



Changing the Path for Houston's Homeless

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**HOUSTON ENDOWMENT MAKES \$12.5 MILLION INVESTMENT
IN THE WAY HOME, HOUSTON'S MODEL TO END
HOMELESSNESS**

More than 2,200 Houstonians like "Sally" have found way home

Houston, Texas (February 23, 2015) – Sally* has lived in the greater Houston area for over 10 years. Unfortunately, life took a downward turn in 2010 when she found herself homeless. Service provider staffers at multiple homeless services organizations, including THE BEACON Day Center, Houston Area Community Services, Healthcare for the Homeless – Houston, SEARCH Homeless Services, and Star of Hope engaged with Sally to try to help her. Sally was suffering from PTSD due to her many years on the streets, and it was hard for her to trust people. Under the umbrella of [The Way Home](#), the collaborative model to prevent and end homelessness in Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County, system partners made a connection that helped Sally change her path in life. She was housed in late 2014, and with ongoing supportive services remains stable to this day.

The Way Home was launched in 2014 under the leadership of the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care, which in 2012 began the work of transforming the homeless response system from managing homelessness to ending it. The Way Home includes more than 60 local service providers and partners working together to create integrated, community-wide strategies to prevent and end homelessness. The positive impacts of this effort to date are staggering. In fact, Houston is leading the nation in reducing homelessness, becoming the national model for other cities. The Way Home expects to achieve its 2015 goals – to end chronic homelessness and veteran homelessness by the end of the year – before moving on to address family homelessness and setting the path to end all homelessness so that ultimately no one has to be without permanent housing for more than 30 days.

Houston Endowment, the well-known Houston-based philanthropic foundation established by Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones in 1937, has stepped up in a big way to put some dollars behind the system to help those who are homeless in the community. The Foundation recently announced six major grants totaling

\$12.5 million to local non-profit organizations that are part of [The Way Home](#).

The grant recipients are:

CSH - \$4M

Healthcare for the Homeless - Houston - \$1.4M

New Hope Housing - \$1.6M

SEARCH Homeless Services - \$3M

Star of Hope - \$1M

The Women's Home - \$1.5M

“Houston Endowment values opportunities to work with both public and private entities towards systemic solutions. The Way Home initiative presented the opportunity to have a broad, leveraged impact in the community,” said Ann B. Stern, President of Houston Endowment. “An [Action Plan](#) was outlined by the Houston Harris County Continuum of Care which focuses on coordinated strategic investments that will drive the new system, matching resources to the need for quality affordable housing and stabilizing services, with an effective governance and monitoring system in place. We are pleased with the progress that The Way Home partners and service providers are making in our community. Houston is becoming a model for other communities in tackling homelessness, and Houston Endowment wants to help pave the way to make it happen.”

Sally is like hundreds of others remaining in the area who need permanent housing with supportive services to end their homelessness. The Way Home partners use Coordinated Access, a Web-based, electronic system that manages real-time unit availability. This system matches homeless individuals to permanent housing with services based on level of service need. That said, there are simply not enough Permanent Supportive Housing (known as PSH) units already available to help the individuals and families in need. The Way Home's leadership and other major partners, such as Houston Mayor Annise Parker's Leadership Team on Homelessness, have begun quietly engaging private funders to augment the costs needed to create the housing solutions needed. It is estimated that 2,500 housing units are needed - a mix of new construction, rehabilitation, and conversion of existing apartment units.

Daphne Lemelle, Community Development Director for the Harris County Community Services Department, recently stepped in as Chair of the CoC Steering Committee, replacing Houston Housing Authority's President & CEO Tory Gunsolley who held the position for the past two and a half years.

Lemelle expressed her appreciation for Houston Endowment's investments in The Way Home, saying “Just as service providers are collaborating, we are delighted to see pacesetter funders such as Houston Endowment demonstrate their belief in what we are doing for our community. Permanent housing, coupled with supportive services, is the solution to ending homelessness, and there are costs involved. While public entities will provide most of the funding to

accomplish the goals set forth, about five percent of the campaign - \$33 million - will need to be contributed by private donors and the Endowment's investment is a great start."

Sally is just one person with one story, and there are so many stories to be told and lives to be changed. Through The Way Home, more than 2,200 chronically homeless individuals have been housed since 2012. In addition to the private fundraising effort underway, members of the community are encouraged to support The Way Home by contributing to the "Barrier Buster" fund, which helps provide newly-housed individuals and families with security and utility deposits, furniture, household goods and food. Individuals interested in supporting The Way Home may visit www.thewayhomehouston.org to donate to the Barrier Buster Fund online, volunteer or take the pledge and stay connected.

**In order to protect the privacy of the formerly homeless individual referenced in this story, her name has been changed.*

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The Way Home is the collaborative model to prevent and end homelessness in Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County. Learn more at www.thewayhomehouston.org.