,
5 guidance and support. We navigated our way
6 through the state welfare system and then
7 managed to get an application filed for Social
8 Security benefits. That got a little bit
9 complex because when you get older you have a
10 much more complex medical history than when
11 you're 25 or 30 and you're going through the
12 shelter system for the very first time.
13 Beyond that, I was discharged as stable
14 eventually from Connections, which presented a
15 severe problem for the staff because I had
16 been there more than three weeks and they
17 wondered when I was going to be moving on.

18 With a little bit of effort, they
19 placed me in the PHMC 12 program. That's an
20 abbreviation for the Philadelphia Health
21 Management Corporation. And I was fortunate
22 we had an exceptional case worker at Ridge
23 Avenue who was able to do quite a bit with us.
24 One was rather unusual because she was an
25 unusual mix of compassion and experience and

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2 no little street smarts. She allowed one
3 opportunity to screw up, but not two. Two and
4 you were out of the program. Most of the men
5 were able to handled this, but I would point
6 out it was not an easy program. In 2003,
7 three of the men in that program that I was
8 with died because we are, as a group, a bit
9 older than many of the other shelter residents
10 and the conditions there are fairly severe.
11 One was, I believe, a heart failure; another
12 one had died from sclerosis of the liver; and
13 if I recall correctly, the third one had
14 accumulated respiratory problems that
15 eventually terminated his life.

16 The program works because, among
17 other things, we had access to things simply
18 like telephones, which is an expensive item
19 when you're in a shelter and you're trying to
20 get by on a DPA grant, especially if you have
21 to call a doctor's office or a hospital and
22 somebody says, "Please hold," instead of
23 "What's your problem?" We needed telephones.
24 We needed things like SEPTA tokens just to get
25 out to keep the medical appointments that have

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2 been scheduled for us to take care of the
3 health problems. And the program is
4 successful because what they try to do, and
5 they were successful with several of the other
6 men, are placing us in long-term housing.

7 My only recommendation I think I can
8 make at Ridge is when you first come into the
9 program in the shorter term areas -- I think
10 the reason these two other programs worked
11 well is the small number of individuals in
12 them, perhaps a dozen in each program with
13 experienced case workers or case manager staff
14 supervising and being able to follow-up with
15 the people. Unfortunately, in the larger
16 short-term turnover population, the ratio is
17 about two permanent staff members in
18 day-to-day contact with up to 50 men. I think
19 you need to increase that staff by at least
20 one more person. I have no complaints about
21 the two individuals that I worked with in the
22 shelter as men and as individuals. But
23 they're just on the verge of being constantly
24 overwhelmed by a variety of urgent problems,
25 or more or less urgent problems.

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2 Since Ridge, I have been living on
3 my own in an apartment on the edge of
4 University City. I'd like to tell you that
5 things have gotten all kinds of rosy, but they
6 really haven't. The physical health problems
7 continue. I've been diagnosed with such
8 wonderful conditions as osteopenia and
9 something called obstructive sleep apnea.
10 I've even had a fracture in the arm. So once
11 you're down, apparently, the idea is you
12 should stay down for a while.

13 I continue with a psychiatrist and a
14 therapist on a regular basis. But I did
15 volunteer this past year after discussing it
16 with a therapist to work with an organization
17 called Vote For Homes. And I had the
18 opportunity to go around and speak to a number
19 of men and women in the shelters in the City
20 of Philadelphia, including such places as
21 Outley House on Woodland Avenue. It was an
22 interesting experience. I'm glad I wasn't
23 running for office when I spoke to the men
24 because they had some very sharp questions at
25 the beginning of our conversation. And I had

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2 to explain, "No, I'm not doing that. I'm only
3 out here to make sure that you men have the
4 right to vote. I'm here to make sure you have
5 an opportunity to register to vote."

6 Ready Willing and Able in South
7 Philadelphia was far more receptive earlier
8 and I think we registered a number of people
9 there; and also, by the way, at Outley House
10 eventually.

11 On Election Day, I was active
12 helping some of the residents getting to the
13 polls in and around the City of Philadelphia.
14 Some people think I made a contribution. I'm
15 not really sure yet.

16 Thank you very much for the
17 opportunity, Madam Chair.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
20 very much.

21 MR SPEEDLING: Good afternoon,
22 Councilwoman Blackwell. My name is Ed
23 Speedling, and I'm the interim Director of the
24 Outreach Coordination Center at Project
25 H.O.M.E.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. SPEEDLING: It's an honor to be
4 here. It's also a privilege to be at this
5 table with these gentlemen here, because I
6 think that their actions speak louder than a
7 lot of words that one could speak. But I'm
8 thankful for the opportunity to speak for just
9 a few moments about the needs and hopes and
10 aspirations of homeless men and women who are
11 living on the streets of our City. I hope
12 that what I have to say will be helpful. I
13 also hope that they will lend support to the
14 planning process under way to craft the
15 powerful plan to end homelessness in
16 Philadelphia. Sooner, by the way, than the
17 10-year target date.

18 Now, the mission of the Outreach
19 Coordination Center, which is a partnership
20 between Project H.O.M.E. and the City of
21 Philadelphia, is provide leadership as well as
22 logistical support to the street outreach
23 teams that reach out every day and every night
24 of the year to people on our streets, going
25 wherever they are, being present to them in

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2 whatever their condition, offering them first
3 and foremost a full measure of concern and a
4 hand of friendship but then helping these
5 homeless citizens to make the choice to come
6 off the streets to a better place, to a better
7 place and a chance to change their lives.

8 Five organizations participate in
9 the Outreach Coordination Center. They are
10 the Hall Mercer Mental Health and Mental
11 Retardation Center; SELF, Incorporated;
12 Horizon House, the Mental Health Associations,
13 West Philly Access Team and Project H.O.M.E.
14 These teams respond to calls to our hotline
15 which, of course, as everyone knows is
16 223-1984. They respond to calls to our
17 hotline from people in the community, hundreds
18 of thousands of people who call us. And then
19 these teams also actively search out and reach
20 out to homeless people constantly wherever
21 they may be.

22 Now, many people in this room recall
23 that after the passage of the sidewalk
24 behavioral ordinance in 1998 or 1999, the
25 Outreach Center was given resources by the

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2 City that significantly expanded outreach
3 services. The City also provided resources to
4 create what we call safe haven shelters, small
5 user-friendly shelters to accommodate the
6 physical and psychological needs of very
7 vulnerable people. Moreover, through the good
8 graces and wisdom of CBH, Community Behavioral
9 Health, homeless people were afforded more
10 effective access to substance abuse and mental
11 health services. And, Madam Chairwoman, this
12 package deal works.

13 Let me cite just a few illustrative
14 statistics. In Fiscal Year 2004, the outreach
15 team, the five teams that comprise the
16 Outreach Coordination Center made over 20,000
17 contacts with people, the vast majority, by
18 the way, of whom are Philadelphia residents.
19 They made over 20,000 contacts with people who
20 they either met on the streets or visited for
21 follow-up services at various shelters,
22 programs and therapeutic facilities. We just
23 don't simply drop people off and leave.
24 Outreach workers continue to support and
25 sustain until their consumers are connected to

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2 the mainstream system. Now, these 20,000 plus
3 contacts, conversations, handshakes,
4 information exchanges, et cetera, resulted in
5 1600 placements into shelters, programs and
6 therapeutic facilities; 1600 times outreach
7 workers helped someone make a decision to
8 leave the streets.

9 Now, it is true that sometimes we
10 place the same individuals multiple times.
11 But, you know, in our work, we subscribe to
12 the adage of try, try, and try again. Keep
13 hope alive always. This philosophy keeps us
14 going, and when combined with the right set of
15 resources, it leads to success. I mean, how
16 else can one explain the decline of street
17 homeless in Philadelphia over the last five
18 years, from 824 individuals sleeping on the
19 streets on one summer evening prior to the
20 infusion of resources that I mentioned to 356
21 people on the streets in 2003 to 324 in the
22 summer of 2004? That's a remarkable decline.
23 These, by the way, are the numbers that
24 Project H.O.M.E.'s Outreach Coordination
25 Center collects in its quarterly census.

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2 There have been successes, but let
3 me not minimize the barriers to stabilization
4 faced by homeless people. Of all the people
5 that the Outreach Coordination Center engaged
6 in Fiscal Year 2004, only 17 percent were free
7 from symptoms of mental illness or substance
8 abuse. Information that we get from our
9 outreach workers lead us to think that at
10 least 20 percent of the folks in the streets
11 are burdened by both substance abuse and
12 mental illness, so we have our work cut out
13 for us. Many homeless people are also
14 burdened by daunting physical ailments as well
15 as social deficits in important life-skill
16 areas. Without a healthy support system, it
17 can be very difficult to overcome these
18 barriers. This is why it is amazing and
19 inspiring to see so much hope on our streets.
20 You cannot imagine how often people on the
21 streets respond to the question "how are you
22 today" with the response "I am blessed."
23 Amazing. And we can do -- we in this room, in
24 this planning process, can do no less than
25 meet this expression of hope with continued

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2 efforts to design and fund the kind of
3 programs that will lift these folks to a
4 higher level of existence. And I believe that
5 the process of the 10-year plan will trigger
6 the kind of energy, the kind of resources that
7 will bring this about. And I'll just mention
8 a few that are high on my list, if you don't
9 mind.

10 First of all, we need to continue to
11 invest in recovery. Let's be realistic;
12 recovery from addiction is hard. Am I right?

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. SPEEDLING: Let's be realistic,
15 let's be honest. Recovery is hard work.
16 Relapse can be part of the process. We have
17 to fund treatment programs that stay with
18 people for the long haul.

19 And we also need to build on the
20 successful safe haven model that we've got
21 here so that there's more opportunity for the
22 most fragile of our homeless population to
23 leave the streets. And believe me, they will
24 only do this if they can feel safe. Let's
25 meet them where they are.

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2 We have the opportunity to target
3 and help those mentally ill folks on the
4 street, particularly those with very few
5 family supports and who are burdened, not only
6 with mental illness, but with substance abuse.
7 And we need to continue to support programs
8 that provide mental health medication for
9 homeless people without insurance. This is
10 incredibly important that we maintain a level
11 of funding for this.

12 Now, I know that many in this room
13 agree with me that too many people are in
14 prison to begin with. And while this City,
15 the City of Philadelphia, has begun several
16 outstanding initiatives to prevent those
17 coming out of prison from becoming instantly
18 homeless -- we have some good programs that
19 we've begun, but we need to do more. And more
20 work is needed, and the plan that is being
21 developed, I believe, will help with this.

22 And let's not forget that engine of
23 self-esteem; jobs. We need to continue to
24 work on jobs.

25 And let's also continue to stress

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2 the needs of our youth. We just heard about
3 that this afternoon. Whenever I see a young
4 person on the streets, living on the streets,
5 the words of Nathan McCall hit me home, "It
6 makes me want to holla; it makes me want to
7 holla."

8 We have the energy in this City to
9 make a difference. We can make a difference.

10 In closing, let me say that in the
11 five years that I've been working with
12 homeless people, I've asked the following
13 question over and over again; "What do you
14 need for your life?"

15 I hear the same three words coming
16 back at me over and over again. They are: "I
17 need my own place."

18 That's the bottom line. Housing.
19 Affordable housing. Housing which supports
20 services. Thank you very much.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
23 very much.

24 We went through a lot on that
25 homeless bill. You know I didn't vote for

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2 that, although it worked out okay. I was
3 really worried about it. But certainly, we
4 thank you for all you're doing and for being
5 such a role model, an example in our nation.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, one of the
8 great tragedies of homelessness, an experience
9 of being homeless, as we know, is that all too
10 often young men and women are called to serve
11 our country in the armed forces, and after
12 serving honorably, come home to walk our
13 streets. In fact, the numbers are as high as
14 30 percent of people that experience
15 homelessness nationally may be veterans.

16 It is a pleasure for me to introduce
17 to you and to invite, with your permission, to
18 provide testimony today, Marsha Four from the
19 Perimeter addresses the needs of this very,
20 very special and important population.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
22 very much. We are so glad to see here. We
23 see her every year at Stand Down. We
24 absolutely support it a thousand percent.
25 It's a wonderful program.

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2 And I wish at some point we would
3 get to the point of expanding it a day. Maybe
4 one day we can end up with a whole week where
5 we could provide services. I'd like us to
6 figure out if we could. I think it, what,
7 starts on Thursday to Sunday, right.

8 MS. FOUR: Friday morning.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I wish we
10 could do like maybe all day Thursday. Maybe
11 one of these days we'll be able to expand it.
12 It's absolutely a wonderful program for our
13 vets. And after serving their country, they
14 absolutely deserve it. It's a program we
15 support, Mr. Hess. We attend every year.

16 MS. FOUR: Thank you.

17 When we first started it, when I
18 first brought it to Philadelphia, they thought
19 I was crazy wanting it for three days, but
20 I'll pass that along. Thank you, ma'am.

21 Councilwoman Blackwell, thank you
22 for allowing me to be here today. As Mr. Hess
23 mentioned, my name is Marsha Four, I'm Program
24 Director for Homeless Veterans Services at the
25 Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service and

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2 Education Center.

3 As Ed Speedling just said, the
4 energy in Philadelphia surrounding this
5 problem is something that is absolutely felt
6 in the air, the energy that's being expended
7 for that. And as someone else mentioned
8 earlier, this work cannot be done on any one
9 plane, in any one direction. It's a very
10 complicated situation that requires input from
11 all facets of our provider systems.

12 We are, in fact, just one small
13 piece of the puzzle, but we are able to access
14 funding that is not available to everyone in
15 the homeless services arena. Today, I'd like
16 to speak to that funding, what it is and how
17 we utilize it in advancing the work in
18 Philadelphia on the issue of homelessness.

19 In these times, of course, when
20 patriotism runs high and palatable, we also
21 think of the veterans of the past, and it's
22 about them that I'd like to speak today; they,
23 who served our country who are now on the
24 streets.

25 Homeless veterans are a reality.

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2 And as Mr. Hess mentioned, a quarter of a
3 million men and women in this country are
4 homeless on the streets, and they are
5 veterans. And in Philadelphia, that number
6 may, in fact, reach as high as 2,000. And I
7 know certainly you are aware of this issue.

8 Our agency's been around since 1981.
9 But in 1996, we were able to make some
10 dramatic changes to our programs. This was in
11 part due to our realization of the growing
12 number of veterans that were coming into our
13 doors that were homeless and also the
14 availability of funding that was now going to
15 be available for veterans through the VA
16 Homeless Grant per diem program. That year,
17 we did submit three grants, three at one time;
18 two to the VA and one to HUD. They were able
19 to provide us with two transitional homeless
20 veteran-specific programs; one, a transitional
21 program; and one, a day service drop-in
22 program. Later, we augmented that with
23 additional US Department of Labor dollars.

24 The realized unique opportunity
25 provided by the VA and Department of Labor

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2 awards were grant dollars exclusively for
3 homeless veterans. These awards were able to
4 introduce into local homeless services a new
5 stream of federal funding dollars accessible
6 only to homeless veteran programs. However,
7 it was augmenting the monies available to
8 serve the general homeless population of the
9 City. In actuality, they offset City expenses
10 that homeless veterans would have otherwise
11 expended on the already financially burdened
12 system. The center is proud to have played a
13 role in this contribution along with the
14 increased grant leveraging with these grants
15 and the ability for future Philadelphia grant
16 proposals.

17 I think that the commitment that we
18 bring to this issue is vital to the work that
19 we do because it is our mission not to leave
20 our brother and sister veterans behind. Our
21 commitment is to coordinated programs, which
22 we work hard at every day, that will lead
23 these veterans back to safety to self and to
24 community. And as we said in past testimonies
25 also, no one can do this alone.

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2 The center's 50-bed transitional
3 residence was expanded to 95 beds. It has
4 admitted 636 total veterans since 1997,
5 average length of stay 281. Per day it only
6 cost \$26 to house them, and we have 84.6
7 percent of our total discharges are placed in
8 independent housing.

9 Our day service program, the
10 Perimeter, is located in Center City
11 Philadelphia. Since 2000, we've seen over 50
12 veterans a day that come into our program that
13 are homeless. We have 2300 unique veterans in
14 our data bank. During our last HUD contract,
15 839 veterans utilized our services; 401 were
16 new admissions last year. But with the work
17 we're able to do and to help the City
18 providing services to the homeless, 97 of
19 those veterans were also admitted to
20 Coatesville VA Substance Abuse Program, 52 to
21 its domiciliary, 68 to transitional housing,
22 and 71 independent housing.

23 I believe the overall program
24 efforts in concert with what we have with the
25 VA have dramatically enhanced coordinated

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2 services for homeless veterans in the City of
3 Philadelphia. I do believe if we could look
4 at the numbers, we can show that the work that
5 we've done with veterans has decreased the
6 length of stay in City shelter systems.

7 As we invested into further
8 opportunities, we also tapped into Department
9 of Labor funds that are only available to
10 homeless veterans also. Last year, 88
11 veterans utilized our training programs, and
12 80 of the homeless veterans were placed in
13 jobs.

14 We anticipate December 1st opening a
15 further expansion, which is 30-bed standalone
16 component dedicated exclusively to homeless
17 women veterans, the Mary E. Walker House.
18 According to the VA Center for Women Veterans
19 in Washington, 3 percent or 6,000 nationally,
20 women veterans are homeless. Using these
21 statistics, Philadelphia may have as many as
22 115 on the streets. And if we look at data
23 from the VA on pilot programs they have, it is
24 very interesting and startling, in fact, that
25 of all US women, those who served in the

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2 military are overall 3 times more likely to be
3 homeless. Further studies are looking at this
4 investigation.

5 We've invested in a system so that
6 we can help the City in coordinating their
7 knowledge of the tracking of veterans in the
8 system. Partnerships, of course, are very,
9 very important, and the Center has reached
10 into local agencies, the City and the VA.
11 Without coordination of available resources,
12 as you well know, the homeless will never
13 achieve full advantage of the work that we do.

14 Reflecting on the progress of
15 Philadelphia, it has come a long way over the
16 last few years. In 1997 when we first sought
17 a grant, the City of Philadelphia thought they
18 had about 6 percent homeless veterans in their
19 population. And today, that certainly has
20 advanced the cause moving forward to 25 to 30
21 percent in their recognition and services that
22 they provide.

23 I've spoken to the commitment of our
24 agency in the work that we do in the life
25 situation of homeless veterans. This is in

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2 part attested to by the 20-year commitment we
3 made when we were awarded our first HUD grant
4 in 1996. As a partner with the City in this
5 work, as with many, many other non-profits, we
6 place great confidence in the City's
7 commitment to us and supporting us in the
8 programs that we have.

9 Our partnership with the City has
10 been enforced over many years, and we look
11 forward to continuing it in active
12 participation in the consolidated effort of
13 pressing forward. Mr. Hess has always been
14 open to us. His doors has always been -- he
15 has always been available for a contribution.
16 And we are prepared to do whatever we need to
17 to help the homeless veterans in this City.

18 On behalf of the Philadelphia
19 Multi-Service Education Center, my executive
20 director, I'd like to thank you for not only
21 having this hearing, but for all the energy
22 and advocacy and the work that you do in the
23 homeless arena in this City which you have
24 done for many, many, many, many years. And we
25 certainly, certainly thank you for the help

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2 that you have given to us.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

4 Thank you very much.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you

7 for all you do. Certainly, helping these

8 homeless vets is an absolutely wonderful

9 program.

10 Brenda Cooper Cutz (ph), would you

11 stand up?

12 Brenda Cooper Cutz introduced me to
13 the program, told me about it, and invited us
14 down at the lighthouse location the first year
15 we attended. So we thank Brenda. She's part
16 of Horizon House and was working with many of
17 this client base and she kind of introduced
18 us. And so we say thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, Brenda, if I
21 may take a moment, reminds me of the many
22 people in this City that started working on
23 this issue very, very young. I think she was
24 3 or 4 years old. And we look forward to
25 ending homelessness before Brenda retires,

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2 because she's not allowed to retire before
3 that.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely.

5 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, one of the
6 first things Mayor Street asked me to do
7 almost four years ago was to take a look at a
8 program that he had seen in New York City
9 called Ready Willing and Able. Ready Willing
10 and Able to work, a program where men could go
11 who had histories of drug abuse or substance
12 abuse, had histories of some criminal
13 violations and have had a tough road to go, a
14 program where those folks could come in, work
15 every day, become proud of the work they're
16 doing, remain clean, and end up with
17 good-paying jobs, living in a community, and
18 becoming tax-paying citizens once again.

19 I looked at that program, and then
20 we decided we wanted to do it. We had to have
21 a similar program here in Philadelphia. So I
22 asked Richard Schaffer, who I'll ask to stand
23 over here for just a moment --

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. HESS: I asked Richard to figure

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2 out how to find a building, get renovated and
3 get it open so we could start our own Ready
4 Willing and Able Program and not to take a day
5 longer than six months; and he did it. He
6 deserves a great deal of credit for this
7 program getting up and running, but it's the
8 men in this program that deserve tremendous
9 credit for the great work they do every day,
10 every day at Fairmount Park, every day at
11 Woodstock, every day at Stenton Family Manor
12 to make life a little better for people living
13 within our shelter system and every day again
14 on the Parkway and in the park to make the
15 quality of life in our City a little better
16 for all.

17 And so it is with a great deal of
18 pride that I invite Kate Houston, again, with
19 your permission, and a couple of Ready Willing
20 and Able residents to join us here at the
21 table to provide some testimony.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
24 very much.

25 I've certainly visited this program,

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2 too, on several occasions. And it is
3 absolutely an outstanding program.

4 Welcome and thanks for your
5 patience.

6 MS. HOUSTON: Thank you. And thanks
7 for your continued support, Councilwoman and
8 Rob Hess and Richard Schaffer. I always bring
9 a big audience with me everywhere I go, so
10 thanks to you guys, too.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Let's have
12 them stand. Everybody can see you. We
13 welcome you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. HOUSTON: Ready Willing and
16 Able, as most of us know, is a residential
17 work training program located at 12th and
18 Bainbridge Streets. That's where Richard
19 Schaffer decided we would be, and it's a
20 beautiful facility. We're changing people's
21 minds everyday about many things, and one
22 thing is what a home should look like. And we
23 take care of our place. It's like nothing
24 you've ever seen.

25 Right now, we're serving 70 men in

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2 our residential facility. By January of 2005,
3 we hope to be serving 10 more clients through
4 a non-residential component of our program by
5 partnering with a residential clean and sober
6 program. We hope that we can expand our work
7 opportunity and share with more formerly
8 homeless and homeless men in Philadelphia.

9 Clients we serve are mainly from
10 Ridge Avenue Shelter, but also come from
11 Outley House. We are certainly a preferred
12 location for men who are exiting the prison
13 system and criminal justice system. Every
14 meeting I go to for ex-offenders, I hear Ready
15 Willing and Able on the lips of case managers
16 who want the best for their clients.

17 Our community improvement project --
18 these guys in blue are actually coming in from
19 work. They've had a very long day.

20 And thanks for your patience, guys.

21 They are doing street cleaning and
22 landscaping in North Philadelphia, South
23 Philadelphia, Fairmount Park, across the City,
24 City shelters and, Councilwoman Blackwell,
25 beginning in December also in West

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2 Philadelphia.

3 What does that mean to the guys?

4 That means that they're giving back often
5 times to the neighborhoods that they came
6 from. They're not cleaning in Center City
7 probably because Center City District's
8 cleaning there. But also because it's a
9 meaningful give-back experience for them. A
10 lot of our guys are from North and West
11 Philadelphia.

12 What does that mean for the rest of
13 the community? It means that these guys in
14 blue are fantastic visibility and draws
15 valuable attention to the homeless community
16 in Philadelphia. I dare say the hard work
17 that they're doing changing people's minds
18 every day about the capacity of a homeless
19 man. The fact of the matter is, when given
20 the opportunity, these men will work hard.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. HOUSTON: Our founder developed
23 the Ready Willing and Able formula by doing
24 exactly what we are doing today, he listened
25 to the men and women who were experiencing

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2 homelessness. To this day, the men in our
3 program are our program's ambassadors and they
4 are the best representatives of our program.

5 Carnell Stanley is a graduate of
6 Ready Willing and Able. He's currently
7 working at a shelter here in Philadelphia.
8 He's part of the younger generation of
9 homeless men in Philadelphia. He was born
10 into a lifestyle. And unlike some of the
11 older guys, like some of the vets, he's never
12 been married and had a happy family and a
13 full-time job and nothing to look back on to
14 aim for. So this was all very new to him.

15 And Michael Brooks, he and I sat
16 down on Friday as I was leaving the office and
17 I asked to talk to him for a few minutes about
18 what he wanted to say today. We only had a
19 little while to talk, and he said, "Hey, Kate,
20 if you really want to know what I have to say,
21 here's my book," and he puts down on the table
22 about 300 pages of typed thoughts, theories
23 and reflections on the issue and circumstances
24 surrounding homelessness.

25 And I'm very proud to introduce you

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2 to both of them today. Ready Willing and Able
3 is an integral and committed partner in the
4 10-year plan to end homelessness, and we are
5 very pleased to be here today.

6 Carnell, do you want to start?

7 MR. STANLEY: Good evening. My name
8 is Carnell Stanley. I'm a graduate of Ready
9 Willing and Able.

10 Ms. Blackwell, I'd like to thank you
11 for this opportunity to share my story. I
12 hope it will help you to understand where some
13 formerly homeless men are coming from and how
14 valuable we can be to this important mission
15 of ending homelessness in Philadelphia.

16 I knew the last time that I was in
17 prison I wasn't going straight back to where I
18 was. I went to Ready Willing and Able after
19 prison because I didn't want to go to a
20 shelter and I didn't need to go to a recovery
21 house. After three and a half years clean in
22 prison, I really didn't need anymore recovery.
23 After Recovery House, I would have had four
24 and a half years clean, but nothing else, no
25 savings, no training. Ready Willing and Able

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2 sounded good because I knew when I left there,
3 I would be secure.

4 Lots of people leaving prison have
5 the best intentions and really want to change.
6 I know how many times I thought I was ready to
7 turn my life around, but I would go back to
8 the neighborhood and think to myself, "I'm a
9 convicted felon, I have no job skills, I have
10 five children to take care of," so I'd hold
11 out for like a week or two, but I still had
12 the problems that I had when I left. And
13 things start building up and you get kicked
14 out from where you're staying and you get
15 comfortable with what you already know. The
16 pressure is heavy and you think, "let me just
17 get back to the corner." So I would start
18 dealing again and relieve the pressure and get
19 some money to my kids and their mother. I
20 really wasn't thinking about the family of the
21 guy that was standing next to me and that
22 mother that I just served. I would just get
23 comfortable all over again.

24 And it's not normal, but it used to
25 feel so normal to me. I was born in this

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2 life-style. Crack was normal. Prison was
3 daily. Dealing was normal. People shooting
4 up around you, all this was normal to me. I
5 never had a full-time 9 to 5 job, a wife, a
6 house. I knew there was something to look
7 forward to, but unlike some older guys, I had
8 never experienced it before.

9 Last year, I had graduated Ready
10 Willing and Able, and I have a full-time job
11 at a homeless shelter. I'm currently on my
12 own, independent living. Reading Willing and
13 Able helped me deal with the issues that I ran
14 from time and time again when I was released
15 for prison.

16 For 10 months I lived at Ready
17 Willing and Able, worked at RWA, and got my
18 life straightened out at RWA. I set goals
19 with my case manager, work 35 hours a week in
20 a park with the Community Improvement Project,
21 and then later as a security guard at a front
22 desk. Convicted felon as a security guard.

23 I gained work experience I never had
24 before. I saved my money. I found a job
25 doing something I'm good at and something I'm

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2 proud of. When I go home to my neighborhood
3 in South Philly, I tell them I work in a
4 homeless shelter. I'm around homeless people
5 all day, and I love it.

6 Ready Willing and Able is the only
7 shelter I ever lived in, so I'm learning a lot
8 about how people get by in the system and why
9 they stay in the shelter when they do.

10 At my job, everybody can get high.
11 There's little motivation to leave if you can
12 stay there and get high. I know that we need
13 shelters where people can go when they don't
14 want to stop using, but it's hard to help
15 them. I think it's motivating for people who
16 are using to be around other homeless people
17 who are clean. But then that's a double-edged
18 sword because the guy that's clean has to stay
19 strong. The guy that's clean has a hard time
20 staying clean and in that environment.

21 Right now, I'm sponsoring two kids
22 where I'm from in South Philly. They watch
23 me, they see me going to these meetings. See,
24 when you using, you don't consider yourself an
25 addict. It's normal to be smoking all the

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2 time and taking pills all the time. But they
3 see I'm not doing that. They start to think
4 maybe it's not normal, and that's the
5 attraction. They knew me. They look up to me
6 because they knew me from when I was out
7 there. For me to come from where I come from
8 and not preach at them and Bible thump them or
9 NA thump them but just ask them, "What's up?
10 You want to go to a meeting?" That means a
11 lot. The same way it did to me when I heard
12 some older fellows from my neighborhood say
13 that they were scared in a meeting. To hear
14 some real emotional stuff, to see like it's
15 okay to be you, that's what I give the guys in
16 the shelter.

17 I think I treat the guys different
18 in the shelter than the people who work there
19 who's never been on the streets, who's never
20 used, never been in a situation. In a sense,
21 it's like a sense of knowing. Some of these
22 dudes I know personally. I shared something
23 with them. I heard their stories, and I know
24 where they came from. Some of them are old
25 enough to be my father and grandfather. Like

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2 it's an older guy who comes in so drunk the
3 night before he can't even walk. I know
4 firsthand at 5 o'clock when it's time to wake
5 him up that he can't sweep a mop without his
6 head pounding. I know firsthand. And it's
7 always amazing when this guy who's old enough
8 to be my grandfather asks me, "How do you do
9 it? How do you stay clean? How do you get
10 another day?"

11 There are a few other guys at Ready
12 Willing and Able that graduated and who work
13 at shelters now. It's not only door opening
14 for us, but it keeps us dreaming. One RWA
15 graduate works with me now at the shelter and
16 he remembers spending two years in a shelter
17 like the one we work. He said it didn't
18 matter to him, he didn't care, it was normal.
19 And now, every day when he comes to work, he's
20 grateful to know and be reminded that he's one
21 step away. And I know I'm one step away too.
22 I could light up right now or be where they
23 are just like that. It takes just one step
24 and I'm off, complete switch up, right on cue.
25 And that scares me.

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2 My job is one of the best things
3 that could happen. I'm doing what I already
4 know how to do. I have knowledge of it. I'm
5 sharing my experience. I feel like I'm doing
6 something positive. But when it's time to
7 move on, I'd like to go school. That's where
8 I'm at right now. Not just for people, but
9 for me. RWA helped me get this far now and
10 I'm getting ready to take another step ahead.

11 Thank you for letting me share my
12 experience.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
15 It was excellent. We thank you. We know it
16 took courage. We appreciate you writing all
17 of that and sharing your life with us. Thank
18 you. And we're always here for you. I'm
19 right down the hall, as I've said, in 408.
20 We're always there for you.

21 And thank all of you for willing to
22 come out west, too. We need you out there,
23 too. Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. HOUSTON: I'd just like to point

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2 out an interesting thing that's going on in
3 the system that we don't always take time to
4 celebrate. But there's this natural
5 mentorship. People are graduating from work
6 training programs and then going back to
7 shelters. Not only is it a natural career
8 path or an opening, like Carnell said, but it
9 feels good to know, to be experienced and to
10 share and to help other people through that.

11 At Ready Willing and Able, we try to
12 hire as many graduates as we can to help the
13 new guys through the program. But it's going
14 on across the City. And I think it should be
15 celebrated and I hope that we consider that
16 component of the system when we look at a
17 10-year plan.

18 Michael.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Is that
20 Brooks, Michael Brooks?

21 MR. BROOKS: Yes.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That's my
23 maiden name, so we've got to look into that,
24 Mr. Hess.

25 (Laughter.)

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2 MR. BROOKS: I want to thank
3 everyone for being here and taking time out to
4 listen to all the concerns.

5 I want everyone to visualize, you're
6 going throughout your day and it's at the end
7 of your day. You're feeling good because you
8 accomplished all the tasks you set out to
9 accomplish that day. You're on your way home.
10 You're walking down the street, then the
11 inevitable happens. A man comes up to you and
12 says, "Do you have any change to spare?"

13 Normally, we just keep walking
14 ignoring that person. Most of us don't
15 realize that person is a confused person.
16 That person don't have any sense of direction.
17 That person don't have any hope.

18 Well, I was that person. My name is
19 Michael Brooks, and I'm currently a trainee at
20 Ready Willing and Able where I plan to
21 graduate within six months with a full-time
22 job, independent housing, and most
23 importantly, I'll be believing in myself
24 again.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. BROOKS: My story is, me and
3 mother had a rocky relationship. I never had
4 any children, so no one was depending upon me
5 and I wasn't depending upon no one. Towards
6 the end of my mother's life, our relationship
7 got a little better. But throughout that time
8 growing up, I always felt it was me in this
9 world all by myself. So I never really had no
10 sense of belonging, and that created a sense
11 of loneliness and all types of voids that came
12 within me. So I started doing things I wanted
13 to do to try to ease that pain and forget
14 about that pain. I starting drinking. I
15 started hanging out. In doing that, I became
16 frustrated because my life wasn't becoming the
17 way I wanted it to become and I wasn't doing
18 the things I should be doing to make it become
19 the way I wanted it to be. So to try to
20 forget about the frustration, I would start
21 drinking again, I would start doing drugs.
22 And that cycle persisted and it developed into
23 an addiction.

24 Now, the question may be, just
25 because people have issues and people are

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2 going through things, do that mean they have
3 to become homeless? Maybe, and maybe not.
4 The point is, when you're dealing with issues,
5 some people have a tendency to try to cover up
6 those issues like I did. I didn't want to
7 face them issues. I was in denial about those
8 issues. So those issues persisted and
9 manifested themselves in other ways, and other
10 ways were the drug addictions and there are
11 many other forms. It can be gambling, it can
12 be excessive work, it can be shopping,
13 overeating, and those in a self-destructive
14 behavior. Those are the underlying issues
15 that cause addictions.

16 But before a person becomes
17 homeless, they're not happy with their life
18 for one reason for another. And it doesn't
19 matter, it's just a matter of time before a
20 person end up on the street because he didn't
21 have the coping skills. He didn't have the
22 support system. And when you don't have those
23 things in place, then you tend to act in
24 self-destructive ways. And because of the
25 self-destructive ways and you see your life as

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2 becoming unmanageable, you have a tendency to
3 think, well, I don't deserve good things. So
4 when good things start happening, you sabotage
5 it.

6 When a homeless man comes to a
7 service provider, the way things are set up
8 now, the first thing we say to him is, "Let's
9 tackle your addiction. Let's get a job." But
10 I believe first you have to get hope into that
11 person. You have to encourage that person to
12 believe in they-self again. You have to
13 figure out -- help that person figure out what
14 they want to do with their life. Then those
15 symptoms, the drug abuse, the alcohol abuse,
16 the violence, the underlying problem, once a
17 person starts believing in himself again, I
18 believe those things will go by themselves.

19 From what I've seen in the shelter
20 system, mostly people just don't have time.
21 They locate you and say, "Here's your bed.
22 Wake-up time is at 5 o'clock. You must leave
23 the building. Take your belongings with you."

24 Most shelters are filthy. After
25 being depressed, feeling reject, being

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2 isolated from mainstream society, being
3 isolated from your family, from your friends,
4 going into a place like that really becomes
5 depressing. The filthiness, the odor, people
6 talking rude to you, they don't take time out
7 to talk with you, to encourage you, to find
8 out what's going on. People have a tendency
9 to say, why even try.

10 Being homeless, you have no sense of
11 direction already. Then you're at a place
12 like that and people looking down on you and
13 talking down on you, it's almost "Why even
14 bother? I already have no hope. I already
15 believe that my life became so unmanageable it
16 can't be fixed." Come into a place like this,
17 a place that's supposed to help you, it's even
18 more depressing.

19 The shelter system, as we know it,
20 needs to be abolished. We need to create a
21 place where people can go, leave their
22 belongings, a clean facility, a place where
23 they can get rest, a place where people can
24 come in to encourage them, to talk to them,
25 find out what they want to do with their life.

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2 Because being in that addiction, you lose a
3 part of yourself. You forget your hobbies,
4 you forget your interests, and you have to
5 relearn all of those things again once you
6 start the recovery process.

7 And we also need to be held
8 accountable. Going into a shelter system, a
9 new shelter system, a clean facility, they
10 should be drug tested. They should be guided
11 in doing positive things with their time,
12 taking all those energies and doing positive
13 things with them so they can be held
14 accountable, give them pride. Because it's
15 funny, we think we have to help a homeless man
16 get a job, but we never have to help a
17 homeless man get money for drugs. We don't
18 really have to help a homeless man find work.
19 He knows all of that. Most of the time a
20 homeless man had a family, had a job, had a
21 car, had a house, they had all of those
22 things. They didn't lose the ability to
23 achieve those things again; they lost their
24 ability to believe in themselves.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. BROOKS: What do I think about a
3 10-year plan to end homelessness in
4 Philadelphia?

5 The only way we will end
6 homelessness is to get the people to believe
7 in themselves. You don't have to teach them
8 how to make money, how to survive, you don't
9 have to teach them any of that. What you do
10 have to teach them is that there's a better
11 way to life, I'm willing to help you see that
12 better way. It doesn't necessarily have to be
13 someone who's already been down that road. It
14 could be someone who just cares, who has
15 empathy for that person, who has compassion
16 for that person, who takes the time to listen
17 to that person. Because, in my opinion,
18 homelessness is not an economic problem.
19 Sure, affordable housing and livable wages
20 would help, but 9 out of 10 times, they
21 already had that. They already the skills to
22 achieve that. We have to get to the part
23 where they believe that they can achieve it,
24 to encourage them, get them thinking about
25 "who are you? What do you do want to do with

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2 your life? What steps can you do to help make
3 that dream become a reality?"

4 Believing in yourself and thinking
5 positive, showing them how to do constructive
6 things, showing them how to live again; I
7 think that's part of a successful program.

8 The thing that separates Ready
9 Willing and Able from all the other programs I
10 have seen, particularly in Cleveland and
11 Pittsburgh, is that they believe in the guys.
12 They encourage the guys. We have a clean
13 facility, not like a shelter, where you can
14 live and you can feel good about yourself,
15 about working. At the same time, it's
16 teaching you how to structure your time. It's
17 teaching you good habits, going to bed on
18 time, waking up on time, how to deal with
19 other personalities, how to deal with life
20 when it shows up, how to deal with them
21 problems, them unresolved issues of conflict
22 we all experience.

23 I'm learn these skills and coping
24 with them through the help of my case worker,
25 things I need for life. At RWA, you're just

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2 not dealing with "here's a place to sleep for
3 the night." You're dealing with the a person
4 as an individual. "I'm going to encourage
5 you. I'm going to show you how to manage your
6 time. We're going to develop positive habits
7 that will help you on the outside world in
8 mainstream society."

9 And that's the thing that separates
10 RWA. That's what makes it an excellent
11 program. It allows the man to keep his
12 dignity and have pride in himself. It allows
13 a man to help him achieve his dreams, to get
14 him to dream again. The environment of Ready
15 Willing and Able is a clean facility. It
16 nurtures the possibility that man saying,
17 "Hey, I can do it again. I can start living
18 again."

19 The other thing about RWA is it has
20 a excellent activities program where they take
21 the men to sports games, they take the men to
22 concerts and shows, not because I think it's a
23 waste of money or "How do they go to those
24 places? I'm working 9 to 5, I can't afford to
25 go to them places." Well, they earned that

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2 right to do those things. It's teaching them
3 that there's a positive way to spend your time
4 other than running the streets and going to
5 bars and hanging out and doing destructive
6 things.

7 I spend a lot of time thinking,
8 writing, and sharing my theories on
9 homelessness, and I look forward to working
10 with you to achieve this ambitious goal for
11 Philadelphia.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
14 very much. We thank you very much.

15 It comes back to that old poem about
16 love that says, "There's no difficulty that
17 enough love won't conquer, no problem that
18 enough love will not solve."

19 We thank you. And belief in one's
20 self is loving one's self, am I correct?

21 All right, we've got to love one
22 another. We're all we have.

23 Thank you very much.

24 (Applause.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Let me note

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2 before Mr. Hess speaks that we have the
3 testimony from Professional Healthcare
4 Institute. The stenographer will record it
5 and it will go into the record as if this
6 testimony was made.

7 (See attached testimony.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We thank
9 Jean Bumb (ph) and Commissioner Harvey Portner
10 who was here. As many of you know, Jean Bumb
11 does a fantastic job. She's one of my dearest
12 friends. You know, when you're so committed,
13 you interact so much. She and Brenda Cooper
14 Cutz and I have been working together for a
15 very, very long time and are certainly
16 committed to you. Thank you.

17 Mr. Hess.

18 MR. HESS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

19 We want to thank all the men for
20 doing such great work at Ready Willing and
21 Able. We look forward to continuing to hear
22 the wonderful stories of folks that have
23 graduated from that program.

24 We have a number of distinguished
25 federal partners with us here today and also

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2 Dennis Culhane from Penn, all of which we need
3 to hear from, want to hear from, look forward
4 to hearing from.

5 We have one other group to hear from
6 first. The day has gone long, as you know.
7 We appreciate everyone's patience that's still
8 here.

9 One of the great things about this
10 issue at this time in this City under the
11 leadership of this Mayor and this Majority
12 Leader is that this hearing could go on for a
13 month and we would hear just incredibly
14 inspiring stories from all across this City of
15 great work that's being done.

16 And there's no one right door or one
17 right program for anyone. Ready Willing and
18 Able certainly works for many of our men in
19 this City. Housing First works for many men
20 and women in this City that nothing else ever
21 worked for. And we are just so proud, and I
22 think it's appropriate and I'm pleased that
23 our federal partners are here to hear about
24 our New Keys and Home First Program. And
25 David Dunbeck will make his way to the witness

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2 table with his folks to briefly review that
3 program with us.

4 But let me just say while our
5 federal partners are here that these Home
6 First programs would not have been possible
7 without new dollars from the federal
8 government. And we appreciate that so very,
9 very much.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
12 very much for your patience. We're glad you
13 are here and look forward to your testimony.
14 Thank you.

15 These are all my friends with whom I
16 interact regularly.

17 MR. DUNBECK: Good afternoon,
18 Councilwoman Blackwell.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
20 afternoon.

21 MR. DUNBECK: My name is David
22 Dunbeck, and I'm the Director of Homeless
23 Services at Horizon House. I'm pleased to be
24 here today to speak to you about the
25 importance of continued funding for services

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2 to homeless men, women, and children in
3 Philadelphia.

4 As you know, Horizon House was
5 founded in 1952 and has grown into one of the
6 largest behavioral health services
7 organizations in Philadelphia. Horizon House
8 uses the principles of psychosocial
9 rehabilitation to provide comprehensive
10 treatment and residential services to adults
11 and families with mental illness, mental
12 retardation, and substance abuse problems,
13 many of those whom are homeless.

14 Each year, the agency's clinical and
15 rehabilitation specialists provide
16 community-based residential, vocational,
17 educational case management, outpatient and
18 partial hospital services to over 3,000
19 individuals. Horizon House's services are
20 consumer-centered and are designed to assist
21 the individuals served to live as
22 independently as possible within the
23 community.

24 There are many reasons that I am
25 proud to be here today. First, I am proud to

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2 represent the 70 hard-working and dedicated
3 employees of Horizon Houses Homeless Services
4 Division.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. DUNBECK: As you may recall,
7 Horizon House has been providing homeless
8 services to homeless individuals since 1984
9 when we participated in the Center City
10 Project, Philadelphia's first effort to
11 organize the service system for homeless
12 people with mental health needs. Since then,
13 Horizon House has helped thousands of homeless
14 individuals with behavioral health needs
15 regain control over their lives and become
16 contributing members of their communities.
17 Today, Horizon House's nine homeless service
18 programs assist individuals and families to
19 become progressively more self-sufficient.

20 Second, I am also proud to be here
21 as a partner with you, the City of
22 Philadelphia, and other homeless service
23 providers to bring an end to homelessness in
24 Philadelphia. Together, we have made
25 significant strides in reducing homelessness

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2 in the City in the last 5 to 10 years. A big
3 part of Philadelphia's success lies with the
4 high level of collaboration that has existed
5 among service providers and between providers
6 and funders. We must make sure that this high
7 level of collaboration continues. We cannot
8 tolerate an environment where the public
9 sector is competing against the private sector
10 or family providers are competing against
11 single providers or homeless children are
12 being pitted against the chronically homeless.

13 In an environment of ever-shrinking
14 resources, every dollar that goes toward any
15 part of the homeless problem must be
16 celebrated by all as part of the solution.
17 Only together can we continue toward our
18 ultimate goal of ending homelessness. And
19 this won't be possible without maintaining or
20 increasing the City's strong support for all
21 parts of the homeless system.

22 Of the over \$5 million homeless
23 services budget at Horizon House, over 43
24 percent comes directly from City contracts.
25 In the last year, you have helped us provide

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2 outreach engagement services in the streets of
3 Center City and West Philadelphia during the
4 day and overnight. This funding brought
5 needed emergency services to hundreds of our
6 vulnerable citizens on the streets. You
7 helped us to start Philadelphia first two
8 Housing First programs which Rob referred to,
9 Home First and New Keys. Working
10 collaboratively with 1260 Housing Development
11 Corporation, the Philadelphia Health
12 Management Corporation, and the Veterans
13 Administration and the City, these programs
14 have provided immediate access to housing and
15 intensive support services to chronically
16 homeless individuals who have lived on our
17 city streets and in our shelters for years.
18 In the last year, over 65 chronically homeless
19 individuals have successfully received housing
20 and regained a place in our society.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. DUNBECK: You also helped us to
23 provide transitional housing and support
24 services to 80 homeless families with
25 behavioral health needs who had been living in

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2 the shelter system. This program called
3 Prepare is the largest transitional housing
4 program for families in the City. In the last
5 12 months, 48 of these families successfully
6 moved into permanent housing, ending the pain
7 of homelessness for themselves and their
8 children.

9 You also helped us with our other
10 programs, our Homeless Intervention Program
11 and our Support to Achieve Self-sufficiency
12 Transitional Housing Programs and you
13 supported our drug and alcohol support
14 services in the shelter system where we now
15 can provide assessment and access to drug
16 treatment for hundreds of homeless men and
17 women each year. All of these programs work
18 to end homelessness, and they must not be cut.
19 In fact, now is the time to increase the
20 services we provide.

21 Finally and most importantly, I am
22 proud of the hundreds of homeless individuals
23 and families who come through our doors each
24 year with the hope and determination to
25 stabilize their lives and end their personal

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2 homelessness. Our work as a service provider
3 is to help them make their dreams a reality.
4 They do the really hard work of ending
5 homelessness. Their tenacity and ability to
6 adapt to changing circumstances feed our
7 souls, inspires us, teaches us and guides us.
8 They can clearly articulate to you the
9 importance of funding for homeless programs in
10 Philadelphia than I can. That's why I've
11 asked Anthony Reeves and Patricia Baltimore,
12 two formerly homeless individuals served by
13 Horizon House, to accompany me here today to
14 tell you their personal stories of hope and
15 recovery.

16 In closing, I urge you to maintain
17 or even increase the City's funding for
18 homeless services. With your continued
19 support, there will be many more men and women
20 and children who have success stories like
21 we're about to hear. Thank you very much.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
23 (Applause.)

24 MR. REEVES: Good afternoon, Madam
25 Chairperson.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
3 afternoon.

4 MR. REEVES: My name is Anthony
5 Reeves, and I would like to read something to
6 you.

7 My name is Anthony Reeves. I've
8 been homeless for nine years before Home First
9 entered into my life. That's a miracle. I
10 don't know where I would be if it wasn't for a
11 program called Home First.

12 I have slept on the streets. I've
13 slept in abandoned buildings, anywhere else I
14 could lay my head. Since Home First came in
15 my life, my spirits and my dreams have been
16 renewed. Today, I actually laid my head down
17 in my own apartment and said "It's mine." I
18 don't have to worry about anyone waking me up
19 and telling me to go.

20 Home First saved my life. I don't
21 know where I would end up if it wasn't for
22 Home First. I've slept in shelters, but it's
23 not the same as having your own. So please
24 don't cut the budget on our programs for
25 homeless or any other programs that help

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2 people get on their feet and their own, like
3 me.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. BALTIMORE: I rise first to give
6 honor to God, City Council, and to all who are
7 here.

8 My name is Patricia Baltimore. I am
9 a 48-year-old who was homeless for 2,190 days,
10 for 6 years, to be exact. I was homeless on
11 the streets of Philadelphia, a City in which I
12 was born and raised. My reason for becoming
13 homeless was I went to live with my daughter
14 who is hip hop singer in Germany. I gave up
15 everything and moved to Germany. After a year
16 and a half, I decided not to stay in Germany
17 and came to states. I had to start over. I
18 went into the shelter system and literally
19 into the streets of my city.

20 I rise again today to, hopefully,
21 help you all understand the importance of
22 service to homeless children, women, and men.
23 It is very, very necessary. And I am also
24 here to represent all the homeless people who
25 are still out there and who are too wounded to

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2 stand up here for themselves in light of the
3 serious budget challenges. I pray that
4 support for homeless services continue. I
5 pray that city funding for the homeless is on
6 the very top of the budget list as to not cut
7 funds away to us. I cry to this City, my
8 City, that public support for the services
9 that are already available to us continues.

10 To have a home is not a privilege,
11 something a person should have to earn.
12 Housing is a right. If you never been
13 homeless and do not know what it's like, take
14 a moment one day and close your eyes. Better
15 yet, if all the lights in this building went
16 out at this very moment, let's see how you
17 could get to Market Street and you would know
18 and feel what it's like to be homeless,
19 crawling through the dark.

20 We need the funding for these
21 services. Homeless people don't have
22 flashlights or maps. We need a sense of
23 direction. We have these services and we
24 honestly need them.

25 Try to put yourself in a place where

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2 there is no hope or no sense of protection.

3 No one wants to feel like there is no hope for
4 them. There is definitely a growing need for
5 these programs and more.

6 While I was homeless I fainted a
7 thousand times. While I was unconscious in
8 the hot summer, I couldn't get a drink of
9 water. In the winter, I wore frozen tears on
10 my face. Every muscle, tissue, and cell in my
11 body felt paralyzed in fear. Fear, not afraid
12 of dying; it was the dying while I was living
13 that bothered me. And that's what I was
14 doing, dying while I was living, yet still
15 alive in my own city, the City of Brotherly
16 Love.

17 Earlier this year, I got over that
18 fear. I got over the fear that had me
19 paralyzed for so long. And I started seeking
20 out who helps the homeless. I threw all fear
21 in the trash, because you can't do anything as
22 long as you are afraid of what might happen.
23 Fear makes the problem seem bigger than it may
24 be. Fear freezes the mind, making the
25 challenges seem overwhelming. Fear clouds

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2 opportunities. It erases possibilities and
3 limits the ability to move beyond the place in
4 which the mind is stuck.

5 Last year, I called out the names of
6 those who did not survive homelessness and I
7 decided that I didn't want to die like this.
8 I went to City Council. Ms. Jannie Blackwell,
9 she is the one who helps the homeless. I
10 knocked on her door and it opened. You can
11 feel a person's spirit when you approach them.
12 I felt her spirit, and it was pure and it was
13 genuine.

14 Ms. Blackwell, you already know
15 this: I love you so very much and I'm so
16 very, very even more today proud of you. Ms.
17 Blackwell introduced me to a program called
18 Home First.

19 I do thank God for shelters, but
20 shelters are only temporary relief. Home
21 First is permanent relief. Home First is the
22 solution to homelessness. And to be able to
23 say I'm going home to my own home today is
24 with great gratitude, because I wanted to say
25 I was going home too.

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2 Thank you, Jesus.

3 With Home First any and all thorns
4 from the past are removed. There is nothing
5 to hinder you, and it is nothing. They send
6 you out of the nest and say, "Fly, dear
7 birds." And they send you off with very good
8 wings to fly with, and that's the truth. If
9 you bothered, they won't bother you unless you
10 want to be bothered. They let anybody else
11 bother you either. So I call them my pitbull
12 angels.

13 So, Mr. Hess, I thank God that I
14 could thank you personally.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. BALTIMORE: When you are
17 homeless, you don't trust people and people
18 don't trust the homeless too much either. Mr.
19 Hess was trying to help me, but I didn't trust
20 Mr. Hess. I took an army of people up into
21 Mr. Hess' office. He wasn't there. But I
22 thank God because I'm a warrior. I came
23 through it and I thank God. One thing about
24 it, I reach back to try to give it back. I
25 try to give it back.

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2 I want to thank Marchella who they
3 thought was crazy when she come up here, Dr.
4 Marchella. I'd like to thank Jenny from
5 Project H.O.M.E. who gave me the opportunity
6 to read the names of those who did not survive
7 homelessness. And do remember the homeless
8 during this holiday season. I thank Ms. Letty
9 here from OSHA. Where ever I went for
10 different things with them, I would not clap
11 for OSHA. I didn't like OSHA. I thought they
12 was out to hurt me. And she knew it. But you
13 know what I thank God for? Everybody that
14 knows me knows that Ms. Baltimore kept
15 fighting with intelligence. You know, they
16 throw that mental health on me, but whatever.
17 I'm like okay. But you know what I'm saying,
18 I knew how to maintain some calmness, you know
19 what I'm saying, present myself. And I thank
20 God. But I like you today. We made up today.

21 It's been a lot of people that has
22 been a stairstep getting to where, you know.
23 And if I had any dream -- like I am in my
24 apartment eight months, eight months.

25 (Applause.)

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2 THE WITNESS: If I had any dream, I
3 wish I could give an honor party, but it's
4 just so many people to honor I don't have it
5 like that.

6 But, Ms. Blackwell, I thank you so
7 very, very much. You really gave me -- like I
8 used to say, I just need a chance, just a
9 chance, just a chance. Because a hundred
10 people, a hundred ways. Everything is not for
11 everybody. And they want to get everybody
12 under the same umbrellas or whatever. You
13 have to hear the person because they really
14 speak. I notice with some of these programs
15 -- I want the funding to be there because we
16 need it, we need it. We're going to need it
17 more with the way the economy is going this
18 minute, because some people could go home
19 today and find out they're homeless now. You
20 understand?

21 I'm just so very -- I don't have
22 anything, but I'm going to draw you a picture
23 out of some construction paper because it's
24 going to be special from my heart. But I want
25 to thank very much, Ms. Blackwell.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, we have
4 heard all day from local providers and people
5 that have experienced homelessness in our
6 community. We have now one of the, I think,
7 true national experts with respect to homeless
8 data and understanding that data, making sense
9 of it to make policy recommendations, one of
10 our local scholars from the University of
11 Pennsylvania, Dennis Culhane.

12 MR. CULHANE: Good evening,
13 Councilwoman.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
15 evening. Glad to have you.

16 MR. CULHANE: Thank you.
17 You're a true hero to the people of
18 Philadelphia and we're very grateful that
19 you're our representative from West
20 Philadelphia also.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
22 God is good. Thank you. My honor.

23 MR. CULHANE: I'm going to be brief,
24 but I do want to make a general statement of
25 support for the City of Philadelphia and its

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2 programs that have proven so vital to the
3 lives of so many people.

4 As a researcher, I'm grateful that
5 the City has made its data available to us at
6 the University of Pennsylvania to try to
7 understand the problem and to inform a
8 national discussion, in part, based on that
9 information. And what we have learned is that
10 about 1 percent of Philadelphia goes to the
11 shelter system each year; 5 percent of the
12 poor people in this City, 10 percent of the
13 poor African-American children in this City,
14 and about 20 percent of the poor
15 African-American men in their 30s and 40s are
16 homeless and use the shelter system each year.
17 So the numbers are pretty staggering in terms
18 of their impact.

19 Fortunately, most people do not stay
20 homeless forever. They are assisted by these
21 programs and the vast majority of them leave
22 the public shelter system and they don't come
23 back. They leave assisted by the very
24 programs that the City funds, along with state
25 and other federal resources.

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2 However, there is a group of people
3 who are homeless for long periods of time and
4 for whom emergency assistance and shelter is
5 not enough. About 10 percent of our single
6 adult homeless in Philadelphia are chronically
7 homeless. Research that we did here has, in
8 fact, helped to inform a national discussion
9 with federal leadership which you're going to
10 hear from in a moment, about creating a
11 priority for ending chronic homelessness.

12 We know that these folks are using
13 about half of the emergency shelter system
14 resources in the single adult system and that
15 they're also using a lot of emergency room
16 resources. They end up hospitalized and they
17 end up in our jails and prisons at very high
18 rates. And all total, when we did a study a
19 few years ago, we found that they used about
20 an average of \$40,000 a year in these kinds of
21 services, making it imminently more wise to
22 place these folks in permanent housing.
23 Housing programs -- I saw one of the materials
24 that was provided for Council today showing
25 that the per diem for a place like Project

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2 H.O.M.E. would run at a cost of about 12,000
3 or \$11,000 a year as opposed \$40,000 a year
4 which we spend just to have someone remain
5 homeless.

6 I know the City is facing a big
7 problem, particularly in the last few years,
8 with regard homeless families. The demand has
9 been going up in the shelter system. Once
10 again, research we were able to do using
11 Philadelphia's data found that, in fact, if
12 you look over the last 12 years, when
13 unemployment goes up, shelter admissions go
14 up. When housing costs go up, shelter
15 admissions go up. And we happen to be in a
16 time in the last three years where both of
17 those things have been occurring at the same
18 time, a real a double whammy for poor
19 families, all the more pointing out how
20 critical it is to have these City programs and
21 services.

22 I do look forward to a future. I've
23 had a wonderful relationship with Rob Hess. I
24 think you're blessed with very, very good
25 leadership here in the City, someone who's

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2 brought a lot of vision to the system, some
3 great management skills, and appreciates the
4 fact that good data is going to drive even
5 better policy in the future.

6 And I think with regard to the
7 homeless families, I look forward to
8 opportunities in the future to do more
9 prevention with these homeless families, to
10 get resources to them so that they can avoid
11 evictions, or if they do lose their housing
12 that they can get relocated immediately
13 without having to go through a costly stay in
14 the shelter system.

15 I know the City's embarked on a
16 10-year plan to end homelessness. I'm very
17 hopeful about that plan. Like all of these
18 plans, it is ambitious, but I believe that
19 with the right kind of local leadership like
20 yours and with the Mayor and others that the
21 opportunity is there to achieve some very
22 significant gains and to reduce homelessness
23 in the City of Philadelphia.

24 This is one of the few cities that
25 folks in the federal government and elsewhere

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2 can go around and applaud and say, if you do
3 focus your resources on the street homeless,
4 you can have an impact. You can have
5 sustained impact over time, but it takes
6 housing and it takes that kind of commitment.
7 And I think our City deserves to be credited
8 and lauded for those accomplishments.

9 Thank you very much.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
12 also for your research over the years. You're
13 known city-wide as an authority in this area,
14 and I'm glad that you're from my district and
15 we're proud of the work that you do. Thank
16 you.

17 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, with all due
18 respect, I have seen you all over this City in
19 every district. I'm not sure which district
20 is really yours.

21 With that said, Madam Chair, the
22 last year and a half or so I have had the
23 distinct honor and privilege of, at the
24 invitation of the man I'm going to introduce
25 next, visiting cities all across this country.

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2 And I have to tell you that I have never seen
3 before the kind of energy around ending the
4 disgrace of homelessness in the state houses
5 and city halls that I see today all across
6 this country. And it's largely because, I
7 believe, of the man I'm going to introduce.
8 He is a true visionary and I think hero to
9 people who experience homelessness across this
10 country.

11 Now, there are some that will try to
12 pit family populations against folks that meet
13 the federal definition of chronic
14 homelessness. I suggest that we really
15 shouldn't go down that path, because the man
16 I'm going to introduced I've come to know,
17 I've come to call a friend, I've come to
18 understand how passionate and intelligent and
19 reasoned he is in this area and he cares about
20 all people. He could have been anywhere else
21 in America today, and he knew it was going to
22 be late in the day and that we were going to
23 run long and the gallery would draw thin by
24 this time in the day, but although he could
25 have been anywhere else in this great country,

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2 he chose to be here at this place at this
3 time; and I think we owe him our thanks for
4 that.

5 Madam Chair, it's my privilege and
6 honor to introduce to you the United States
7 Interagency Council Executive Director and the
8 Presidents's point person on homelessness in
9 this country, Phillip Mangano.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome,
12 and thank you so much for your patience.
13 Thank you for staying. I saw you when you
14 came in, and we know it's been a while and we
15 appreciate your commitment, your visit to our
16 City and testifying at this hearing. Thank
17 you so much.

18 MR. MANGANO: Thank you,
19 Councilperson Blackwell for being the
20 initiator of this hearing. And after hearing
21 Rob, I want to say, I accept the nomination,
22 whatever it was to, I accept that nomination.

23 (Laughter.)

24 MR. MANGANO: I want to begin by
25 saying that for the past three years of my

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2 appointment, I've been bragging on
3 Philadelphia all across this country. And
4 I'll tell you I've been bragging about you
5 across the Atlantic as well. I've sent
6 delegations from the West Coast from San Diego
7 and from the middle of our country in Dallas
8 and back to the West Coast, San Francisco and
9 other cities in our country. And recently you
10 had a delegation from London who came to visit
11 to learn what you're doing here in
12 Philadelphia.

13 So let me begin by congratulating
14 your City, your Mayor, you, Madam Chairperson,
15 your Council, Mr. Hess and his outstanding
16 staff for the work that you're doing here in
17 Philadelphia. It's unparalleled in our
18 country. I want you to know that. You should
19 be proud.

20 (Applause.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

22 MR. MANGANO: And I want you to know
23 in Washington, we think of ourselves as being
24 in a partnership with you and we're putting
25 out resources where our rhetoric is. In the

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2 last five years, we've sent over a hundred
3 million dollars to Philadelphia specifically
4 targeted to homeless people. Last year, we
5 sent over \$20 million. And you'll hear more
6 about that from the federal partners who will
7 be testifying in a few moments.

8 Investment, we believe in a visible
9 mensurable quantifiable change that's
10 happening here in your city. We do see the
11 number of chronic homeless people on your
12 streets long term in your shelters.
13 Philadelphia has become the national model to
14 which cities across our country are looking
15 because of the demonstrated results achieved
16 on its streets in the innovative and
17 cost-effective strategies implemented in its
18 planning. Just in new revenues that
19 Philadelphia has received and officials from
20 other cities pilgrimaging here to
21 Philadelphia, I think you've earned enough
22 money to sponsor all of these homeless
23 activities.

24 There have always been many reasons
25 to come to this great city; history, art,

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2 music, sports.

3 And I want you to know off the
4 record I'm a New England Patriots fan and
5 those Pittsburgh Steelers did to our
6 undefeated team what they did to your
7 undefeated team, so we're in solidarity, I
8 want you to know, this week. We're going to
9 get them back; I can tell you that. Nobody
10 here is from Pittsburgh, I trust.

11 (Laughter.)

12 MR. CULHANE: Well, they used to
13 come for your history, your art, your music,
14 your sports. Now pilgrims come here to your
15 city to see how you've made a change on your
16 streets, to learn how your strategies have
17 worked. You deserve to be proud of this
18 effort.

19 In Washington, we're proud of the
20 investment that we've made in the Philadelphia
21 response. Twenty federal agencies partner
22 together, HUD, HSA, VA, SSA, and 16 others,
23 your investment, like our federal one, in the
24 homeless efforts in Philadelphia makes sense,
25 common sense. The resulting quality of life

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2 improvement in your City for everyone, both
3 homeless and housed people, is envied by other
4 communities. Your investment, like ours, is
5 in a management process which has the
6 confidence of political will and the
7 confidence of provider agencies. Your
8 investment, like ours, anticipates a return on
9 investment that is tangible and gets the job
10 done, not only in changed lives but in cost
11 savings in the expensive mainstream health
12 systems.

13 We've long understood the moral and
14 spiritual and quality of life issues related
15 to homelessness. But only recently in the
16 last few years have we understood the economic
17 impact and consequences of homelessness. Dr.
18 Culhane is an initiator of that. But other
19 cities have done their own cost benefits
20 analysis. And one of the best studies in our
21 country is a city that's about the same size
22 as Philadelphia, and I want to briefly
23 summarize their study to indicate the impact,
24 the economic impact; and that City is San
25 Diego.

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2 We all know San Diego. They
3 constantly brag about their 330 days of
4 sunshine a year. They've become a Mecca for
5 tourists, retirees, vacationers, homeless
6 people. And as the numbers increased in the
7 1980s and 1990s, there was a certain
8 assumption in San Diego that they could
9 accommodate that rise in numbers and that,
10 though the numbers rose, it didn't cost the
11 public purse anything. After all, they slept
12 on the beaches, they slept in the parks, they
13 slept on the streets and they begged for their
14 food and drink. The common perception among
15 the public and the public policymakers was
16 this population didn't cost very much.

17 As the number increased, unlike in
18 Philadelphia, as the numbers increased in San
19 Diego, they decided they would test that
20 hypothesis. They engaged the University of
21 California in San Diego to do the study. They
22 followed just 15 chronic street people on the
23 streets of San Diego for 18 months. And what
24 they discovered was the complete opposite of
25 their hypothesis. They learned in that study

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2 that these folk were some of the most
3 expensive people to the public purse in San
4 Diego. They discovered, for example, that
5 those 15 people had nearly 300 entrances into
6 the emergency rooms of the hospitals, taken by
7 ambulance, accompanied by EMTs for
8 multiple-day stays. They noted and researched
9 the random ricocheting of those 15 people into
10 the expensive acute side of the substance
11 abuse and mental health system. They
12 aggregated how much law enforcement
13 interventions were on the street for those 15
14 people and how much it cost for the temporary
15 periods of incarceration.

16 And rather than leaving all those
17 numbers silo-ed, which happens so often, they
18 aggregated all of those numbers. And what
19 they discovered was that those 15 people in
20 the 18 months cost the city and county of San
21 Diego \$3 million, an average of \$200,000 per
22 person. And of course, what the public in San
23 Diego thought was, "We could have rented
24 penthouse condominiums, given servants, and it
25 would have been a less expensive

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2 intervention."

3 So, of course, what they learned was
4 that the old status quo of ad hoc silo-ed
5 crisis interventions was the most expensive
6 and least effective intervention that could be
7 made. And what they further learned, which
8 caused them the most chagrin was this: That
9 after the expenditure of that \$3 million over
10 those 18 months, averaging \$200,000 per
11 person, at the end of the 18 months those
12 people were in the same condition and same
13 situation as they were at the beginning of the
14 18 months. It just didn't work. The results
15 weren't there.

16 So if there's one thing we've
17 learned in the last few years, there's an
18 economic consequence and an economic impact of
19 homelessness. And the work that's been done
20 here in Philadelphia has cost savings probably
21 still uncalculated in terms of the people have
22 been taken off the streets here. So that's to
23 be applauded as well.

24 Across the country, new partnerships
25 have been created. A recognition that no one

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2 level of government can get it done alone, no
3 one sector can get the mission accomplished.
4 We now have 20 federal agencies partnered.
5 Fifty governors have created state interagency
6 councils to mirror the work that we're doing
7 in Washington with the United States
8 Interagency Council to make the resources of
9 the federal government more available and more
10 accessible to homeless people. States are
11 doing that, including your Governor, Governor
12 Rendell.

13 But even that partnership isn't
14 enough. The federal and state government,
15 because on the front lines of these issues is
16 Mayor Menino. He's an old friend of mine,
17 Mayor Menino of Boston. He constantly reminds
18 us that there's no such thing as a national
19 street or a state street, there are only
20 community streets and that's where the issues
21 are. And it's mayors and councils that get
22 their doors knocked on with these issues. So
23 we understood that we needed to involve
24 cities.

25 There are now 168 mayors, county

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2 executives and city managers who have
3 partnered with us in the creation of 10-year
4 plans to end chronic homelessness in their
5 cities. And those 10-year plans are
6 conciliating the private sector. Whether
7 business, non-profit or faith-based, all of
8 them have been re-invigorated in a
9 performance-based, research and data driven
10 plan to get the job done for people
11 experiencing chronic homelessness. And
12 central to those plans, and I trust central to
13 the plan that you're going to develop here in
14 Philadelphia, will be cost benefits analysis
15 and the resultant reinvestment strategies that
16 go with cost benefits analysis.

17 So Philadelphia is working in a
18 partnership, and it's a broad partnership and
19 it's a partnership with the federal government
20 in focussing on chronic homelessness in
21 providing your great staff here in
22 Philadelphia to be part of our national
23 faculty for other cities in a management
24 agenda that prioritizes results in importing
25 and exporting best practices.

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2 Our good friend Rob Hess talks about
3 larceny, the stealing of best ideas from
4 around the country, around the world, and
5 bringing them here to Philadelphia. That's
6 true. He is a larcenist, but he's also a
7 exporter. He exports the good ideas, the
8 innovative solutions that have been developed
9 here in Philadelphia, and that's an exciting
10 prospect for your City. And we appreciate the
11 collaborative style that's been developed in
12 this City to work in league with the federal
13 government to get the job done.

14 I have to say that when I began my
15 job three years ago, I couldn't have picked
16 Rob Hess out of a police lineup, Madam
17 Chairperson. Now he's one of the most
18 influential people in our country on the issue
19 of homelessness. You should be very proud of
20 the work that he and his incomparable staff
21 has done.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. MANGANO: Now, you know on this
24 issue you have a trinity of national
25 influences here, Dennis Culhane, Rob Hess, and

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2 Mary Scullion, who I believe is still on her
3 way here, and many more as you've seen from
4 the testimony. Philadelphia is blessed,
5 blessed many times.

6 Now I would be remiss if I didn't
7 mention another opportunity for Philadelphia
8 and our country. In the President's '05
9 budget, he created a new program called the
10 Samaritan Initiative. And anyone who's
11 familiar with that old story knows what it's
12 about. There are some people in our country
13 who are on the side of the road who are on the
14 street. Some pass by because of indifference,
15 some pass by because they're ignorant, some
16 pass by because they're insulated from the
17 plight of those people. What we're saying
18 with Samaritan Initiative is that we, with our
19 state and local partners, are going to stop on
20 the side of that road to make sure that that
21 person is moved from the side of the road to
22 housing and the services that they need. That
23 initiative is now in Congress. We have 31
24 cosponsors in the House, and it's just been
25 introduced in the Senate.

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2 Things are happening rapidly in
3 Washington with regard to the budget now, and
4 I'm forbidden by the ethical procedures that
5 I've had to encourage you to talk to any
6 Congress people. I can only educate you about
7 the fact that this Samaritan Initiative is
8 there and it would mean more resources
9 targeted to people experiencing chronic
10 homelessness. And given the record that
11 Philadelphia has in drawing down federal
12 resources, I wouldn't be surprised.

13 Finally, across this country there
14 is a new standard of expectation regarding
15 homelessness, and Philadelphia is a key part
16 of establishing that new standard. We can no
17 longer tolerate shuffling homeless people from
18 one city to another, from one side of town to
19 the other, from one homeless program to
20 another, from the street to treatment and back
21 to the streets. We now expect visible,
22 measurable, quantifiable change on the streets
23 of our communities, in our neighborhoods and
24 especially in the lives of homeless people.
25 The new technologies and new research point to

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2 that change and affirm its possibility.

3 Philadelphia is leading the way in achieving

4 these changes. Some city in our country is

5 going to be the first to end chronic

6 homelessness on its street. Why not? Why

7 not? Why not?

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. MANGANO: I'm pleased today to

10 be followed in testimony by a regional

11 expression of the partnerships that we're

12 developing. Not only 20 agencies in

13 Washington, 50 governors and 168 mayors, but

14 regional federal agencies have been brought

15 together in partnership on homelessness by the

16 Council's regional coordinators across the

17 country. Here in the Mid-Atlantic, the

18 Council's coordinator is the very talented and

19 gifted Debbie Jackson. And she has assembled

20 key regional federal agencies to address you

21 this afternoon. It's another example of

22 interagency collaboration in the federal

23 government. No one federal agency can do it

24 alone. So they're partnered in Washington,

25 led by VA Secretary Principi and partnered in

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2 the 10 federal regions across the country.

3 The exceptional talents of these regional
4 federal officials only adds to the assets to
5 get the job done. That job is that every
6 citizen in our communities will be known by a
7 single name; neighbor, and be treated as one.

8 Thank you very much. I'm proud to
9 be here in Philadelphia.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
12 very, very much for that excellent testimony.
13 We got the message and we will respond
14 accordingly. And thank you. We want to be
15 No. 1.

16 (Applause.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
18 definitely want to be No. 1 to be rid of
19 homelessness.

20 MR. HESS: I think, Madam Chair,
21 there's no question with the continued support
22 of this Mayor, this Majority Leader, this
23 Managing Director, there is no question with
24 the community you've heard from today and a
25 couple of our federal partners you're still to

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2 hear from, there is no question but that
3 Philadelphia must become the first city in
4 this country to end chronic homelessness.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely.
6 (Applause.)

7 MR. HESS: I'd like to invite, again
8 with your permission, Madam Chair, Dainette
9 Mintz, our colleague and partner in this
10 homeless crime of larceny from OHCD to
11 introduce our next speaker.

12 MS. MINTZ: Good afternoon, Madam
13 Chair.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
15 evening. Nice to have you.

16 MS. MINTZ: I'd like to take this
17 opportunity to also indicate OHCD's support of
18 the City's 10-year plan to end chronic
19 homelessness and thank Rob Hess for the
20 opportunity to be here this afternoon and to
21 be a participant in this hearing.

22 I've been asked to introduce the
23 next speaker who is indeed a friend to
24 Philadelphia. He is someone who is a
25 supporter of Philadelphia's housing programs

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2 and homeless programs. He has been in the
3 trenches with us developing housing,
4 affordable housing, homeless housing across
5 the board. And we are very fortunate that he
6 is now representing us on a national level.
7 He is the Secretary's Representative for the
8 Mid-Atlantic Region representing the US
9 Department of Housing and Urban Development.
10 And I introduce to you Milton Pratt.

11 (Applause.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome and
13 thank you for your patience. It's a pleasure
14 to be with you again, Mr. Pratt.

15 MR. PRATT: Good evening. Well, I
16 thought we were going to have a big crowd, so
17 I had this long testimony.

18 (Laughter.)

19 MR. PRATT: But I think in the
20 interest of my other cohorts here from the
21 federal government, I will consolidated my
22 testimony, if that's okay with you guys. But
23 let me know if it's not.

24 (Laughter.)

25 MR. PRATT: First, I want to express

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2 my support for being here today and
3 participation in acknowledging your 10-year
4 plan is certainly to be complimented on. I
5 get to travel throughout my region, which
6 includes about six states, and I'm always
7 proud of my home, the City of Philadelphia,
8 and telling people how progressive we are when
9 it comes to dealing with homeless populations.
10 And I've hosted many of those delegations that
11 Executive Director Mangano has spoken about,
12 and so we're certainly pleased to be a partner
13 to Philadelphia, to the City, to the
14 leadership that is exhibited here because that
15 kind of leadership is not exhibited everywhere
16 I go.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

18 MR. PRATT: It really is not. I
19 don't go to towns and hear that there's one
20 councilperson, specifically one councilwoman
21 who is the councilwoman of the homeless. And
22 so I want to make sure that you know that your
23 vision and your thoughts are certainly
24 important.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

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2 MR. PRATT: But on any given night,
3 approximately 5,000 people in Philadelphia are
4 without a home. Of that group, 2300 people
5 spend a night in a shelter and 960 are
6 children. Over the course of the year, more
7 than 25,000 men and women across the
8 Philadelphia community experience a night of
9 homelessness. The real story, however, is
10 found not in the statistics but in the people
11 that they represent. It is a tragedy that so
12 many individuals, patriots that have defended
13 our nation's freedom, families that are down
14 on their luck, victims of domestic violence
15 and substance abuse, addicted individuals that
16 are in dire need of treatment spend their
17 nights without homes, without hope, many of
18 them huddle under roads such as I-95, on
19 Girard Avenue, on Broad Street, on South
20 Street all over this city in SEPTA subway
21 stations. We see them. We know them. Many
22 of them are our families. In the richest
23 city, in one of the richest cities, certainly
24 in the richest country, the most compassionate
25 country in the world, it is unacceptable that

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2 so many people can fall through the cracks,
3 fall through the safety nets that are being
4 provided.

5 I want all of you to know that
6 President Bush is committed to making sure
7 that there is a change in this country when it
8 comes to dealing with homelessness. Through
9 an innovative approach that combines new
10 resources with an unprecedented level of
11 intergovernmental cooperation, and you heard
12 Mr. Mangano speak about that, but I'm a part
13 of that cooperation. And today, the other
14 members of the federal government that are
15 here are also a part of it.

16 This Administration is aspiring
17 dramatic progress in the battle to defeat
18 homeless. My department -- I'm so proud to be
19 at HUD because all my career I've spent
20 knocking on the door of HUD and now I'm inside
21 of HUD, so that's sort of a good thing and a
22 bad thing. But Dainette is probably laughing
23 because I think sometimes we went to HUD
24 trying to get things done over the years. But
25 I'm proud to be a part of HUD and serve on the

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2 frontlines here in Pennsylvania and certainly
3 in the City of Brotherly Love in the fight.

4 A little known fact that of the
5 600,000 Americans of this country that are
6 homeless every night, 200,000 of them are
7 experiencing chronic homelessness. And I
8 think you've heard everyone describe what
9 chronic homelessness is, but it's certainly a
10 person that suffers from a debilitating,
11 developmental, physical or mental condition or
12 substance abuse or addiction. They have been
13 homeless more than a year or more or they have
14 repeated periods of extended homelessness, as
15 you heard described in San Diego. They may
16 occasionally get help and they leave the
17 streets, but they soon fall back in the
18 streets. I think I heard the gentleman DWA
19 talk about how they would come and go and
20 leave the streets.

21 So what have we done here in
22 Philadelphia? And that's what I want to talk
23 about. For the past eight years, we've
24 invested \$53 million in funding to provide
25 temporary housing for homelessness through

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2 emergency shelter grants, programs for rental
3 assistance and supportive services through
4 housing opportunities for persons with AIDS.
5 Some of these funds have gone to fund projects
6 such as Calcutta House where they used their
7 funds to develop a facility that I happened to
8 actually see this week when I was up in that
9 area and where they're providing medical
10 assistance for homeless individuals as well.
11 Through McKinney Program we got 36 grants
12 totaling almost \$23 million and we've awarded
13 the 2003 competition. The 2004 competition is
14 underway. So hopefully there will be more
15 funds available to the City of Philadelphia to
16 continue to support training and assistance
17 for formerly homeless individuals and
18 families.

19 Recently, HUD awarded a three-year
20 grant totaling \$1.8 million called the
21 Collaborative Initiative to End Chronic
22 Homelessness, and this was awarded to
23 Philadelphia. And again, this is something
24 for the City to be very, very proud of. It's
25 a recognition that the City providing the kind

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2 of leadership that is so important.

3 I'm going to paraphrase some of the
4 my testimony in the interest of time and just
5 remind you that on the federal level we've
6 tried to coordinate our services and our
7 programs through our Interagency Council. I
8 serve as the Vice Chair of the Interagency
9 Council and HUD provides the staff, namely,
10 Debbie Jackson.

11 Where is Debbie at? I want to make
12 sure Debbie is pointed out. Debbie is on my
13 staff. She's been a resource throughout the
14 entire region, to cities and counties that are
15 trying to develop 10-year plans.

16 As we are trying to coordinate our
17 efforts on a reasonable level, I want to
18 encourage you here in Philadelphia to continue
19 to do the same thing. I know that there are
20 three distinct agencies that provide different
21 levels of support for homeless families,
22 certainly OESS, Rob's office and his entire
23 staff does a great job and we continue to have
24 a great relationship there; and then Kevin
25 Hanna's office through the Office of Housing

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2 and Neighborhood Preservation, and we provide
3 the bulk of our funds through those doors and
4 OHCD; and finally, the Housing Authority where
5 I know you're a member of the board. We want
6 to courage you to make sure that there is
7 spirit of collaboration between those three
8 agencies because homeless families in this
9 City need to know that they can count on
10 transitional housing, permanent housing,
11 temporary housing. And I think right now the
12 climate is such that they know they can count
13 on at least two components there and they want
14 to continue to find that the Section 8
15 Program, more specifically, is a resource for
16 homeless families here in the City of
17 Philadelphia because it is a very, very vital
18 resource.

19 You heard many individuals today
20 talk about that Home First or that Housing
21 First model. That model doesn't work unless
22 we know that a family has a way to pay that
23 rent. And the way that they pay that rent is
24 clearly through the Section 8 voucher program.
25 So I want to encourage you to make sure there

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2 is a spirit of cooperation here in the City
3 and let you know that as a department, we at
4 HUD are committed to supporting the City of
5 Philadelphia in its innovative efforts here to
6 end chronic homelessness. And I want to thank
7 you for your time and attention and patience,
8 and I look forward to testimony from my other
9 colleagues.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
11 very much.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We thank
14 you for your continued leadership.

15 My understanding is that it's at the
16 federal level that -- not project-based, but
17 that the scattered site Section 8 vouchers
18 have been cut. That's what my understanding
19 is. So we need them. In fact, my
20 understanding is that when PHA is asked to
21 make decisions about who gets the voucher
22 program, it's put in competition with itself
23 in terms of the Section 8 voucher program.
24 But I understand that it's at the federal
25 level that that the individual scattered sites

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2 have been cut. Maybe you can find out.

3 Obviously, I have no way of checking myself.

4 MR. PRATT: With respect to your
5 comments, they are certainly appreciated. And
6 we have been trying to reform the Section 8
7 Program. And the reason that we have tried to
8 reform that program is because essentially
9 that program consumes more than 50 percent of
10 our annual budget, and that number continues
11 to escalate. Of the \$33 billion that's
12 appropriated every year by Congress, we
13 appropriate half of it to the Section 8
14 Program. So across the country when you look
15 at that program, it's a very, very successful
16 program.

17 I started my career here in
18 Philadelphia running a component of it and I
19 ran the program also in Chester City, so I'm
20 more than just a fan and a friend to the
21 program. I understand the program operations
22 very, very well.

23 And I don't think that was the point
24 I was trying to make. I know the point that I
25 was trying to make was just that with three

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2 distinct agencies here, it's important that
3 they continue to collaborate. I know that
4 they do. I'm not suggesting that they don't.
5 I know that they do, but that collaboration at
6 the highest level and certainly provided by
7 your leadership and the Mayor's leadership
8 serving on the Housing Authority Board and
9 obviously being the Chief Executive and the
10 Majority Leader, that collaboration I know
11 exists here, and we just want to make sure
12 that we're a part of extending it and make
13 sure that the City of Philadelphia knows that
14 we're partner.

15 And we are going to reform this
16 program because if we don't reform this
17 program long-term, and that's the Section 8
18 program, it will continue to consume more and
19 more of our resources. And if it does that,
20 other federal programs, other programs funded
21 by HUD may, in fact, be at jeopardy, and we
22 don't want that to happen. So this is a way
23 to make sure that our 33-billion-dollar pie
24 gets spread as far as it possibly can.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I don't

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2 know all the other HUD programs, but I do know
3 that Section 8 is worth every dollar because
4 it is the only way that people can get an
5 opportunity to live in neighborhoods, and it
6 is the incentive for developers to build. So
7 I have no idea what it's in competition with.
8 I only know that it is a wonderful program.
9 It is sorely needed. And I hope that you will
10 take back that -- I don't know what else has
11 to be cut, but we need it. And if something
12 is in jeopardy, it sure shouldn't be the
13 Section 8 Program because I don't know how we
14 survive without it.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. PRATT: I will take it back to
17 Secretary Jackson.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
19 for all your leadership and commitment.

20 I see Mr. Pratt everywhere in
21 Philadelphia. We've been to more dedications
22 and more ribbon cuttings than either of us can
23 remember. But thank you very much.

24 MR. PRATT: Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, as the hour
3 grows late, the dignitaries keep rolling in,
4 in support of this great issue. I'm more
5 convinced than ever that with the support
6 we've seen here today that we will, in fact,
7 become the first city in this nation to end
8 chronic homelessness.

9 And so it is with that framework
10 that invite Debbie Jackson, which, again, with
11 your permission, to join us at the testimony
12 table to introduce our other federal partners
13 that are here today that would like to say a
14 few words in support of our effort here.

15 Debbie, as you know, is our
16 representative on the Regional Interagency
17 Council, and we're just so pleased to have her
18 with us today as well.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
20 very much, and welcome. Thank you for your
21 patience.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. JACKSON: Thank you, Mr. Hess,
24 for including me in this opportunity.

25 Madam Chairwoman, thank you again

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2 for having us.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

4 MS. JACKSON: We thought it not
5 robbery to include our federal partners. I
6 called them and said, this is what was
7 happening in the city in which we have
8 investment. And each of our federal partners
9 here today volunteered, offered, insisted that
10 they be allowed to give testimony. We have
11 one agency, however, Social Security that said
12 "We think it's important. We don't want to
13 take away from the day, but we're here and
14 we're present." And so representing the
15 Social Security Administration today, we have
16 Ms. Karen Martin, the Regional Communications
17 Director.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. JACKSON: And now without ado,
21 I'd like to bring forth my partners in the
22 Federal Interagency Council to present. I'd
23 like to ask Mr. Michael Hall from the US
24 Department of Census, I'd like to invite Mr.
25 Vincent Kane from the Department of Veterans

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2 Affairs, and I'd like to invite Mr. Frank
3 Holland from the Department of Health and
4 Human Services to share their interest, their
5 concern, their support for this initiative
6 here in Philadelphia.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
8 very much.

9 Welcome all of you, and thank you
10 all for your patience. We realize it's been a
11 long afternoon, and we appreciate you for
12 spending so much time and for being willing to
13 make your testimony. Thank you.

14 MR. HALL: Thank you, Councilwoman,
15 for allowing us to speak today. My name is
16 Michael Hall and I'm representative of the US
17 Census Bureau. As the goal of the US Census
18 Bureau is to be the preeminent collector and
19 provider of timely, relevant, and quality data
20 about the people and economy of the United
21 States, the US Constitution mandates that we
22 conduct a complete count of the population in
23 the United States every 10 years. The Census
24 Bureau does not produce a count of the
25 homeless population because it's been very

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2 difficult for us to adequately do that, but we
3 do provide counts for certain components of
4 the homeless population. But we have
5 partnered with US Interagency Council on
6 homelessness, serving on the Regional
7 Interagency Council on Homelessness in the
8 Philadelphia area.

9 Statistics show that our homeless
10 population has a huge impact upon the local
11 economies. The staggering cost of hospital
12 stays, emergency room visits, detoxification
13 programs, rehabilitation treatment centers and
14 psychiatric hospital care as well as emergency
15 shelter operations all drain the local
16 economy's limited resources.

17 At the US Census Bureau, we're
18 developing strategic plans to improve coverage
19 of the difficult-to-enumerate populations with
20 special emphasis on including people without
21 conventional housing as well as people
22 experiencing homelessness. Therefore, we are
23 partnering with the providers of services for
24 individuals and families experiencing
25 homelessness. We hope our plans will enable

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2 us to find solutions and meet the challenges
3 encountered enumerating the homeless
4 population in our 2010 census.

5 As you well know, the more people we
6 count in the City of Philadelphia, the more
7 federal dollars that come into the City of
8 Philadelphia. So we strongly feel that
9 developing such relationships will be a
10 win/win for all involved. And I will end it
11 there because I know it's late in the evening
12 and will let everybody continue on. Thank
13 you.

14 MR. HOLLAND: Good evening. I'm
15 Frank Holland with the US Department of Health
16 and Human Services in Philadelphia. I'm
17 representing Secretary Tommy Thompson, a
18 regional director of Robert Zimmerman.

19 When President George W. Bush
20 declared that by 2012 we would end chronic
21 homelessness in America, the US Department of
22 Health and Human Services stepped up to the
23 plate immediately. Secretary Thompson became
24 the first non-HUD Chair of the US Interagency
25 on Homelessness. Under Secretary Thompson's

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2 leadership, 50 governors were encouraged to
3 establish state Interagency Councils on
4 Homelessness. As the immediate past Chair of
5 the Federal Interagency Council on
6 Homelessness, Secretary Thompson remains
7 vigilant in his commitment to end
8 homelessness. In conjunction with the
9 Department of Veteran Affairs, Housing and
10 Urban Development and Labor, HHS sponsors a
11 series of homeless policies academies to
12 assist states to explore new policies and
13 collaborations across multiple programs that
14 improve access to housing and treatment
15 resources. HHS also published the Blueprint
16 for Change, a Strategic Plan to End
17 Homelessness. HHS offers a multitude of
18 programs, grants and services.

19 First Step is a Web-based tool
20 designed to assist providers and persons
21 experiencing homelessness. Healthcare for
22 Homeless provides medical services to one of
23 our most vulnerable population, the homeless
24 and the kids that are out there. And locally,
25 the Mary Howard Clinic receives funds under

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2 the Healthcare for Homeless Program.

3 In this region, the Mid-Atlantic
4 region, Robert Zimmerman, our Regional
5 Director, served as the first Chair of the
6 Interagency Council on Homelessness. And
7 under his leadership, the Council was
8 established in Philadelphia.

9 Since it's inception, the Regional
10 Interagency Council on Homelessness has
11 participated as a federal partner in training
12 sessions for homeless providers and hosted
13 visitors from the United Kingdom on their tour
14 of Philadelphia's homeless service providers.
15 Philadelphia is 1 of 11 cities to receive
16 funding from the first collaborative supported
17 by HUD, HHS, and the VA.

18 HHS fully supports the efforts here
19 in Philadelphia to develop and implement a
20 plan to end homelessness among the citizens of
21 the City of Brotherly Love.

22 Thanks. I tried to make it quick.
23 Everybody wants to leave.

24 MR. KANE: Good evening. I'm Vince
25 Kane from the Veterans Administration here in

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2 Network 4. Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for
3 inviting us. I have to tell you, it's really
4 a pleasure as well as a privilege to be here.
5 And I'm here in two capacities: One,
6 representing the VA; and second, representing
7 the Interagency Council. I'm going to sort of
8 put of this aside and just submit it and kind
9 of try to echo what I learned here today and
10 what I've learned over the course of the year.

11 At the VA here in Philadelphia, we
12 would not have the source that we currently
13 have if it wasn't for our relationship with
14 the City. Mr. Mangano spoke about how the
15 federal partners are going to resources where
16 there's partnerships and strong partnerships.
17 Philadelphia and the Philadelphia VA is the
18 beneficiary of that, and that's because of our
19 relationship with you in trying to meet the
20 needs of homeless veterans here on the streets
21 of Philadelphia. At this time of the year,
22 particularly on the eve of Veterans Day, it's
23 ever more important to remember the veterans,
24 those who have served, the men and women that
25 have served our country that need our services

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2 now. And I can't thank Philadelphia enough
3 for your leadership in meeting their needs and
4 partnering with us so that we could bring
5 resources here to our community and be part of
6 the process when we become the first city to
7 end homelessness in this country. And I think
8 we will because of our relationship and the
9 partnerships that you value. And we're here
10 as members of the Interagency Council to
11 support you and your team, Rob Hess, and
12 others in whatever way you need us to make
13 sure that we are the first to end
14 homelessness.

15 We're delighted that you have
16 involved us in the process. We're
17 appreciative of how you've included us, how
18 you've taken care of our veterans and enabled
19 us and supported us in stepping up to make
20 sure that we're there for our veterans and for
21 the other homeless in our community.

22 So we want to continue to thank you,
23 to support and please let you know that we're
24 available as a resource to help you in your
25 10-year plan as well as to help you on a daily

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2 basis in meeting the unmet needs of the
3 homeless in our community. So thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
5 very much.

6 (Applause.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
8 all very much for your excellent statements
9 and for your commitment because it's what you
10 do and it's what we all do collectively when
11 we care and care about this client base that
12 makes a difference. Thank you. Thank you
13 very much.

14 (Applause.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We're
16 grateful for all the positive statements we've
17 heard tonight. And in all things we give God
18 the glory for the privilege of serving other
19 people in need. That's what it's all about.
20 We have to love one another. He is the
21 essence of love, and we thank Him for the
22 privilege and opportunity to serve.

23 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, we're so
24 pleased for the presence and support and
25 continued support of our federal partners.

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2 I noticed that the Managing Director
3 has entered the Chamber. Of course, he has
4 two jobs -- probably more than that, but at
5 least two. One is just the small job of being
6 Managing Director of this great City. The
7 second and I think more serious job, although
8 that's a very serious job, not to make light
9 of it, is that of Co-Chair of the Mayor's Task
10 Force on Homelessness. And so I recognize
11 Phil Goldsmith in both roles.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome,
14 Mr. Managing Director. We're glad you're
15 here.

16 MR. GOLDSMITH: My pleasure. I wish
17 I could have gotten here earlier. I just
18 wanted to stop by and thank you, Councilwoman
19 Blackwell, for keeping the focus, keeping the
20 focus on this very important issue. And I
21 know you've been at it a long, long time.

22 I know a lot of people would like
23 the homeless to go away; out of sight, out of
24 mind. And we only wish it was so easy, but
25 it's not. And as I said to people, they're

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2 not pieces of litter that we just throw away.
3 And we have to balance the dignity that they
4 deserve with our desire to find them homes
5 that they can restore themselves to a
6 productive life.

7 One of my best friends was a
8 homeless person. He was a businessman and he
9 got involved in drugs and alcohol, found
10 himself in bad shape. And he was fortunate
11 because a police officer reached out to him
12 and took him to a shelter. My friend
13 eventually became the head of that shelter and
14 ran the shelter. I also knew he was an
15 artist, but that hobby and that skill sort of
16 went by the wayside when his luck turned
17 against him. So I commissioned him to paint
18 me a drawing, which very proudly is in my
19 house on my wall. And it keeps on reminding
20 me each day that these people are human
21 beings, they deserve our respect and they
22 deserve dignity.

23 I'm please that the White House is
24 here and other people have come here, and I
25 thank Rob Hess and his staff for the wonderful

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2 job that they do. But I do want to thank you
3 for continuing to shed light on this issue.
4 Thank you very much.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
6 (Applause.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
8 Managing Director Goldsmith. Thank you very,
9 very much.

10 You know when we were all in school,
11 we read, many of you will remember, The Rime
12 of the Ancient Mariner. Anybody go back that
13 far? The theme of that was -- as you know,
14 the albatross didn't fall until he remembered
15 that he loveth best who loveth best all things
16 both great and small. For the dear Lord who
17 loveth us, he made and loveth all.

18 So that's what it comes down to.
19 And as you know, when he realized that love
20 was the answer and God loves all, then he was
21 freed from that burden. Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. HESS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
24 We have one more individual to testify
25 tonight. She was actually here earlier in the

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2 day, had to leave briefly and has returned.

3 So we invite, again, with your permission

4 Deborah Russel from Disabled in Action to the
5 testimony table.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

7 She's been here awhile. I saw her
8 earlier. Certainly, she's absolutely welcome,
9 and we're happy to hear her testimony.

10 Good evening. Welcome, and thank
11 you for your patience.

12 MS. RUSSEL: Good evening. Thank
13 you, Madam Chair. My name Deborah Russel.
14 And I am a member of Disabled in Action.

15 Disabled in Action is a civil rights
16 group of disabled people who are constantly
17 pursuing our rights to live in the community
18 and be a part of the community.

19 I wanted to speak today because it
20 is important for this City and the world to
21 know that disabled people don't want to be
22 left out. When you're talking about housing,
23 remember disabled people. When you're talking
24 about neighborhood development, remember
25 disabled people. When you're talking about

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2 homelessness, you have to remember disabled
3 people.

4 I thank you for the opportunity to
5 speak today. I thank Bob Hess who has worked
6 with Disabled in Action and also Liberty
7 Resources in pursuit of our rights to be a
8 part of the community and be involved in
9 housing.

10 I think it's also important for
11 everyone to know and understand and realize
12 that right here in Philadelphia, about 25
13 percent of our population is made up of
14 disabled people, whether it be physical,
15 sensory, mental illness, mental retardation,
16 whatever, there's 25 percent of us in this
17 City that are disabled. That's a large
18 number; in fact, I believe the largest number
19 across the United States comparatively.

20 What's important for us to express
21 today is that many disabled people are
22 homeless. If they're not literally on the
23 streets, which some are, there are many, many
24 more that are in institutional settings, not
25 because it's where they choose to be but

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2 because of the fact that they didn't have
3 resources and options to develop accessible
4 homes or have funds for modifications.
5 Families have been split up because there
6 weren't those resources available to them.

7 What I also want to say is that I
8 commend this City for its programs and support
9 services to those who are homeless, but we
10 must remember not only to keep those
11 successful programs going but also to continue
12 to develop the innovative and progressive
13 movement towards transitional and permanent,
14 affordable and accessible housing.

15 Thank you very much again for the
16 opportunity to speak.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
18 Ms. Russel.

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
21 very much.

22 MR. HESS: Madam Chair, as we close
23 this evening's proceedings, I think I will
24 leave this place, without question, energized
25 from the last seven hours and thankful for

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2 your leadership that led to the testimony that
3 we've heard throughout the day and absolutely
4 convinced that as Council looks at future tax
5 cuts and other things along that nature that
6 they couldn't help be touched by what they
7 heard today. These programs are incredibly
8 successful because of the people you heard
9 from today and others and have to be
10 continued. In order to do that, the Mayor,
11 the Managing Director will need the resources
12 necessary to allow that to happen. And so
13 with your leadership and that of your
14 colleagues, I'm confident that that will
15 happen. But I hope today has helped in some
16 small way to let everyone see how important
17 these issues are, how important these
18 resources are, how important these programs
19 are.

20 Thank you again for your leadership,
21 Madam Chair.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
23 Mr. Hess. Thank you, too, Roberta and your
24 entire team and Ms. Hinton, just everyone.

25 I suppose our next step is some

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2 benchmarks that we can use to help get us
3 where we need to go and hope we don't have a
4 downturn on the economy that makes it even
5 harder to go where we need to go, because we
6 have had a 10-year plan before. We believe
7 that we can achieve it if we have the will to
8 do it and that we make a commitment and stick
9 by it no matter what. We can always scale
10 back or move it up, but if we keep moving in
11 that direction, I'm sure that with God's help
12 we will be successful, because in the richest
13 country in the world, no one should have to
14 live on the streets. And certainly, we know
15 where they are. It has been said over and
16 over, we know where they are. We know where
17 they are still in the subway and under bridges
18 and in abandoned homes. We know where they
19 are. And because we know where they are, it
20 means that we can help them and we can take
21 them to places where they can get the help
22 they need.

23 So we know that we would not be this
24 far were it not for your vision. You've been
25 a visionary leader. We are grateful for your

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2 leadership and know that across the country,
3 people are talking about us and we are
4 breaking records because of your commitment
5 and vision. And we say thank you to Rob Hess.
6 Thank you, Managing Director. And thank you
7 all.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: This
10 hearing will stand recessed subject to the
11 call of the Chair.

12 Thank you all very much.

13 (Council adjourned at 6:10 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Council of the City of
Philadelphia of Tuesday, November 9, 2004,
were reported fully and accurately by me, and
that this is a correct transcript of the same.

RE: COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD
DEVELOPMENT AND THE HOMELESS

Lisa C. Bradley, RPR