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Year One Report Released for Boulder's First Housing First Community

Boulder, CO—The city's first Housing First community had a quiet year, with formerly chronically homeless residents rebuilding their lives and relying far less on public services, according to a new report from Boulder Housing Partners (BHP) and the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless.

1175 Lee Hill opened in November 2014, providing secure homes and supportive services to 31 chronically homeless men and women. The apartment community is located at the corner of Lee Hill Drive and North Broadway Street in North Boulder.

"This first year has been very successful," said Betsey Martens, Executive Director of BHP. "We wanted to do four things. We wanted to demonstrate the Housing First model locally. We wanted to show how it yields real benefits to individual residents as well as the greater community. We wanted to demonstrate that Housing First can be a good neighbor. And we wanted to build something beautiful. We're achieving all four goals and will continue to do so."

The Housing First model is being implemented around the country as a way to reduce chronic homelessness by providing people with housing and supportive services to help them achieve long-term stability and self-reliance. Among a community's most vulnerable groups, chronically homeless men and women often suffer from disabilities and poor health, which prompt heavy utilization of public health and emergency services. Research has shown that the Housing First model significantly reduces demand on hospital emergency rooms, jails and court systems, and human service agencies.

Key findings of the Year One Report on 1175 Lee Hill:

- The 31 apartments are home to 10 women and 21 men between the ages of 40 and 70.
- 5 residents are now employed.
- 75% of the original residents still live at Lee Hill after one year.
- There were no calls to the police from the neighborhood related to Lee Hill or its residents. Likewise, BHP, the property manager and owner of Lee Hill, received no complaints from the neighborhood.
- Lee Hill residents called for emergency services 49 times; 82% of the calls were for medical assistance.
- Residents now have easy access to Medicaid/Medicare (25 residents); Supplemental Security Income (11 residents); Aid to the Needy and Disabled (7 Residents); and Social Security Disability Insurance (7 residents).
- 13 partner agencies provide a wide variety of programs, such as art classes, cooking classes, mental health support and food.

Boulder Housing Partners will complete additional research on program performance in 2016.

“We know that the Housing First model works, and it’s great to expand these programs to better serve the homeless and the community,” said Greg Harms, Executive Director of Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, which administers supportive services at Lee Hill. “Giving homeless people a place to live saves lives, and saves the community money.”

A Denver study found that it costs an average community about \$43,300 per year for each chronically homeless person living on the streets. By contrast, it costs about \$11,700 per year to provide housing and case management in a Housing First setting. Communities can therefore save more than \$31,000 per year, per Housing First resident.

1175 Lee Hill won the Mountain Plains National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials Affordable Housing Innovation Award in 2015 and was a finalist for the Urban Land Institute Impact awards. The highly sustainable building was designed by Humphries Poli Architects, with a 2-story mural by Boulder artist Sally Eckert. Funding was provided by the City of Boulder, Boulder County, the Colorado Division of Housing, Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, National Equity Fund and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

More information about 1175 Lee Hill is posted [here](#).

[Boulder Housing Partners](#) is celebrating its 50th year as the housing authority for the City of Boulder. BHP builds, owns, and manages quality affordable housing for low and moderate-income Boulder residents, and helps those residents pursue successful, productive, and dignified lives. BHP is one of only 35 public housing authorities in the United States participating in the prestigious Moving to Work program, which encourages innovation by providing flexibility in the use of federal funds. Its communities have won national and international awards for sustainability and affordable housing development.

The [Boulder Shelter for the Homeless](#) has been serving the homeless adults in Boulder County since 1982. Its mission is to provide safe shelter, food, support services and an avenue to self-sufficiency for homeless adults in our community. The Shelter is a private, 501c3 corporation that runs multiple programs, including the 160-bed shelter facility in North Boulder.

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