



Responding to the Needs of the Community

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Editor's Note: Homeless Hero Awards will be presented at approximately 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 14, 2006 at Sam Seltzer's Steakhouse, 4744 N. Dale Mabry in Tampa.

Coalition Honors Homeless Heroes

Awards to be presented at Homeless Coalition's Annual Meeting as part of Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week

TAMPA, Fla. – (Thursday, November 9, 2006) – Countless individuals work diligently and tirelessly to meet the needs of thousands of homeless and near homeless men, women and children and address this complex issue. Two such individuals will be honored by the Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County as the recipients of the organization's 2006 Homeless Hero awards. The awards will be presented at the Coalition's annual meeting on Tuesday, November 14 at Sam Seltzer's Steakhouse on N. Dale Mabry in Tampa.

Sharon Singletary is being recognized in the homeless/formerly homeless category and Gerard Hendrickson is being honored in the direct service category for his work with homeless veterans.

"These individuals are truly unsung heroes who work tirelessly every day to improve the lives of homeless men, women and children in Hillsborough County by finding ways to meet their immediate needs," said Rayme L. Nuckles, CEO of the Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County.

Singletary is a case manager assistant at Mental Health Care, Inc. and works daily with homeless individuals. She consistently provides clients with information regarding services and

resources in the community, assisting them during the most desolate times. Having personally experienced homelessness, Singletary is able to quickly connect with homeless people on a level that would customarily take clinicians a very long time.

“She doesn’t just utilize terms and phrases that might, for a short time, comfort someone living on the street; she speaks from the heart,” wrote Rei Kobayahi, who nominated Singletary for the award. Singletary is a resident of New Tampa.

Hendrickson has been working with homeless veterans in Hillsborough County since 1994 and consistently goes the extra mile. He finds ways to empower homeless vets to make choices to end their homelessness by helping them access health and social services. In one case, he helped one homeless vet prepare for an at the VA hospital by taking the client to a facility to shower, and personally trimmed the gentleman’s beard and hair so that he would look presentable for his appointment. Hendrickson has also volunteered and helped with past homeless census counts conducted by the Homeless Coalition.

“He disregards their faults, sees their hearts breaking, the despair in their faces, and the sores on their feet,” said Wendy Hellickson, who nominated Hendrickson. “His hand reaches to their hands as he offers a step-up in their times of need.”

Hendrickson is a resident of South Tampa.

The Homeless Hero Awards seek to recognize individuals for their commitment and dedication to meeting the immediate needs of homeless and near-homeless people, working for systemic changes needed to address the underlying causes, and/or removing barriers that prevent people from obtaining stable housing and self-sufficiency in our community.

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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