ANNUAL REPORT: 2015
SOUTH MIDDLESEX OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL
In 2015, we continue our task of working to end homelessness in Massachusetts. Family homelessness in Massachusetts still afflicts over 4,000 families. Homelessness among individuals is estimated at nearly 7,000 individuals.

In order to meet this tall order, we must redouble our efforts to implement new strategies and programs that recognize that the best solution to homelessness is a permanent home, not long term shelter and not motels. We are working with state government and the legislature to help design new ways to prevent homelessness in the first place and new ways to intervene rapidly to assess and house those who fall into homelessness. SMOC has an accomplished record of success in developing safe, decent and affordable housing opportunities for both families and individuals and we can bring this experience to bear in the work we do to continue towards our goal of ending homelessness in Massachusetts.

With particular regard to homeless individuals, we have had an exciting start to the 2015 roll out of the Pay For Success (PFS) program. PFS is a Massachusetts pilot program that targets 800 homeless individuals statewide for housing and support services. PFS should significantly lower the overall costs of shelter, health care (Medicaid), hospital emergency room, criminal justice and acute behavioral health care interventions for these formerly homeless individuals. More importantly, the quality of life and the opportunity for each individual to succeed in community living increases dramatically when the person has a stable home life and receives critically important services. SMOC operates PFS in the Lowell, MetroWest and Worcester regions. Our eventual goal is to enroll, house and support 135 individuals.

We would not be able to achieve our sustainable housing goals without the tremendous contribution of SMOC’s family of programs that support people in meeting their goals of successful community living. Rental Assistance, Fuel Assistance, Women Infant Children (WIC) Nutrition, Voices Against Violence, SMOC Behavioral Healthcare clinic and residential programs, Workforce Development, Food and Meal Services, Head Start and Child Care, Family System and Individual System property and case management staff, Housing Consumer Education Center and SMOC Financial Services are SMOC’s collective and comprehensive response to meeting the diverse needs of our community.

We are also grateful to the SMOC staff that supports all of this work – administration, human resources, resource and real estate development, facilities staff, and financial services that help us to meet our goals so successfully.

We thank the SMOC Board of Directors for their guidance and support of this work. We thank our dedicated volunteers who work day in and day out to help meet the basic human needs of many thousands of our fellow residents. We thank our community partners in the non-profit provider, governmental, financial, philanthropic and business sectors for their support, without which we could not achieve all that we have.

Here at SMOC, “Everybody Matters” is played out well and in so many ways throughout the year.

Sincerely,

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.

2015 HIGHLIGHTS:
SMOC CELEBRATES NEW HEADQUARTERS
SMOC celebrated the completion of SMOC’s new Framingham Headquarters with an Open House and Dedication Ceremony. Community partners, public officials, funders, vendors and staff gathered for the occasion. Many commented on how the new building offers a bright, spacious and dignified environment in which SMOC clients can access much-needed services. This was the vision for the new space and we are grateful to all who made this vision become a reality.
SMOC CELEBRATES RE-OPENING OF 75 CHURCH AVE, NORTHBRIDGE, MA

The Open House was held on Tuesday, March 3rd to celebrate the complete rehabilitation of this property, which was destroyed by a fire the previous year. The property consists of 13 apartments designed for low and moderate income families. The dedication ceremony was attended by neighbors, financing partners and state officials. This $2M project was financed by MA Department of Housing and Community Development, Southbridge Savings Bank and the Town of Northbridge.

GOVERNOR PATRICK VISITS SMOC TO LAUNCH PAY FOR SUCCESS INITIATIVE

Governor Deval Patrick visited SMOC in December to announce the launch of the first-in-the-nation Pay for Success initiative to reduce chronic individual homelessness. This initiative leverages philanthropic and private capital investments to provide 500 units of stable supportive housing for up to 800 chronically homeless individuals over six years. We are grateful to the many partners and investors across the state that made this innovative new program possible.
SECURE JOBS INITIATIVE

In FY2015 SMOC’s Workforce Development Division launched the Secure Jobs Program. The program was funded through the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Foundation to provide intensive employment support and placement for homeless or formerly homeless families. Fifty families worked one on one with workforce development staff to identify a career field of interest, gain the training necessary for entry into that field and become equipped with the soft skills needed to secure a job. In first year, thirty eight participants were able to locate and secure full time living wage positions with health benefits.

SMOC LAUNCHES COMMUNITY MEAL INITIATIVE

The Community Meal Initiative provides families and individuals residing in SMOC’s MetroWest housing continuum with the opportunity to come together once a month for an evening of hearty and nutritious food, fellowship and entertainment. Sharing a meal is a way to build community. Community meals provide our housing residents with a place to eat, a place to relax, and a place to socialize with others who share similar life circumstances. We are proud to partner with the Foodie Café, a mission-based local catering company, on this initiative.
SMOC FINANCIAL SERVICES

This past year, SMOC laid the ground work for the launch of SMOC Financial Services. The primary goal of SMOC Financial Services (SFS) is to help financially underserved entrepreneurs start, stabilize and grow their businesses. This will be accomplished through a combination of offerings including small business development workshops, one-on-one technical assistance counseling and a microloan fund. Several workshops were offered in Worcester and Framingham this past year to help area entrepreneurs and a loan fund manager was hired to manage micro lending operations. Small business development aligns well with SMOC’s role as Community Action Agency and as a Community Development Corporation. The promotion of small business is a proven antipoverty and community economic development strategy.
FREDERICK RUBIN BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Joan Rastani

Joan Rastani is all about community connections. Joan joined the SMOC Board in 2011 upon the recommendation of the Town of Framingham, a recommendation which she freely admits she lobbied for given her support of the agency. Joan is an active and engaged member of the Board who immediately fit into the SMOC family. She has helped to grow and enhance the relationships we have with Framingham leaders and officials. Joan is well known throughout the community as a “team player” and this quality has greatly enhanced her ability to access and influence opinion leaders and decision makers at all levels of the community.

Joan prides herself as a great listener, a skill which translates to being able to provide good advice to the SMOC Board and senior staff. Joan has a wealth of experience in both the public and private sectors and has been a dedicated community volunteer on many fronts over the years.

Joan is a great spokeswoman for SMOC and the reach of our programs throughout MetroWest. Joan is proud of and totally committed to our mission and programs. She has participated in a meaningful way in so many of our community activities including the Brack Graduation, the opening of the Police Substation at Hollis St., the Holiday Lunch, the Board fundraising committee, Hoops and Homework, the Voices Against Violence Walkathon and more.

At the community level, Joan is a key leadership person for Framingham’s 9/11 Memorial observance. Joan is an able and enthusiastic voice for SMOC with the Board of Selectmen and other municipal leaders. We are pleased to recognize Joan Rastani as the Board Member of the Year.

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Lynne Miller

Lynne Miller has been the Inspection Supervisor with Rental Assistance for the last 10 plus years and she has demonstrated a commitment to Section 8 housing and the agency like no other. Lynne has actually worked for SMOC for 23 years. She started as an administrative assistant in Rental Assistance and learned all facets of the job from the ground up. She brings that unique quality of versatility where she literally steps in and performs many tasks the department needs because her experience with Section 8 is so vast.

Lynne manages a team of 3 inspectors- they describe her as “loyal, real, and considerate”. She and her team represent SMOC and the Section 8 housing department in 37 cities and towns every day. It is not an easy task- asking property owners to make repairs on apartments, and working tirelessly to eradicate the stigma of Section 8 subsidized housing. Under Lynne’s leadership this has happened. She has cultivated positive relationships with property owners and tenants. She adheres strongly to rules and regulations in order to ensure that the 1,800 tenants who receive Section 8 housing from SMOC live in safe and healthy conditions. She has developed procedures and processes that are tried and true, and was recently praised for her rent reasonableness process during a state audit. Lynne takes and gives direction very well. She motivates her staff and is constantly working to improve her team’s performance because mediocre is just not good enough for her. Simply stated, she is an ideal employee and manager.
EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

Francoise Elise

Francoise Elise has worked for over 6 years as one of SMOC’s key resource development professionals. Francoise has done an excellent job of educating herself about SMOC and its many moving parts. With over 50 programs, there are tremendous resource needs all over the agency which run the gamut from play spaces, to vinyl siding, to Head Start school buses to green jobs training to finding sponsors for our events. Francoise was instrumental in helping the agency and our programs in getting the resources to do all these things and so many more.

Francoise is a creative thinker, a quick study and a great listener and, in combination with her great ability, has used these skills to help become a subject matter expert in the many areas of the agency that seek outside resources to meet our goals of serving people in need. Francoise is adaptable and works well both independently and as part of team depending upon the particular need.

Francoise works collaboratively with Director of Development and our many program directors to produce proposals of the highest standards. Francoise has helped to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the agency during her tenure here. We are delighted to recognize Francoise as Employee of the Year.

Janet Wilcox

Janet Wilcox has been with the agency for 15 years. She currently serves as the first line of contact for the families who seek to utilize our Child Care services. Janet greets every family in a warm professional manner thus alleviating some of their fears or stresses that come along with placing their child in care outside of the home. Her open communication skills build a sense of trust with our families and they often seek her out in times of need. Janet’s ability to work independently and as a team player allows her to offer excellent management and understanding of all subsidy policies and procedures. She continues to develop strategies for the ongoing success of the subsidy program while assisting others, including families and co-workers, as needed. Her attention to detail creates a competency which allows management to trust in her ability to successfully master her job duties. Her strong work ethic creates an environment of commitment and dedication as a representative of SMOC.
TEAM OF THE YEAR
Gail Carey and Susan Morley

Gail Carey and Susan Morley have been with SMOC for over 15 years working as counselors. In 2008 they were tapped to jointly serve as co-clinical directors for SMOC Behavioral Healthcare’s (SBH) outpatient clinics. For years prior, the clinic had struggled with management turnover and faced challenges with fiscal and clinical oversight. Gail and Susan each brought their special skills and strengths to the position. Gail, with her experience and expertise in matters of families and children, has built a strong Children Behavioral Health Initiative program, while Susan focused on adult mental health issues, internal system protocols, training, and cultural competency. Both have worked to build a strong internship program, an invaluable source of new clinicians. However, it’s their relationship with the administrative, medical and clinical staff that really stands out as well as the type of environment they’ve helped to foster. Their teamwork created a culture that is both inclusive and clinically responsive. The clinics have a warm inviting environment, one that is safe and respectful to staff and clients. SMOC and SBH are lucky to have two, dedicated people that embody the mission and vision of the agency and their efforts to integrate these services throughout the agency has had a significant impact on the lives of those we serve.

MARGARET DAVITT SPIRIT OF SMOC AWARD
Patricia Greeley

Patricia Greeley served as a dedicated and active member of the SMOC Board of Directors from 1997 to 2015, when she recently retired from the Board. Pat represented the Head Start Program, which she first came in contact with in 1991, when she began teaching parenting classes at the Family Learning/Parent Center in Framingham. The Center was housed in the same building as the early Head Start Program and many of the Head Start parents attended Pat’s classes in order to improve their parenting skills. Pat served as a Language Arts teacher for 20 years and she holds a BS in Early Childhood and a Master’s in Family Studies from Wheelock College. For 18 years, Pat brought a special energy to the Board and to the agency, sharing her experiences as an early childhood educator with us and helping to inform our programming. For this, and for her enduring spirit of caring and compassion for SMOC’s mission, we award Pat Greeley this year’s Spirit of SMOC award.
ANNE BRADFORD FRIEND OF SMOC AWARD

Robert Brack

Bob has been an invaluable friend to SMOC for many years through his commitment and support of the Joan Brack Adult Learning Center, named in honor of his late wife. The Joan Brack Adult Learning Center was established in 2001 to support low-income Framingham residents in attaining their GED (high school equivalency diploma). Today, The Center hosts the HiSET (formerly GED) preparation program and the English as a Second Language: From Survival to Success program, serving over 100 students each year. The Center continues to uphold Joan Brack’s philosophy of long-term, committed, compassionate dedication to students from all walks of life to acquire greater education and financial self-sufficiency.

Through the generous support of the Joan H. Brack Charitable Foundation, Bob and his family have supported the essential programming provided through The Center. Each year, Bob is an inspirational presence at our graduation ceremony celebrating the accomplishments of students. We are deeply grateful to Bob for his commitment, time, and tenacity and are proud to honor him with this year’s Annie Bradford Friend of SMOC award.

ISABEL HARRISON VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

Faith Community Church

Faith Community Church in Hopkinton was approached last year as part of Serenity House’s outreach effort to request raffle items for their annual fundraising event. A congregation member responded immediately and organized four different groups that donated wonderful gift basket raffle items. At the same time a representative called from Faith church wondering if he could meet to discuss what they coined as a “synergy plan” for the house because they wanted to do more. Over the course of several months, the volunteers from the church developed an elaborate, generous, heartfelt plan to renovate Serenity House. The plan included painting all of the bedrooms and offices, the living rooms and common hallways, replacing carpet throughout the building, and installing new hardwood floors in the dining room. Members of the church delivered hand-made individualized corkboards for decorations in each room. New gutters were installed and the building was power-washed. A team of arborists cut down trees and branches that had grown against the house, raked leaves and planted flowers. Dozens of volunteers, children and adults alike, from the Faith Church descended upon Serenity House over the course of several months to complete this act of love and generosity. When they were done, the place had been transformed. We are proud to present Faith Community Church with the Isabel Harrison Volunteer of the Year award.
Crystal McCarthy

Crystal began volunteering with Lowell Transitional Living Center in March of 2015 assisting with community engagement, client services and administrative duties. She immediately demonstrated her commitment to the cause by using her talents to the fullest at every opportunity. She took the initiative to create new marketing materials for the agency and helped launch the organization’s new volunteer initiative by promoting volunteer orientations and recruiting, coordinating and scheduling new volunteers. Crystal also launched an external social media site to promote the organization’s new donation center; volunteer activities and her independently run fundraising events for LTLC. In addition she is spearheading a book drive after advocating for a library program at LTLC. Crystal’s talents and commitment have been invaluable to Lowell Transitional Living Center. We are pleased to present her with a Volunteer of the Year award as a token of our appreciation.

Carol and Jim Veum

Carol and Jim Veum are two of the most dedicated volunteer drivers ever known to MetroWest Harvest. MetroWest Harvest is a food rescue program that helps feed the hungry by distributing quality donated food and prepared meals to those who need it most. Carol and Jim transported food from food donor establishments to local emergency shelters and food pantries for over twenty years. They were our most reliable volunteers, always available to cover their route and at times, stepping in to cover other routes when needed. For their dedication and commitment to the MetroWest Harvest Program and those it serves, we honor Carol and Jim Veum as Volunteers of the Year.

COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Middlesex Savings Bank (MSB)

This year’s Community Partner of the Year is Middlesex Savings Bank (MSB). Simply put, MSB is an outstanding community bank that SMOC has been able to establish a comprehensive and substantial relationship with. This relationship began more than 25 years ago, during the leadership of the now-retired MSB CEO, Jim Lavoie. The relationship has continued and grown under the leadership of current CEO, John Heerwagen. In addition to serving as SMOC’s corporate bank, MSB has financed some of SMOC’s most important residential developments, acted as a trusted advisor to SMOC’s leadership team regarding the attainment of our real estate objectives, made significant charitable donations to several vital SMOC programs, and contributed two of their Senior Managers to serve as Treasurer of the agency’s Board of Directors. Recently, MSB has agreed to take the lead bank role in the implementation of SMOC Financial Services’ Micro Loan Fund. Middlesex Savings Bank is not simply a good partner for SMOC, they are an outstanding corporate citizen and resource for our community.
When Richard lost his job in Boston, he, his girlfriend Simone and their 2 month-old daughter London found themselves homeless. They could no longer afford to share rent with his sister and after “couch-surfing” for a while, they ran out of options. So they went to the State Department of Transitional Assistance who found them a scattered site apartment with SMOC in Framingham. Scattered site apartments are temporary emergency shelter provided by the state for homeless families. The family is placed wherever there is an opening, regardless of what community they have ties to. Richard, Simone and London’s placement in Framingham left them feeling lost. They were separated from their family and community; they didn’t know what they were going to do.

Then, through their scattered site case manager, they met Wanda, a job placement specialist at SMOC. Wanda helped Richard search for a job training opportunity and was able to land him a spot in the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority’s Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Program, an eight week program that trains people in obtaining their commercial driver’s licenses.

At the same time, Richard and Simone signed up for SMOC’s Secure Jobs Initiative. The Secure Jobs Initiative is an intensive training and placement program for homeless and formerly homeless families funded by the Fireman Foundation. The program provides job readiness training and makes linkages with employers in the community. Richard and Simone learned how to prepare for an interview through preparation and practice. They gained knowledge about how to increase their professionalism. Richard used his new skills to land a job as a full-time driver for the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority. Simone attended a SMOC job fair and used her new contacts and confidence to land a job working for a local landscaping company. In addition they made new friends while in the Secure Jobs Program, helping them as they put down roots in the community.

Seven months after landing in scattered site shelter, Richard, Simone and London moved into their own, non-subsidized, apartment in Framingham. London is in good hands during the day at a nearby daycare center while her parents work. Richard and Simone have since purchased a car with their earnings and are able to stay connected with their family and friends from Boston. They plan to attend SMOC’s upcoming First Time Homebuyer’s Class to help prepare them for buying a house and they plan to get married, as well. Richard and Simone are grateful to SMOC for all of the support and resources. As Richard puts it “When you have good people behind you anything can happen.”
“Carly” came to Shadows through SMOC’s Women’s Transition Program, which offers a safe and supportive environment for women transitioning from MCI Framingham into the community. Carly was serving a prison sentence resulting from her alcohol and heroin abuse when she met Regine, the Women’s Transition Program Case Manager. Carly had no place to go when she got out, she has a large family but after many years of burning bridges, no one would take her. Regine told her about Shadows, an emergency shelter with supportive services for women. Carly didn’t like the idea of going to a shelter, she was afraid it would not be safe and that she would be at risk of relapsing into a life of drugs and crime. But when Carly got to Shadows, she found the exact opposite of what she feared.

“When I walked into Shadows, I was broken…but I found kindness there.” Carly says of Shadows. When she walked in the door, her head was lowered, she wore Department of Corrections issued clothing and her only possessions were a couple of greeting cards and a Christmas stocking someone had made her. Sandy, the House Manager, gave her personal care items, clothing from the donation closet.

Carly was stunned, “Nobody’s ever given me something and didn’t expect anything back. Never.” At the Shadows House Meeting Carly found out about SMOC’s job search resources. The next day she sat down in the computer room at SMOC, puzzled because she had never used a computer before. Evaan, one of the Opportunity Center staff members, taught her how to search for jobs. She found one at a local fast food restaurant and it took her three days to complete the application. But she did it and sure enough she landed the job.

Carly worked in her job and on her recovery and it paid off. She was offered a room in Meadows, the program upstairs from Shadows, which offers transitional housing to women in recovery. Meadows meant more privileges, weekend passes and visits with her family, with whom she was mending ties. After a time here, Vaughn, the Program Director, offered Carly a job as Assistant House Manager and eventually as House Manager. This meant endless hours of Vaughn training Carly on the computer to learn how to fill out paperwork and enter data. But Carly learned and today it is she who provides a source of inspiration for new residents in the Shadows programs. Carly was also promoted to manager at her job and is close with her children and grandchildren. She considers herself very lucky and her goal is to work in the human services field. She holds her head high and wants to give back. In Carly’s words today, “I love my life.”
MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SUPPORTED SMOC IN FY15.

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Wendi Lauziere Wendling
Beth Lawson
Rebecca Lay
Lynda Laver
Jose Lemos
Adam Levin
Anne Lindsay
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<th>Michelle Montouri</th>
<th>Fatima Sousa</th>
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<td>Rohey Wadda</td>
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<td>John Ouellet</td>
<td>Katherine Weeks</td>
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<td>Wanda Oyola</td>
<td>Melissa Weinert</td>
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<td>Cheryl Mone</td>
<td>John Piccuito</td>
<td>Udo and Petra Zoettler</td>
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**FINANCIALS**

**SMOC CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES - CORE OPERATIONS**  
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015

**REVENUES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Contracts</td>
<td>$ 67,067,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third Party</td>
<td>4,051,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Kind Revenue</td>
<td>2,640,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17,260,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 91,019,000</strong></td>
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**EXPENSES:**

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$ 26,472,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client Assistance</td>
<td>35,172,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract Services</td>
<td>3,227,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupancy</td>
<td>9,387,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13,157,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 87,416,000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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**CHANGE IN NET ASSETS**:  
$ 1,273,000

---

**SMOC FY14 Revenue**  
*in millions*

- Third Party: 4.1
- In Kind: 2.6
- Other: 17.3
- Grants & Contracts: 67.1

**SMOC FY14 Expenses**  
*in millions*

- Client Assistance: 35.2
- Personnel: 26.5
- Other: 13.2
- Occupancy: 9.4
- Contract Services: 3.2
- Depreciation: 2.3
GOVERNANCE

SMOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rev. Robert Bachelder, Worcester
Gary Baker, S. Chelmsford
Larry Beane, Lowell
Yvonne B. Brown, Westborough
John H. Ellsworth, Ashland
Jeffrey Fishman, Vice President, Framingham
James D. Hanrahan, Clerk, Framingham
Isabel Harrison, Ashland
Ruth Hibbard, Framingham
Hugo Hollerorth, Natick
Bruce Hulme, President, Framingham
Larry Kaplan, M.D., Wellesley

Dorothy Kennedy, Natick
José Lemos, Ph.D., Boston
Carl McCarthy, Worcester
Joseph Morrissey, Hopkinton
Michael O’Riordan, Treasurer, Norfolk
Jessica Ortiz, Milford
Steve Penna, Springfield
Joan Rastani, Framingham
Lawrence Scult, Wayland
Richard Twomey, Holliston
Betty Williams, Northborough
Pamula Zicko, Holliston

CONTACT INFORMATION

Framingham Main Number
508.872.4853

Child Care and Head Start 508.820.8380
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

Opportunity Center
Common Ground Resource Center 508.620.2690
Career Center 508.620.2677

Additional Programs
SMOC Financial Services 844-766-2737
Marlborough Main Number 508.460.9699
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

SMOC Board member Carl McCarthy

ANNUAL REPORT: 2015