

## 2007 NAHRO AWARDS

### AGENCY AWARDS OF MERIT IN HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

#### PROGRAM INNOVATION: RESIDENT AND CLIENT SERVICES

#### ELDERLY OR SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING – SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS

#### “HOME SWEET HOME”

**1. SUMMARY OF PROGRAM:**

Hunter Plaza is a 225 unit complex for the elderly and disabled operated by the Fort Worth Housing Authority (FWHA). Residents often do not have skills and resources needed to improve their living conditions. The “Home Sweet Home” Program is an innovative, pro-active approach initiated by staff to address this concern. For months, staff conducted individual needs assessments. This program helped to identify and resolve problems (housekeeping, social, medical, etc.) by referring residents to homemaker services, conducting housekeeping classes and providing cleaning supplies for each family. Prior to this program, residents faced evictions related to housekeeping issues.

**2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM:**

Many of the elderly and disabled residents of Hunter Plaza were experiencing physical and developmental disabilities that prevented them from improving their living conditions. As a result, in November 2005, the Fort Worth Housing Authority implemented the “Home Sweet Home” Program to support residents in their efforts to improve their living environments and to identify and address the needs of these individuals. A team of FWHA staff was involved in implementing the aforementioned program. Each individual household was visited by FWHA staff, including a social worker who assessed all of the residents that were at home at the time of each visit so that there would be documentation of the areas where residents needed assistance. Identified areas of need included, chronic housekeeping issues, the need for homemaker services/home health aides, unreported maintenance issues, lack of money to purchase basic necessities, and a lack of knowledge of agencies that could assist residents with problems. Each individual was assessed to identify the problems they were experiencing and a service plan was developed and tailored to their particular needs.

**3. THE RESULTS/SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM:**

The "Home Sweet Home" Program has proven to be very successful. For example, prior to program implementation 32% of Hunter Plaza residents were experiencing housekeeping issues, 12% needed homemaker services, 4% needed furniture, 3% needed prescription assistance, and, 1% needed Medicaid or Medicare. One year following the program's inception, only 5% had housekeeping issues, 2% needed homemaker services, 2% needed furniture, 1% needed prescription assistance, and, 1% needed Medicaid or Medicare. Also, many of the residents that were eligible for state insurance programs and not utilizing them now do mainly because of the program. In addition, the number of evictions related to housekeeping issues have been significantly reduced as well.

**4. THE COST/FINANCING OF THE PROGRAM:**

The cost to implement the "Home Sweet Home" Program has been relatively inexpensive because of the partnerships that were created with various service providers. For example, Pantego Church contributed cleaning supplies, vacuum cleaners, pillows, pots, dishes, etc. U.S. Medical Housecalls and T&T Home Health Agency are providing homemaker services for Hunter Plaza residents free of charge. The FWHA social worker continues to assist residents with completing paper work necessary to access supportive services. In addition, the FWHA purchased and contributed cleaning supplies for the program totaling \$14,000.00.

**5. INNOVATION:**

The comprehensive approach undertaken by the Fort Worth Housing Authority to identify and address the housing/living needs of Hunter Plaza residents has enabled these individuals to continue to live independently and age in place. In addition, the initiatives undertaken by FWHA staff, including encouraging residents to be self-sufficient and to take personal responsibility for their living conditions, have greatly enhanced the quality of life for Hunter Plaza residents.

The practical solution of creating partnerships with outside service providers, providing empowerment activities for Hunter Plaza residents, and monitoring the progress of residents and evaluating the overall success of the "Home Sweet Home" Program have proven to be an innovative approach in meeting FWHA's goal of providing decent, safe and affordable housing for all residents.