



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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County participates in state Project Homeless Connect

Staff and volunteers offer meals and services

FREEHOLD – On Jan. 29, Freeholder Barbara J. McMorrow joined a team of 100 volunteers and county employees at Monmouth County's 2008 Project Homeless Connect event, part of a statewide effort to obtain a snapshot of the homeless citizens. The team worked at four locations to collect information from individuals and families in need of housing and social services.

"Our goal is to offer a warm meal, a warm coat and friendly services to people," Freeholder McMorrow said. "Project Homeless Connect works to end homelessness throughout the state and nation, but our county volunteers and staff are making a difference right now. They are connecting with people by offering help through various county and not-for-profit service providers. Food and coats are a great start, but we want to make sure that each person who needs and wants assistance is being helped."

The event gathered information about individuals who are homeless or at risk of being homeless, and offers information and services available through the county's Department of Human Services and not-for-profit organizations.

The county invited citizens without a permanent residence and who were at risk of being homeless to participate in the program at locations in Asbury Park, Freehold, Long Branch and Red Bank. These individuals were asked to fill out survey forms and were offered food, clothing and various services, including free health screenings and employment services.

"This is a unified effort to reach out to people without permanent shelter," said Lynn Miller, director of the county's human services department. "While county staff gathered information at four locations, other workers collected information about people housed at emergency and transitional housing agencies and coordinated efforts with municipal representatives to locate unsheltered individuals."

One of the goals of Project Homeless Connect is to gain an accurate picture of the number of people who experience homelessness and to work toward providing them with the needed services, Miller said.

(more)

Monmouth County **News Release-Continued**

The Jan. 29 Project Homeless Connect event was a part of an annual point-in-time survey of the homeless population in the New Jersey. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that such a count of the homeless be done every two years. Information collected about the Project Homeless Connect will be available in four weeks.

"Several business and not-for profit groups made considerable donations to this year's Project Homeless Connect event," Freeholder McMorrow said. "I thank them all for helping reach those in need and for contributing to our caring community."

Primary donors were Burlington Mills Coat Factory, Wegmans (Manalapan and Ocean townships), Holiday Express, and the Visiting Nurses Association of Central Jersey. The Monmouth County Division of Social Services also thanks:

Atonement Lutheran Church in Asbury Park
St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Freehold
St. James Episcopal Church in Long Branch
CPC Behavioral Healthcare
Dunkin Donuts in Freehold
NJ Division of Youth and Family Services
FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties
Habitat For Humanity
I Beseech Thee
Interfaith Neighbors
Tinton Falls Library (children's items)
Long Branch Concordance
Lunch Break in Red Bank
Manna House
Monmouth-Ocean Legal Services
NJ Youth Corps – Asbury Park
Novadebt
180, Turning Lives Around
O.C.E.A.N, Inc.
One Warm Coat
Open Door in Freehold
Salvation Army
Social Security Administration
New Jersey Department of Human Services
Patrick Weir, a student at Middletown's Thompson Middle School
United Way of Monmouth County
USDA, Food and Nutrition Program
Various Ministries (Rev. Sue Mamchak)
Long Branch restaurants

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Monmouth County News Release-Continued



Monmouth County Freeholder Barbara J. McMorrow (right) and Lezma C. Bowen of St. James Episcopal Church, Long Branch, deliver sandwiches to the needy who participated in Project Homeless Connect at the church.