2013 was a banner year for the work we do throughout the Commonwealth in ending homelessness. As you will recall, we began the successful paradigm shift of our response to homelessness by moving from a shelter model to a ‘first-step’ supported housing model in MetroWest in 2006 with the closing of the shelter at 105 Irving St. in Framingham.

Modeling our MetroWest success in Worcester, we began our transformation there in 2008. In collaboration with the City of Worcester and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), our work there culminated in the closure of the former PIP Shelter at 701 Main St. and the opening of our new Triage and Assessment Center at 25 Queen St. in May. 25 Queen St. is now the front door of ending homelessness in greater Worcester. We are also excited about now having the opportunity to apply what we have learned in MetroWest and Worcester to the Lowell area as we contemplate the creation of housing opportunities there.

Successful diversion to more appropriate housing choices, careful collaboration with our referral partners, linkage to critical behavioral health, health and human services, linkage to training and jobs, etc., are all important elements that have made this rapid rehousing approach a great success.

We would not be able to do this without the tremendous support of our collaborating partners – city and local government, state agencies, sister housing and human service agencies, neighborhood advocates and many, many others. We owe our thanks to them all.

We are also grateful for the support of the SMOC Board of Directors for their guidance and support of this work. In addition, the management and line staff of the agency are an incredible force of experienced and committed professionals who get the job done and ensure great outcomes.

This Annual Report highlights many other significant accomplishments this year that reflect the energy, passion and dedication to mission that is the South Middlesex Opportunity Council. We thank the dedicated staff and volunteers who work day in and day out to help meet the basic human needs of many thousands of our fellow residents.

Best,

Bruce Hulme, President
SMOC Board of Directors

Jim Cuddy
Executive Director
**Mission Statement**

SMOC’s mission is to improve the quality of life of low-income and disadvantaged individuals and families by advocating for their needs and rights; providing services; educating the community; building a community of support; participating in coalitions with other advocates and searching for new resources and partnerships.

**2013 Highlights**

In May of 2013, The South Middlesex Opportunity Council, in conjunction with the City of Worcester and its Plan to End Homelessness, opened the new Triage and Assessment Center at 25 Queen Street in Worcester and closed the doors of the PIP Shelter at 701 Main Street. This was a major accomplishment, preceded by years of visionary planning. The dedication ceremony was attended by neighbors, partners and local and state officials. The new building has 25 emergency shelter beds and 10 assessment beds. The triage and assessment approach is designed to swiftly transition the homeless into a coordinated system of supported housing and care – thus moving from a shelter approach to permanent housing solutions.
The Henry Lee Willis Center, Inc. (HLWC) was a longtime non-profit human services provider in the Worcester region that, among other things, provided case management and sober housing in addition to housing for homeless families. The HLWC was experiencing financial instabilities and in late 2013, SMOC was approached by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development and asked to assume responsibility for delivery of these essential services. The South Middlesex Non-Profit Housing Corporation (SMOC Housing) subsequently purchased each of the properties that were formerly managed by the HLWC in order to provide a seamless transition for the program participants.

This past May, SMOC celebrated the opening of 122 Prospect Street in Hardwick, MA. The building includes 11 units of critically needed supportive housing for low-income individuals in the Greater Worcester region. This brings the number of affordable SMOC housing units to 408 within the region. This site is wheelchair accessible and this project enables us to provide a warm, homelike environment for our residents.

This year saw the launch of Hoops & Homework, a free after school program for children in grades kindergarten through 5, who reside in Precinct 17, Framingham’s most under-served neighborhood. The program is the result of a partnership with the Town of Framingham and is run by SMOC staff and volunteers and advised by the town appointed Hoops & Homework Advisory Committee. The young student participants are provided with a nutritious snack, access to computers, assistance with their homework, a place to read and some organized down time for games, crafts and basketball. The purpose is to provide a safe and nurturing space for learning and enrichment activities for the neighborhood children. Research shows that afterschool programs not only keep kids safer, but can also improve academic performance and decrease childhood obesity.
In June of 2013, SMOC affiliated with the Lowell Transitional Living Center (LTLC), which provides the most vulnerable adults in the Lowell area with food, shelter and stability in a respectful and dignified setting. LTLC provides programs and services that meet immediate needs for emergency shelter and food, along with case management and other services that enable those served to make the transition from a shelter bed to a permanent place to call home. The LTLC Board and SMOC will work together to help create housing opportunities for shelter guests as a long term solution to individual homelessness.

In May of 2013, SMOC experienced the tragic loss of a building in Northbridge due to a fire. Fortunately, none of the families residing in the building were hurt, though they were relocated. Today, through the insurance proceeds, we are able to rebuild the housing that was destroyed. We are grateful that we are able to recreate these housing opportunities for thirteen families in the Northbridge area.

In June, SMOC and the United Way of Tri-County celebrated the opening of the United Way’s Distribution Services Program at 29 Bishop Street in Framingham, right next door to 7 Bishop Street, the future home of SMOC’s new Headquarters. The United Way Distribution Services Program offers furniture, bedding and other essentials that have been donated for free at prices that are 50 to 80 percent below market rates. The proceeds from the sales help support the organization’s social service programs.

SMOC acquired 15 Blandin Avenue in August of 2005 with the intent of redeveloping the property and moving our corporate headquarters there. Due to the real estate market and other forces, we were unable to move ahead with the project and it became apparent to us that the window of time for redevelopment for our purposes had passed. We began to actively market the property at a time when the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) had begun to seek out a new headquarters and operation center as it was outgrowing its current location. It was a win/win situation for both SMOC and the MWRTA when we sold the property to them in June of this year. We look forward to the MWRTA becoming a neighbor in the near future.
In October of 2011, we experienced a fire at 3 Merchant Rd. in Framingham where the Turning Point Emergency Shelter was located. Fortunately, the fire did not result in any injuries due to the quick and responsible action of staff at the site at the time of the fire. Unfortunately, extensive damage to the building required us to vacate the building for over a year. In the interim, 73-75 Hollis St. in Framingham and other locations helped fill the need for housing. Turning Point reopened in June of this year. This will afford a newly rehabbed and respectful environment for homeless individuals and free up 73-75 Hollis St. for more stable housing options for others.

On a beautiful October Day last year, SMOC and Voices Against Violence held the first annual “Walk to Break the Silence” walkathon. Thanks to a great turnout and the tireless fundraising of our volunteers, proceeds from the Walk exceeded $18,000. All proceeds benefitted the Voices Against Violence Program, a program that serves the victims and survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence in the MetroWest area.

Last October was the 11th Annual South Middlesex Opportunity Council Golf Tournament. The tournament raised nearly $58,000 to support SMOC’s Common Ground Resource Center, the gateway to the Single Adult Homeless System and the center of SMOC’s campaign to end homelessness.

In May, Serenity House held its 3rd Annual Fundraiser, “A Celebration of Saving Lives”, raising over $17,000 to support the continued operations of Serenity House. Serenity House, located in Hopkinton, MA, is a residential recovery program that provides treatment and services to as many as 35 women seeking recovery and self-sufficiency.
**FREDERICK RUBIN AWARD**

**Steven Penna**

Steven Penna was on the Open Pantry Community Services (OPCS) Board of Director’s from 2008 to 2009 until OPCS affiliated with SMOC. Since 2009 he has been a faithful member of the OPCS advisory board and recently became the OPCS representative on the SMOC Board of Directors. Steve is a true asset to the OPCS advisory board. He is the first person to help OPCS with an event, attend a speaking engagement or volunteer at our programs. He spends his holidays at our holiday meal program, his weekends at our fundraisers and has even woken up at 5 am to sell raffle tickets at the Mayflower Marathon. He is truly committed to the mission of OPCS which is evident through his words and deeds.

**MANAGER OF THE YEAR**

**Tom Jordan,**  
*Program Director, New Beginnings*

Working for SMOC since 2005, Tom understands better than most the challenges our clients face every day. He has been in the field of substance abuse for many years and truly understands the dynamics of recovery from many different perspectives. He serves as both a role model and teacher which is what makes him such a successful manager. He approaches both managing staff and interactions with clients, as a teacher, mentor, and moderator. His style is unassuming yet direct and insightful. Tom embodies the quintessential manager, knowledgeable and passionate about the field of substance use, supportive, resourceful and nurturing with his staff, calm, engaging, sincere and compassionate with his clients, and reliable and generous toward his colleagues.
EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

Ed Cannon, Case Manager, Safe Haven
Since he started in 2011, Ed has been an invaluable asset to SMOC and the Safe Haven program. Safe Haven serves some of our most complex clients: chronically homeless veterans, many of whom are dual diagnosed and actively using drugs/alcohol. Ed has demonstrated incredible flexibility and commitment to working with these clients and an unwavering commitment to making this program a success. He takes every task thrown his way with grace and enthusiasm, including when he stepped up to manage the shelter in the absence of the Program Supervisor. He is an excellent example of our mission in action - always working to improve quality of life for individuals served and building a community of support.

Kim Kennedy, Operations Manager, Open Pantry Community Services
Kim is a committed, engaging and dedicated employee who has been with Open Pantry Community Services (OPCS) on and off for close to 20 years. She is the “go to” staff member at OPCS. This became more evident than ever when she assumed additional responsibilities while the Division Director was on maternity leave. She did so without batting an eye and kept OPCS running smoothly while continuing to raise funds and write grants. Her outgoing nature and sense of humor create a comfort for all with whom she interacts. Whether it is a new staff person, volunteer or client, she makes everyone feel comfortable and welcomed. Kim is a true asset to OPCS.

Michelle Mullin, Property Manager, MetroWest
This being Michelle’s second stint with SMOC, she epitomizes what it means to be a SMOC employee. Working in the highly intensive area of Property Management for the last 3 years she understands the mission, needs of the tenants and the importance of working as a team to ensure our clients are housed and have the resources they need to remain in their home. She is there whenever or wherever you need her without question and has stepped up during difficult times such as responding to the fire in Northbridge and assuming additional responsibility in her manager’s absence. She understands that no one wants to be in a shelter, they want to be in a home and she works diligently to make sure that happens. She takes pride in her work and goes that extra mile every day.
MARGARET DAVITT SPIRIT OF SMOC AWARD

Jim Shay and John Pendleton

This year, we justifiably honor two individuals with the “Margaret Davitt Spirit of SMOC” Award, two individuals whose spirit, energy and commitment have made SMOC what it is today.

First, let’s talk about Jim Shay, who joined us as a staff member about fifteen years ago to run the Mass Can Program, which was the precursor to our best-in-class employment program called Ready, Willing & Able. Jim Shay directed Mass Can for three years before leaving the agency to enter the private sector, but he didn’t really leave us because he joined our Board. During the twelve years that Jim has been on the Board, he has been an invested, involved, caring and committed Board member. Simply put, he understands and forwards the mission of the agency in both micro and macro ways. On the macro level, he has an intuitive sense of what it takes for the agency to help people to move forward and, as a Board Member, has been instrumental in shaping and directing the forces that effect helping people move from a situation of dependency and poverty to a situation of successful independence. On the micro level, he has made a personal commitment over these years to reach out to people living in chaos or who are struggling to make it through each day and helping them find a new path. Jim Shay has always had the agency’s mission at heart and has always had our back. Even though he will be moving off the Board, he will always be a part of the fabric, culture and spirit of this agency.

John Pendleton is remaining with the agency, but we wanted to find a way to honor him for what he’s done, what he’s doing, and what we know he will continue to do. John coordinates our young adult program for people in recovery that has the acronym “YARCM.” The program is largely successful based on John’s energy. Just recently, he coordinated a move from YARCM’s home on Pearl Street to its new home at 16R Gordon Street. He handled it impeccably. John’s a person who cares about social and economic justice. He cares about the big picture issues, but he never forgets the individual picture issue of an 18 or 19-year-old struggling to remain sober. John’s a joy to work with. So, to both John and Jim, we say Bravo! and thank you.
ANNIE BRADFORD FRIEND OF SMOC AWARD

Herb Chasan
Herb Chasan, long-time community activist and champion of social and economic justice has been a committed advocate for SMOC and the work we do throughout the MetroWest region, and particularly in the Town of Framingham. Herb is all about coalition building as a means of moving forward with progressive action in a wide array of critically important community issues ranging from childhood education to homelessness to the Holiday Lunch to families with substance abuse and more. Most recently, Herb was the leading force behind the creation of the Hoops & Homework Program, an after-school program for children in the Precinct 17 area of Framingham. The program, operated by SMOC, provides recreational and educational opportunities for children who otherwise would be unable to participate in an after school program. We are pleased to honor Herb Chasan for his many significant contributions to helping to meet many unmet needs in our community.

ISABEL HARRISON VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

Elsa Aviza, Hoops & Homework
Elsa Aviza is well known throughout the Town of Framingham as an irrepressible advocate for disadvantaged and disenfranchised individuals and families. Whether it is working on a food drive, serving as a volunteer for a painting and landscaping project at our Sage House, or coordinating volunteers for the Hoops & Homework Program along with many other volunteer tasks, Elsa has earned the respect and admiration of everyone she has come in contact with. Elsa’s tireless support of human services programs and her personal and total commitment to helping others certainly qualify her for this award. We are pleased to honor Elsa Aviza and are humbled and grateful for all she has done for our community.

Janet King, Pathways Family Shelter
Janet King has been volunteering at Pathways Family Shelter for many years, coming as often as once a week to do arts and crafts with the children. Janet is unique in that she has a strong belief in using “recycled” or recyclable materials. She brings a bag full of scraps of cardboard, pieces of material, buttons, etc. and creates a project with the kids, such as a magic ship. Sometimes she brings musical instruments, and she and the children form a band and have a parade. Janet always stops in the office and gives the staff coupons she has clipped from the newspapers to share with the residents. Each October Janet creates Halloween costumes for the children incorporating her recycled materials. Janet also belongs to a group in Wellesley, who create stuffed teddy bears. She shared these creations with the children at Pathways in the past, and more recently with the children in Scattered Sites housing in order to make the adjustment easier for them. She is irreplaceable and we always enjoy seeing her at the shelter!
Muriel McCloy (posthumous), Head Start
Muriel’s long history with the Head Start program began in the late 1960’s when she enrolled her youngest son while living in the state of California. Muriel was struggling as a single parent to raise her four young children. It was then that she learned first-hand how Head Start supports preschool age children and their parents during challenging times. Muriel left a 20-year career at Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Framingham when she was hired by our own Head Start program in the early 1990’s. She worked at Head Start for 11 years, retiring due to health conditions. Once retired, Muriel looked for any opportunity to be involved with Head Start, volunteering for numerous committees and events throughout the years. Muriel was an impassioned member of our program and always an advocate for young children or for their parents.

Carol Willey, Open Pantry Teen Parent Program
Carol Willey has been a faithful “PLAY PAL” volunteer with the Open Pantry Teen Parent Program in Springfield, MA since 2009. She volunteers through Horizons for Homeless Children. Every Thursday morning, for the past 4 years, she has shown up to play with the children in the program. She never misses a week, regardless of the weather or her other priorities. When Carol arrives, the children are thrilled to see her. Carol plays music and they dance. She crouches down on the floor and speaks to them on an eye-to-eye level. Carol’s time with the children offers their mothers a much needed respite – it gives them a chance to do homework, take an uninterrupted shower, make calls for apartment searches, or meet with their case managers. We are so blessed to have her. It takes a village to run a Teen Parent Program, and we are so appreciative of Carol Willey, and all PLAY PALS.

COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Chief Steve Carl
The Community Partner Award is given each year to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the agency’s ability to carry out its mission with particular reference to building community support and participating in advocacy around positive change.

Framingham Police Chief Steve Carl is this year’s choice to receive this award in recognition of his thoughtful and dynamic leadership, in partnership with SMOC, in meeting the basic human needs of disadvantaged people in our community while respectfully ensuring the overall public safety of the community at large. In addition to his role as the community’s Police Chief, Steve and his family have also contributed significant time and resources to helping people in need, particularly with the Holiday Meal programs over the years. We are proud and honored to award the Community Partner Award to Steve Carl.
“**IN SEPTEMBER OF 2012, ROGER AND HIS 4 YEAR OLD SON, JACOB FIRST MET ONE OF THE HEAD START FAMILY ADVOCATES...**”

In September of 2012, Roger and his 4 year old son, Jacob, first met one of the Head Start family advocates. The two had been living with Roger’s parents since July 2011 when Jacob’s biological mother abruptly abandoned the family and moved to another state. Times were tough and the Department of Children and Families was involved.

Roger was struggling financially and emotionally in his effort to support his family together by supporting his son. Roger heard about Head Start from a friend and it turned out that as a family of two, Roger and Jacob met the federal income guidelines for the program. An intake was completed and Jacob began attending school in late September. With Jacob in school, Roger was able to focus more on himself, so he sought counseling through the South Middlesex Opportunity Council’s Behavioral Health Services. He also was able to gain temporary employment through Ready, Willing and Able, SMOC’s on the job training program.

When Roger met for the first time with his Head Start Family Advocate, he voiced his concern about the effect that the divorce might have on his son. The Advocate promised Roger that the teachers would keep an eye on Jacob. She also gave Roger information about the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, where he could attain vocational rehabilitation assistance.

In January, the teachers in Jacob’s classroom and Roger at home became quite concerned about Jacob. He was exhibiting behavioral changes. He had become increasingly anxious and emotional, upset if things were out of place or order, and trying hard to never cry in front of anyone. Together with Jacob’s father, Head Start contacted the program’s Certified Human Behavior Consultant to do an observation, evaluation and possible referral. It was determined that Jacob would benefit from supportive intervention from Behavior Health Services to help him cope with his experience of loss and potential grief.

In late April, Roger gained full physical custody of Jacob and proceeded to register his son for Kindergarten. By this time, the matters with the Department of Children and Family Services were resolved. When the Family Advocate met with Roger again in early May, they reviewed the progress that had been made during the previous four months: thanks to the help of Behavioral Health Services, Jacob showed significant positive changes in his behavior. He was no longer anxious and emotional. He was upbeat and focused on developing the skills he needed to prepare for entering Kindergarten in the fall. Roger, too, turned a corner. He began working with Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to prepare for his next career move. Roger was so grateful for the help Head Start had offered his family that in his spare time, he started volunteering in the classroom and attending Parent Center Meetings. Recently, Roger was recognized for his good work with Head Start when he was invited to attend the Annual Parent Appreciation Luncheon.
After her 12 year relationship fell apart and she lost her job, Lucy was homeless, depressed, and living on the streets. In dire need of help, someone told her about Safe Haven, a program of the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC). Lucy wanted to get off the streets, but needed help. She went to Safe Haven and spoke at length with a staff member at the program. The staff member listened to her story and then encouraged Lucy to go to Common Ground Resource Center, the entry point for homeless women and men to receive services from SMOC. He told Lucy about Shadows, SMOC’s female shelter located in Ashland, and Lucy knew that this was where she needed to go. On January 2, 2013 Lucy went to Common Ground and met with the staff. Unfortunately, Shadows was at capacity so they could only offer her a cot. She gratefully accepted.

That first night at Shadows started her new life. Today, Lucy talks about how wonderful her experience at SMOC has been, particularly the outpouring of support, care and concern she felt at Shadows. She describes how the other women in the shelter and Shadows staff helped her grow and evolve beyond her current situation. While staying at Shadows, Lucy utilized SMOC’s Career Center to find a job, attending several workshops on job readiness and skills. She was hired by Ready, Willing and Able, SMOC’s on the job training program, where she gained experience working in a range of positions – as a member of the landscaping crew, as a baby-sitter and as an administrative assistant. While in the process of saving money for a place of her own, Lucy graduated on to Meadows, a transitional living program co-located with Shadows. Through her time with Ready, Willing and Able, Lucy regained her confidence and knew she was on the road to recovery. She was eventually hired as a permanent full time SMOC employee. She has since become a house manager at one of SMOC’s supportive housing properties where she is recognized as an essential team member who is an invaluable asset to the functioning of the program. Lucy encourages those seeking service from SMOC to take advantage of all the agency has to offer. Though she is not sure what is next for her, she is confident that she will continue to reinvent herself through all of the new opportunities in her life.
SMOC CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES - CORE OPERATIONS  
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2013

REVENUES:
Grants & Contracts $ 60,145,123  
Third Party 3,420,448  
In Kind Revenue 7,079,024  
Other 6,768,823  
Total Revenues $ 77,413,418

EXPENSES:
Personnel $ 22,818,765  
Client Assistance 33,316,678  
Contract Services 3,302,158  
Occupancy 7,415,600  
Other 7,849,110  
Total Expenses $ 74,702,311

Change in Net Assets before Depreciation $ 2,711,107  
Depreciation $ 2,004,100

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS $ 707,007

SMOC FY13 REVENUE in millions
Grants & Contracts 60.1  
In Kind 7.1  
Third Party 3.4  
Other 6.8

SMOC FY13 EXPENSES in millions
Personnel 22.8  
Client Assistance 33.3  
Occupancy 7.4  
Contract Services 3.3  
Depreciation 2.0  
Other 7.8
**SMOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Richard Twomey, Holliston  
Pamula Zicko, Holliston

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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SMOC Behavioral Healthcare  508.879.2250  
Fuel Assistance/LIHEAP  508.620.1230  
WIC  508.620.1445  
SMOC Housing Corporation  508.879.6691  
Housing Service Center /  
Housing Consumer Education Center  508.872.0765

**Marlborough Main Number**  
Greater Worcester Housing Connection  508.757.0103  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Center  508.756.6330  
Lowell Transitional Living Center  978.458.9888  
Open Pantry Community Services (Springfield)  413.737.5354