Point-in-Time Count: Date Change

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires that Continuums of Care conduct Point-in-Time counts of people in unsheltered locations at least every other year. MACH usually conducts the count every year during the last 10 days of January. COVID-19 prevented last year’s count and, due to the impact of the Omicron variant, this year’s count has been postponed until Tuesday, February 22. This effort always requires a large number of volunteers. If you are interested in this service, please subscribe with HandsOn River Region to be kept informed of this and other opportunities by visiting www.HandsOnRiverRegion.org.

Blanket Drive 2021

Thank you to the dozens of volunteers who organized and recorded the donations during the Blanket Drive! Your assistance made for joyous delivery of resources to area agencies. And thank you to hundreds of people who responded to the call for new and gently used blankets and cold-weather wear! Your response and awareness of the need in our community is both heartening and helpful. Here are some snapshots of this annual event and its successes:

- 1,010 new & gently used blankets & sleeping bags
- 1,027 coats & jackets
- 1,590 pairs of socks
- 1,011 hats, scarves & gloves
- 265.6 volunteer hours and 63 volunteers
- in-kind value of donation equalling $56,153
- 18 local agencies (and counting) have benefitted

A few of the beneficiaries of the drive, from left to right: Essie Brown of Aletheia House, Susan Hunt Sims of Renascence, Desiree Taylor and Katrina Haigler-Boswell of One Place Family Justice Center, Shirley McCall and LaVonnette Liggett of Embrace AL Kids, Paulette Nichols and Carol Potok of Aid to Inmate Mothers, Angelicia Willis and Briana Penn of Hope Inspired Ministries. Other beneficiaries of the drive were Abner’s House, Brantwood Children’s Homes, Catholic Social Services, Council on Substance Abuse, Faith House, Friendship Mission, HOPE Program, Mercy House, Montgomery Pride United, Powell’s Homeless Shelter, Reality and Truth Ministries and River City UMC HOME Program.
“Not-A-Bed” Sleep Out
On November 19, 2021 MACH held its first National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week event. Participants slept outdoors overnight, either communally in a parking lot downtown or in their cars. The evening began with prayer and a candlelight walk from the Court Street Fountain to the event site. Soup donated by Gail’s Down the Street Café was served by the Salvation Army’s Cantina and a program of music was performed by the gospel/jazz group, Patience, and the folk duo of Patrick Aitken and Jimmy Baker. Representatives from MACH and area service providers spoke with those gathered about the local need. MACH thanks the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) for their event sponsorship, our hosts River City Church and Alabama’s Unified Judicial System for the use of their facilities, and the many participants who raised awareness.

Goodwill of Central Alabama: A Valued MACH Partner
Goodwill Industries of Central Alabama, formed in 1968, is an independent non-profit organization and part of a more than century-old brand. As a “social business enterprise,” The processing, merchandising and sales of goods, donated by the public, provides jobs and job training for a workforce that has been referred to Goodwill from Easter Seals of Central Alabama or the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. According to its website, 75% of its workforce has a documented disability, but a percentage of these workers do not have disability income; they require opportunities to gain employable skills in order to advance their standard of living. Goodwill is no simple retail enterprise.

MACH facilitates a November Blanket Drive in a concentrated effort to get gently used or new blankets, coats and winter wear to local partners at the end of each year, but it does not have the space or the workforce to do what Goodwill does year-round. As you do your spring cleaning and find sheets, bedspreads and clothes that you no longer need and would like to donate for further use, please consider a donation to Goodwill. In addition to the benefits provided to the local workforce by Goodwill Industries of Central Alabama, the agency also allows the clients of MACH’s Housing Assistance program to “shop” for household items and clothes without cost to them as needed throughout the year. MACH applauds and appreciates this and Goodwill’s many other community benefits.
How can all members of the human family have access to adequate shelter? The institutions and communities engaged with this question must accept responsibility, when necessary, to help meet basic needs, and access to community development programs and their benefits must be ensured for all. The creation of a Coordinated Entry System to equitably connect those experiencing housing instability and homelessness to available local resources is a step in this direction. Dialing 2-1-1 allows for an initial screening of need and the opportunity for referral. Ask those in need if they have called 2-1-1 and refer them to this resource.

MACH General Membership Meeting
(online and open to the public)
Thursday, February 24, 2022
3pm - 4pm

MACH brings people around one table to deliberate and act on the realities of homelessness and poverty in Montgomery, Autauga, Bullock, Elmore and Lowndes Counties. Consider adding your voice and collaborative energy to the effort. Subscribe to join the MACH mailing list at www.midalhomeless.org or call 334-261-6182 for information on how to join.

Support Our Work!
Visit www.midalhomeless.org to donate or become a MACH member. Your donation will assist in breaking the cycle of homelessness and accessing a safe place to sleep for an individual or family in our area.

Mid-Alabama Coalition for the Homeless / 101 Coliseum Blvd. / Montgomery, AL 36109 / 334-261-6182

Become a Feed-The-Meter Sponsor!

MACH is working with the City of Montgomery to develop local resources to end homelessness. When you feed a green meter in Montgomery, you are helping people who are experiencing homelessness, imminent homelessness, or housing instability get back on their feet. Donations directly support local community service programs designed to help those in need obtain and maintain housing and to become self-supporting members of our community.

One-year meter sponsorship is $2,000.00. Sponsors receive:
• Placard bearing your name / organization’s name on the meter
• Your name or logo on the website, feedthemetermgm.org
• Recognition in all Feed the Meter publicity
• The satisfaction of knowing that you play an essential part in addressing a significant issue that calls for community-wide support

Mail your payment to the address above or become a sponsor online at feedthemetermgm.org.
Questions? Call or email MACH at (334) 261-6182 or lydia@midalhomeless.org.