



Osteopathic Heritage Foundation  
Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville

1500 Lake Shore Drive, Suite 230  
Columbus, Ohio 43204-3800

P. (614) 737-4370 Toll-free (866) 737-4370  
F. (614) 737-4371

heritage@ohf-ohio.org  
www.osteopathicheritage.org

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 18, 2009

Contact: Terri Donlin Huesman, Director of Programs, (614) 737-4359, [tdonlin@ohf-ohio.org](mailto:tdonlin@ohf-ohio.org)

### **Athens and Hocking Counties Awarded \$100,000 Grant, Part of Rural Homeless Initiative**

Columbus, OH—Athens and Hocking Counties were awarded a Phase II grant of \$100,000 from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville through its Rural Homeless Initiative of Southeast and Central Ohio (RHISCO). Hocking Housing Management will serve as the fiscal agent for the project, which will provide needed case management services to at-risk youth and families transitioning into stable housing in Athens and Hocking Counties. The \$100,000 grant is one of 12 grants totaling \$614,264, and part of Phase II of RHISCO, a multi-year, multi-phase initiative designed to improve the health and quality of life of homeless individuals and to prevent and end homelessness through systems prevention and emergency prevention in the 17-county Southeast and Central Ohio area.

“The Foundations are committed to advancing strategies that demonstrate positive outcomes related to homeless prevention for at-risk populations,” said Terri Donlin Huesman, director of programs for the Foundations. “Nationally, the philanthropic sector, through Funders Together to End Homelessness, has endorsed key principles for ending homelessness, including support of effective prevention programs and strategies, such as effective discharge planning, employment training, substance abuse counseling, and family reunification efforts.” Donlin Huesman continued, “The Foundations will continue to support efforts that align with local, state and national priorities.”

Terri Gillespie, the grant project manager and supportive services coordinator with Integrated Services of Appalachian Ohio, said that she is very pleased with the successes of the program, now in its second year. “The need for transitional housing surfaced as a priority in our plan to end homelessness for the two counties,” said Gillespie. “We also received funding from the Ohio Housing Trust, which will provide rental assistance for kids who’ve aged out of foster care and the criminal justice system, and to provide direct housing.”

A key learning from the project is that 72 percent of direct housing participants aged out of or spent significant time in a foster care program as a teenager. Gillespie said that youth, “put themselves in horrible, vulnerable places. These preventive and supportive services are invaluable for people at risk of homelessness—those who are about to be homeless or are ‘doubled up,’ and they provide a beacon of hope.”

Homelessness prevention may come in the form of short-term supports designed to help individuals and families maintain housing when their living situation becomes unstable, typically through notices of eviction and utility terminations. Gillespie said that while no one agency can fix what is

needed and there are not enough resources to go around, the multi-phased grant investment has helped her agency become more confident in its ability to collaborate with partnering agencies such as Metropolitan Housing, children's service agencies and homeless and domestic abuse shelters.

Craig Garrelts, executive director of the non-profit organization Hocking Housing Management and executive director of Hocking Metropolitan Housing, has witnessed, "Interesting, positive outcomes."

"Seventy percent of the 18 kids going through the program are now either in an educational program, employed and out of their housing assistance program, and able to sustain themselves without case management," said Garrelts.

Case management may involve negotiating with a landlord to secure a place to live, assisting with the application process for a job, helping individuals enroll in school, and building esteem or assisting those struggling with depression.

Both Gillespie and Garrelts note a surprising finding—babies. "We did not anticipate that working with this youth would quickly become working with this family when they had a baby," said Gillespie. Garrelts said that the program helped youth in the foster care system who have had children reunite with their children, align them with resources and work toward a more stable family outcome. Some individuals have gotten married or a spouse has become employed.

Diane Pfaff, licensed independent social worker and planning and reporting coordinator for the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board serving Athens, Hocking and Vinton Counties (also known as the 317 Board), said that the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville's multi-year investment, "is instrumental in helping the program to build capacity. We also feel positive about our ability to sustain services in rural areas where we don't have those layers of management. Everything is so streamlined, so we pull together and have been able to leverage additional resources."

"We are trying to prevent people from moving on to a homeless situation or becoming long-term homeless individuals. This was and is a huge opportunity for us to go out and try something that heretofore there was no funding or mechanism for," said Garrelts. "The end result will give my community a long-term return."

**The RHISCO grants are part of the Foundations' \$1,501,764 investment in community health in central and southeastern Ohio. Information about each of the 12 RHISCO grants follows:**

- To increase housing stability and employment opportunities through financial assistance, case management, referrals and transportation in Fayette County: \$50,000 to Community Action Commission of Fayette County (Washington Court House, Ohio).
- To increase access to employment, housing and healthcare opportunities through provision of transportation services in Meigs and Jackson Counties: \$48,264 to Woodland Centers, Inc. (Gallipolis, Ohio).
- To expand a comprehensive family homeless prevention program designed to facilitate housing stability through case management and support in Pickaway County: \$50,000 to Pickaway County Community Action (Circleville, Ohio).

- To improve existing low-income housing stock through needed emergency home repairs in Perry County: \$30,000 to Perry County Family and Children First Council (New Lexington, Ohio).
- To increase housing stability and economic independence through comprehensive financial support services in Knox County: \$50,000 to InterChurch Social Services (Mount Vernon, Ohio).
- To provide needed case management services to at-risk youth and families transitioning into stable housing in Athens and Hocking Counties: \$100,000 to Hocking Housing Management (Logan, Ohio).
- To support at-risk youth transitioning into independent, permanent housing through coordinated supportive services and housing assistance in Delaware County: \$50,000 to The Salvation Army (Columbus, Ohio).
- To prevent eviction through short-term emergency housing support and case management in Union County: \$50,000 to The Salvation Army (Columbus, Ohio).
- To increase financial stability by increasing access to eligible tax and public benefits in Madison County: \$21,000 to The Community Action Organization of Delaware, Madison and Union Counties, Inc. (London, Ohio).
- To expand county-level information and referral systems designed to connect at-risk families and individuals to existing community housing resources in Fairfield County: \$50,000 to Fairfield County Family, Adult and Children First Council (Lancaster, Ohio).
- To prevent housing eviction and/or foreclosure through short-term subsidies and supportive services in Licking County: \$50,000 to Licking County Coalition for Housing (Newark, Ohio).
- To expand a comprehensive case management program designed to transition survivors of domestic violence into permanent housing and to stabilize families through short-term housing assistance in Washington and Morgan Counties: \$65,000 to Washington-Morgan Community Action (Marietta, Ohio).

The Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville (the Foundations) include eighteen Ohio counties in the primary funding area including: Athens, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Hocking, Jackson, Knox, Licking, Madison, Meigs, Morgan, Perry, Pickaway, Ross, Union, Vinton and Washington. The Foundations also fund nationally with respect to osteopathic biomedical research and osteopathic medical education.

### **About The Osteopathic Heritage Foundations**

The Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville (the Foundations) are pre-eminent in advancing osteopathic medical care, biomedical research and osteopathic medical education, nationally, and community health and quality of life programs in central and southeastern Ohio. The mission of the Foundations is to improve the health and quality of life in the community through education, research and service consistent with the principles of its osteopathic heritage and the philosophy of osteopathic medical care. The Foundations advance this mission through a broad spectrum of funding awards, initiatives and funding methods.