



## Morristown United for Healthy Living

July 24, 5:30pm- 7:30pm, St. Margaret's Church

### Agenda

Minutes in *purple*

5:30 **Welcome & Introductions**

5:40 **Upcoming Events/Activities**

- Homeless Solutions Buddies Program (ages 6-21; looking for mentors, especially male mentors); additional information attached
- Wind of the Spirit Youth Leadership Camp (2 weeks in August); open to youth (rising) 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- Homeless Solutions Women's Day, October 16<sup>th</sup> (save the date!)
- Morris Arts programming at the Early St. Garden; upcoming dates August 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, September 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, October 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>

5:50 **Joint Learning Opportunity**

- Tom Clark, Director of Housing, *Homeless Solutions*
- Affordable Housing in the 435 (see Properties and Programs and Homeless Solutions At a Glance handouts attached)
  - o Next construction project (partially funded by Morristown United) will be at 23 Abbett Ave
    - Special needs application, two-family house
    - 50 x 110 vacant lot on corner of Abbett and Lincoln; proximate to 4 other Homeless Solutions properties
  - o Why invest in 23 Abbett?
    - Proven development capacity
    - Full funding commitment = project ready
    - Redevelopment of vacant corner lot to spur neighborhood revitalization
    - Home \$\$\$ will leverage a 4:1 additional investment (\$625,000 total project cost)
  - o Questions from the coalition:
    - Q: Are homes handicapped accessible? A: yes, ADA-compliant and can be modified to fit wheelchairs
    - Q: What category of "special needs" will this home be open to? A: Not yet decided, but there are a wide-range of groups that can be considered, such as aging-out youth, people who are homeless or on the verge of being homeless, re-entry, etc.



- Q: What are the qualifications? A: Qualifications are property specific; in this case, the price of both units combined cannot exceed 52% of median household income for the region
- Q: How is availability marketed to the community? A: We have to submit an affirmative marketing plan; we reach out to local faith communities, send out emails, post on the website, advertise on the radio. Opportunity for Morristown United to help recruit applicants from the 435.
- Navigating Affordable Housing
  - Applying for affordable housing (see Navigating Affordable Housing in NJ handout attached)
  - Challenges to obtaining affordable housing
    - Cost and high demand (waitlists) are major issues
    - Credit is a major barrier, but HSI partners with credit counselors and provides supports for people in need of assistance with credit or income. Last year 100% of families in the program improved their credit score. When looking at credit, almost all families have damaged credit and that does not disqualify them. However, chronic evictions or violent convictions can be a greater issue. The credit report itself is just a formality.
    - There is a big gap for people in need who aren't homeless and not eligible
    - Q: Is there a place we can send/refer folks who need help? A: Homeless Solutions has a 24-hour intake line (support but not immediate placement)
  - Challenges to increasing affordable housing/Working with towns to increase affordable housing (challenges)
    - Cost and high demand (waitlists) are major issues
    - Funding support comes from organizations like the NJ Mortgage Finance Agency, the Federal Home Loan Bank of NJ, HSI and other partners
    - Low-income tax credits can also be an incentive for for-profit organizations
    - It's difficult when funding streams increase competition between organizations working on affordable housing within the same community (there's only so much funding available)
    - HSI is also pushing for the Town to increase the % of deed-restricted units at the Atlantic Health properties (behind Morristown Medical Center); opportunity for Morristown United to support via advocacy work? Can we help mobilize the people in need of housing to advocate for this issue?
    - COA legislation is still underway for Morristown, which has really put a hold on what we can all do to address this issue.

6:15 **Strategies and Performance Measures Review**

- To view our strategies and performance measures (for evaluating our progress), go to [www.njhealthmatters.org/tiles/morris](http://www.njhealthmatters.org/tiles/morris) and scroll down to Morristown United and click "Strategies and Performance Measures"



6:25 **Actions Taken Since Last Meeting** (by sub-groups)

- Training sub-group:
  - Focus groups with residents on their training needs are underway (see email for next-steps and how to get involved)
- Built Environment/Sense of Community sub-group:
  - Proposal for AARP grant has been submitted (by Morris Habitat for Humanity) to work with Morristown United to do home repairs for seniors and to make ADA-compliant park improvements in the community
  - Grant awarded to Townology Inc. to create a parklet in the 435

6:35 **Break-Outs by Group**

7:10 **Report-Backs by Group**

- Built Environment/Sense of Community group
  - Discussed partnership with Morris Arts and Grow it Green; ideas for the future include doing some community-based data collection in this space.
  - Grow it Green is also planning on putting up a bulletin board and using this space to put out excess produce for free. The group thought we could also find other areas in the neighborhood to put out excess produce, such as the kiosk on MLK at the trailhead for Patriot's Path (also need to know who has the key to the kiosk; Angela will look into this); the Food is Free project is doing something similar in other communities. This also led to discussion about working on a composting program with Sustainable Morristown.
  - Idea to create lending libraries throughout the community; Morris Habitat may be able to find volunteers to construct the libraries. This would be a great volunteer opportunity
  - NJ Healthy Communities Network grant opportunity: At least one NJHCN grant will be awarded to the 435 thanks to a contribution by Atlantic Health System. The current idea is to use this grant in addition to some Morristown United funds and budget from the Town to fund the proposal to do improvements at the park off Speedwell and Cory Rd.
  - We are applying for a grant from the National Center for Healthy Housing to address lead poisoning awareness in the community (due 7/28); Ashley will submit
- Training group
  - Currently holding focus groups (see email for additional details)
  - Creating an online survey version of the question to engage folks who can't attend in person
  - The plan is to use the data from the focus groups/survey to help develop and organize trainings and to direct advocacy efforts (address the finding that people feel "defeted by the system"). It is very important to the group that they don't do trainings that take people to a closed door or "abyss;" they want actionable follow-through
  - The group is also exploring train-the-trainer opportunities

7:30 **Close**

**Next meeting September 25<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30pm [Note: No August coalition meeting]**

# Navigating Affordable Housing in New Jersey

## Federal Housing Programs

## NJ State Housing Initiatives

Morristown Housing Authority

### Public Housing

Largest affordable housing program. Federal grants are administered through state and local agencies to provide affordable housing by administering Housing Choice Vouchers and project based units.

Madison Housing Authority

Morris County Housing Authority

Boonton Housing Authority

Dover Housing Authority

## Vouchers

When available, given to eligible individuals and projects

## NJ Housing & Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA)

Supports construction of affordable apartments in NJ, as well as offers home-buyer programs and grants/loans for housing rehabilitation

### Housing Choice (Section 8)

Vouchers for:

- Low income families (under 50% of median income)
- Elderly
- People with disabilities

### State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP)

Vouchers for those under 40% median income AND:

- Elderly (62+)
- Homeless families with children/Graduates of Transitional Housing Programs
- Project based vouchers for special populations

## Tax Credits

Income-restricted apartments where developers are given tax-break for building affordable housing

## Farm Home

Federal Housing Grants through U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] to build affordable apartments for low and moderate income persons in small town rural towns in America

## “Mount Laurel” Housing & Balanced Housing (MtL-BH)

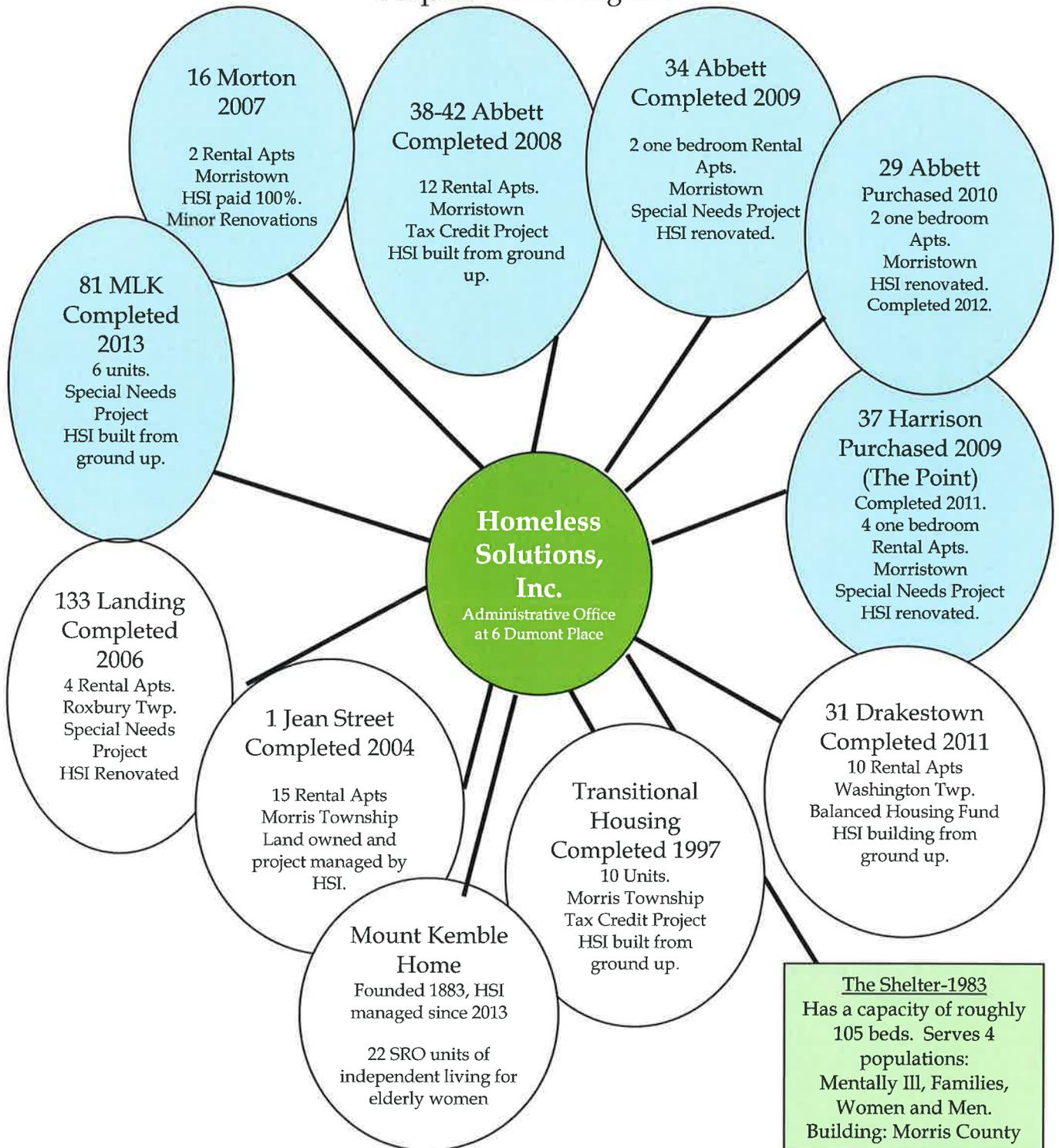
**MtL:** affordable housing built with either federal or state subsidies

**BH:** Supports repairs/renovations of existing housing and construction/conversion of new units. Both rental and for-sale units available for low- and moderate-income households.

## Other HUD programs

- **Section 202:** Affordable apartments for Elderly (62+)
- **Section 811:** Affordable apartments for people with disabilities

# HSI Properties and Programs



**The Shelter-1983**  
Has a capacity of roughly 105 beds. Serves 4 populations:  
Mentally Ill, Families, Women and Men.  
Building: Morris County

**Projects Under Development:**  
23 Abbett Ave (2 Family)  
24 Walnut St. (2 Family)  
88 MLK (6 Apartments)

**HSI in Census Tract 434**  
28 affordable housing units in place  
10 more under construction.



# Homeless Solutions, Inc. At A Glance



For more information call the shelter (973) 993-0833 ■ [www.homelessolutions.org](http://www.homelessolutions.org)

Program	Shelter				Transitional Housing Program	Housing Development	Mt. Kemble Home
	Families	Single Women	Single Men	Safe Haven (guests with a mental health diagnosis)			
<b>Description</b>	Short-term, dormitory style, safe, secure, supportive, drug and alcohol free 24-hour emergency living environment				3 bedroom, medium-term, independent living units	1-3 bedroom, permanent affordable rental housing	Single room, "boarding house" style, permanent affordable housing
<b>Location(s)</b>	Morris Township, NJ				Morris Township, NJ	Morristown Morris Township Roxbury Washington Twp	Morristown, NJ
<b>Audience</b>	Families with children	Single women	Single men	Single men and women	Families with employment	Individuals and families	Elderly women of limited means
<b>Capacity/Length of Stay</b>	10 families for up to six months each, and 10 single women for up to three months each		25 men for up to three months each	20 individuals for up to 12-18 months each	10 units for up to 60 people for 12-18 months	57 units across nine sites, accommodating ~130 people	22 rooms accommodating 22 women
<b>Facilities and Services Provided</b>	Highly structured environment Intense case management focused on goals and securing/increasing employment Life skills workshops on topics including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money management and credit repair</li> <li>• Resume writing and job search</li> <li>• Effective parenting and nutrition</li> </ul> Linkages to medical care and transportation 2-3 meals per day and childcare assistance			The only supportive shelter program for homeless mentally ill in NJ. Guests receive meals as well as case management services from HSI & MHA of Morris County	Structured environment focused on budgeting/saving to prepare guests to return to independent living. Services include case management, life skills workshops (see "Shelter" for details), childcare assistance	Supportive, safe, attractive, environmentally sustainably built rental units located near shopping, transit hubs and parks	Supportive, safe and recently renovated, affordable rental units in historic building within walking distance to Morristown town center



## Homeless Solutions Buddies Program

### The Mission

To provide children in Homeless Solutions' (HSI) shelter programs with strong and encouraging role models, by forming one-on-one relationships with volunteers that will help the child's development, self-esteem and outlook on life.

### The Inspiration

In Fall 2016, a single mother and her children entered HSI family program after becoming homeless. As the family settled in, Family Case Manager Jackie Zapata noticed that the oldest child acted as the care taker for his younger siblings. The teen would prepare meals, change diapers, comfort his siblings when they were upset and tuck them into bed at night. It became clear to Jackie that this teen was forced to grow up prematurely, embracing more adult responsibilities than most teenagers ever would. Jackie's heart ached for this teen to just "be a kid". This was not the first time that HSI staff noticed a fleeting childhood, as children had to step up to fill the void of an absentee parent. Jackie and other HSI staff, recognized this unmet need, sparking the development of the **Homeless Solutions Buddies Program.**

### Why it's Essential

Youth who experience homelessness are more likely to experience higher rates of physical or psychological violence, substance abuse, poor academic performance, mental health problems and insufficient social support compared to their peers who do not experience homelessness. In order to mitigate these risk factors and promote resilience in homeless youth, studies have shown that it is essential to **address the risk factors directly and highlight the children's strengths.** HSI staff believe that the Buddies Program will do exactly that.

By matching children in Homeless Solutions programs with mentors in the community, we anticipate the following outcomes:

- **Increase in self-esteem.** *Mentors will become a positive voice for their mentee, being intentional to recognize positive behaviors and attributes they see in the child. As mentors gain the trust of their mentee, our hope is that the mentee will*

**Program Criteria:**

All children ages 6-21 years old entering the Family Program, Transitional Housing Program, or Outreach Program will be offered to participate in the mentoring program. Children and their families will have 60 days upon their entry to their program to elect whether or not to participate in the Buddies program. This includes children with special needs, as they will be matched with a willing and qualified mentor who is familiar with working with children with special needs. To be eligible for this program, children must be covered by health insurance.

Those interested in becoming a mentor must be at least 16 years old and be willing to meet with the child at least once a month for a **minimum of six months**, as consistency is crucial in the development of the children. All mentors must have a valid driver's license, car insurance and car, or if under age 17, the parent must meet the previous criteria. Mentors must be willing to travel to Homeless Solutions on a regular basis to pick up their mentee for their outing. Those interested in becoming a mentor are encouraged to submit an application. All mentors must submit to a background check, driver's abstract, reference check and other screening when applicable. Any driver must also submit to these screening processes.

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Questions? Contact Supportive Housing Intern, Johanna Roehrich at [mentor@hsinj.org](mailto:mentor@hsinj.org) or (973) 455-0129.