



Responding to the Needs of the Community

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Editors Note: All media outlets are invited to attend any of the volunteer training sessions.

Counting to Care...Because We Care Homeless Census Project Needs Volunteers *Volunteers needed to conduct Homeless Count in Hillsborough County*

TAMPA, Fla. – (Friday, December 22, 2006) – When you see a homeless person, do you wonder why that person is homeless? Wonder how many people are homeless in our community? These are just two of the questions you can help the Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County answer during its next homeless census being conducted on Thursday, January 25, 2007. With more than 1,000 square miles in Hillsborough County to cover, the Homeless Coalition needs volunteers to assist with the biannual homeless census.

“The Homeless Census process seeks to identify not only how many people are homeless in our community,” said Rayme L. Nuckles, “but also why are people homeless and what services are lacking in the community that could assist people getting back on their feet.”

During a 24-hour period on January 25, 2007, volunteer teams will visit places that homeless people go as part of their daily activities including homeless encampments, shelters, meal locations, clothing programs, streets and sidewalks homeless people where homeless people are usually travel and other known locations where homeless people gather. Volunteer teams will ask each homeless person they encounter to participate in a brief interview, lasting less than a minute. Each homeless person participating in the interview will receive a small ‘thank you’ gift, such as a hygiene kit, socks, and/or blanket, for their time.

To help volunteers prepare for their participation in the actual census count, volunteers do need to attend one of the census trainings being held in January. Trainings will be held on:

- Thursday, January 4 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Metropolitan Ministries Family Grill, 2010 N. Florida Ave., Tampa;
- Tuesday, January 16 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at ACTS, 4612 N. 56th St., Tampa;
- Thursday, January 18 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at ACTS, 4612 N. 56th St., Tampa;
- Friday, January 19 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Plant City Neighborhood Service Center, 307 N. Michigan Ave., Plant City.
- Monday, January 22 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County, 1102 N. Florida Ave., Tampa (Note: RSVP required for this training; call (813) 223-6115)

During the training, volunteers will learn about the census' purpose and process as well as address any questions they might have. All volunteers will receive a free t-shirt to wear on the day of the census.

“This is a project that just about anyone can become involved with,” said Nuckles. “There is really something for everyone involved whether you are a business, faith-based organization, service group, fraternity, youth group, service provider or governmental agency as volunteers are needed for the day of the census as well as for pre-census activities.”

One way people can help with pre-census activities is holding a hygiene kit donation drive within their organization. Items included in the hygiene kits are: soap, shampoo, deodorant (male or female), safety razor (male or female), shaving cream, brush or comb, bug repellent, q-tips, feminine products, toothbrush, tooth paste, and mouth wash in with travel or full-sizes.

To help with the 2007 Homeless Census, please contact the Homeless Coalition at (813) 223-6115 or info@homelessofhc.org.

Calendar Announcement: Volunteers are needed to help with the 2007 Homeless Census count in Hillsborough County on Thursday, January 25, 2007. Volunteers need to attend one training session and will receive a free t-shirt. For more information, visit www.homelessofhc.org or call the Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County at (813) 223-6115.

The Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County is a 501 (C) 3 organization responsible for establishing and maintaining concentrated strategic efforts to develop long-term constructive solutions that address the underlying causes of homelessness and meet the immediate needs of homeless people. Governed by coalition members, the Coalition promotes collaboration and coordination among social service providers, businesses, funding institutions, housing providers, state and federal agencies, faith-based communities and other supportive organizations and individuals to organize and deliver, without duplication, support services, emergency shelters, transitional housing and affordable housing to meet the specific needs of all homeless people. The Coalition also operates the UNITY Information Network that “virtually” links service providers in Hillsborough County. UNITY offers integrated referrals, creates a base of data to better understand homelessness to plan effective intervention, and shows “real-time” availability of services – all essential to securing funding to meet the level of need within the community. For more information visit www.homelessofhc.org.

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