

JESSIE S HOUSE EXPANDS TO SERVE GROWING NUMBER OF HOMELESS FAMILIES

Amherst, MA – Feb. 14, 2007 – Jessie’s House, Hampshire County’s only emergency shelter serving families, is increasing its capacity to provide shelter for more families. In addition to the shelter’s location in Amherst, which provides shelter for six families, the program is moving into two rental buildings in South Hadley that will have space for 10 families.

“Families with children are one of the fastest growing segments of the homeless population,” said Jane Banks, director of Jessie’s House. “According to the Conference of Mayors, homeless families make up 33 percent of all homeless people in the U.S. Rents in Massachusetts are the third most expensive in the country, so families across our state are struggling to keep a roof over their heads.”

The shelter expansion comes at the request of the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), the state agency responsible for administering public assistance programs for needy citizens of the Commonwealth. “DTA started talking with us in the fall about the rise in the number of homeless families in the state and how we might help serve more families here in our area,” said James Goodwin, president/CEO of the Center for Human Development (CHD), the Springfield-based nonprofit that is the parent agency of Jessie’s House. “We immediately began to look into the possibility of leasing additional space for Jessie’s House.”

“Jessie’s House has a 23-year record of serving homeless families from throughout our region,” said Banks. “We are fortunate to be part of a strong organization like CHD, which has the capability to respond quickly when community needs change or grow. We look forward to guiding the additional families who come to us towards a future of hope, good health and a safe place to call home.”

About Jessie s House

At Jessie’s House, over 40 families a year receive supportive shelter, food, case management, life skills education, and referrals to other community services. The shelter’s outreach program also assists families in the transition out of shelter and provides extensive stabilization supports once they find permanent homes. Jessie’s House was founded in Northampton in 1983; in 2005, the shelter moved to Amherst. For more information on Jessie’s House, visit <http://www.jessieshouse.org>.

About the Center for Human Development

The Center for Human Development provides over 3,500 children, adults and families in Massachusetts and Connecticut with care from 900 human service professionals working in over 40 community-based programs. For more information, visit <http://www.chd.org>.

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