

HAM Hosted By MCAH November 2022



# HOMELESS AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT

"Homeless Not Hopeless"

WWW.MIHOMELESS.ORG

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# MCAH & HAM | TOGETHER AGAIN "HOMELESS NOT HOPELESS"

Homeless Awareness Month (HAM) takes place every November in Michigan to raise awareness about issues relating to housing insecurity and homelessness and to get communities invested in making a difference.

The Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) promotes HAM throughout Michigan, providing support for local partner events and leading the state's communication and awareness raising campaign.

Michigan's observance, which has taken place for nearly 20 years, has become an essential part of our collective effort to promote awareness and understanding of those experiencing homelessness.

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# SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES "HOMELESS NOT HOPELESS"

#### **SPONSORSHIP FORM**

#### **Cornerstone Sponsor (\$2,500)**

- Named as "VIP Partner" on all MCAH Homeless Awareness Month online awareness-raising materials
- Including MCAH's annual statewide HAM event-planning toolkit, email updates, website, etc
- Recognition of your company's support in 2\* statewide press releases
  - \*if partnership form is received by September 30th, 2022
- Two dedicated MCAH social media posts (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn) during Homeless Awareness Month 2022
- Company and logo promotion on Twitter, Facebook and our website
- Corporate mention & logo promotion in an internally produced HAM video
- (Optional) a 1-year MCAH organizational membership

#### Steel Sponsor (\$1,000)

- Named as "Executive Partner" on all MCAH Homeless Awareness Month online awareness-raising materials
- Including MCAH's annual statewide HAM event-planning toolkit, email updates, website, etc
- Recognition of your company's support in 2\* statewide press releases
  - \*if partnership form is received by September 30th, 2022
- One dedicated MCAH social media posts (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn) during Homeless Awareness Month 2022
- Company and logo promotion on Twitter, Facebook and our website
- (Optional) a 1-year MCAH organizational membership



# SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES "HOMELESS NOT HOPELESS"

#### **SPONSORSHIP FORM**

#### **Brick Sponsor (\$500)**

- Named as "Social Media Partner" on all MCAH Homeless Awareness Month online awareness-raising materials
- Including MCAH's annual statewide HAM event-planning toolkit, email updates, website, etc
- Company and logo promotion on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and our website

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• 2-3 hours of free marketing/communications consulting for a HAM related event! (customizable to suit your needs & resources)



# SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES "HOMELESS NOT HOPELESS"

#### **SPONSORSHIP FORM**

	Cornerstone	Steel	Brick
Named as 'Concrete/Metal/Lumber Sponsor' on HAM materials	<b>√</b>	<b>&gt;</b>	✓
Company and logo promotion on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and our website	<b>,</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>V</b>
Recognition of your company's support in 2* statewide press releases	<b>√</b>	<	
Dedicated MCAH social media posts (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn) during Homeless Awareness Month 2022	2	1	
(optional) a 1-year MCAH organizational membership	<b>√</b>	<b>✓</b>	
Corporate mention & logo promotion in an internally produced HAM video	<b>√</b>		
2-3 hours of free marketing/communications consulting for a HAM related event!	5		√ #HAM2022















CHAPTER

# **PREPARATION**

W W W . M I H O M E L E S S . O R G

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### PREPARATION 101

5 minutes, 5 days, 5 weeks We have something for everyone!

The goal of Homeless Awareness Month (HAM) is to raise awareness about issues related to homelessness and to call in your community as partners in the work to prevent and end homelessness.

Whether you are a seasoned veteran or this is your first time hosting a HAM event, remember that you do not need an event or activity for each day. It might be better to focus on one or two well-planned, marketed, and attended activities to increase your impact without unnecessarily increasing your workload.

Homelessness cannot be solved in a month, but a creative, dedicated, and timely effort will contribute greatly to your organization and our collective cause.

MCAH recommends pulling together an informed, dedicated committee to plan and implement your HAM activities.

This can be done whether your planning begins months, weeks, or even days before November 1st





#### BUILD YOUR PLANNING TEAM

We recommend that you begin by seeing what is already happening in your community and identifying partners who can help plan and implement your ideas.

#### Start by contacting:

- Your local Continuum of Care (CoC) leadership
- The Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) for your community
- Shelters in the area
- Other nonprofits interested in housing, homelessness, and poverty
- Faith-based organizations and institutions
- Universities, colleges, and high schools



If you don't know where to start, we can give you contact information (including CoC leadership and HARAs). Working together on a project, no matter how big or small, will make sure that you have all the best available information and resources to make your event a success!

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#### A WORD ABOUT PREPARATION

#### Take 5 Minutes To Answer These Questions

#### **Considerations:**

- What community organizations, local businesses, schools, or other entities should we engage with to partner, sponsor, or market our event or activity?
- · What individuals (members, donors, staff, volunteers, etc) might want to participate in our event or activity?
- Who is knowledgeable about organizing events within the community?
- What is the value of our event or activity for our community, agency, or individuals experiencing homelessness?
- What information (data, policy/advocacy info, stories, etc) would be helpful for our event or activity?
- · How do we market and publicize our event or activity?
- · When and where should the events take place?
- · How many people should coordinate each event?
- · How can we get decision makers and people in power (local elected officials, state legislators, members of Congress, business, funders, media, etc) to participate or attend our event or activity?





### TELL US ABOUT IT

Please take the time to contact MCAH and let us know about your event!

Having a complete list of all activities happening around the state allows us to support your efforts, but it also gives us crucial information we can take to decision makers.

By illustrating just how many communities host HAM events, we are showing our elected officials that this is an issue that our communities care about and want to see more resources and attention paid to ending homelessness.



- Register your event
- Join the <u>Homeless Awareness Month Facebook group</u>
  - Questions? <u>Contact Amy Stephenson</u>

## ABCs | Preparation

#### CAPACITY

What is our capacity for hosting well executed, successful events and activities?





#### GOAL

 What is our primary goal? (educate, advocate, raise funds, etc)

#### **STAKEHOLDERS**

How are we incorporating individuals who have experienced homelessness into our planning process?



#### **Library Program**

In 2019, there were over 15,000 children in Michigan experiencing homelessness, with an average age of seven. For these children, a little empathy can go a long way.

With the theme of empathy in mind, last year Julie Vitale and TrueNorth Services started a program that has local libraries reading books about homelessness to children. After the readings, participants drew pictures centered around housing and discussed what they had just learned. "To teach kids very early that homeless people aren't bad people is the main goal," Vitale said.

To set up the program in 2020, Vitale contacted area libraries about 30 days prior to the start of November, though she recommends reaching out much earlier to ensure that slots for storytime sessions are still available. She explained to librarians that she would like to have readings at the libraries centered around homelessness and offered to buy books for libraries to use. For the event, Vitale used The One With the Scraggly Beard and Still a Family.

"They were very simply stated, they had good pictures," Vitale said. For 2021, TrueNorth provided a list of seven options, and asked librarians to select two. This way, libraries can pick books to help fill out their circulation if they are missing choices that would appeal to certain age groups. Additionally, if a librarian knew of a book about homelessness that was not on the list, they could request it. "They know what their circulation is, they know if they only have books for young kids, old kids, etcetera," Vitale said.

(cont'd)

#### Library Program(cont'd)

Vitale said that they funded the program through a private donation for the first year, but this year TrueNorth set aside funds to hold the events.

After libraries selected books, Vitale dropped them off, so they could be added to the permanent collection. She said some libraries found other books centered around homelessness, and they made a display featuring them all. It could be helpful to provide handouts or posters for libraries that want to make displays. Vitale praised libraries' enthusiastic participation in last year's program. "Reserve your spot, fund their materials, and they'll take it from there," she said.

When holding the events, Vitale recommends offering a virtual option using something like Zoom or Facebook Live. While this was necessary last year for most events due to capacity limits put in place to stay safe during the pandemic, there will always be interested people unable to attend events in person. Increased accessibility is never a bad thing when spreading awareness.

After the readings, Vitale said kids worked on drawings centered around housing, but that other activities like building homes out of Legos could be engaging as well. With the program's success early on, Vitale is hoping to expand the program in 2022. Once the uncertainties presented by the pandemic have subsided, Vitale hopes to bring reading events to local Elementary schools.

"Things happen, everybody's one paycheck away from not being able to make their mortgage or the rent payment," Vitale said. "This can happen to any one of us and we all need to have empathy."





# **EDUCATE**

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#### A WORD ABOUT EDUCATION

Data and statistics should create the base of your educational efforts, but they can't stand alone. While creating educational materials or opportunities, make sure to incorporate personal narratives by elevating the stories of individuals who experience homelessness in your community.

Data and narrative, when combined, tell a crucial story about what homelessness looks like and directs us toward tangible ways that we can be involved in the work to prevent and end homelessness in our community.



# EDUCATION 101

# Homeless Awareness Month is the perfect time to educate your community about housing and homelessness issues.

This is an opportunity to call in your partners and the public on how housing insecurity and homelessness impacts everyone in the community and how we can all work together to find solutions.





### OTHER IDEAS | EDUCATION

There are many activities that you can use to educate your community during Homeless Awareness Month.

- Engage with schools by asking to join an classroom. You could encourage the class to read a book or share a documentary and follow up with questions and discussion
- Host (virtual) movie night. Pick a movie from our list and hold a group discussion
- Share educational materials (MCAH infographics, stories from your organization, etc.) on social media, websites, and local media outlets
- Reach out to local businesses to see if they are interested in becoming partners in your educational efforts by:
  - 1. sharing your social media messages during the month and in turn recognize the contributions of your local supporters
  - 2. donating a percentage of their profits during a period of time to a local homeless service provider



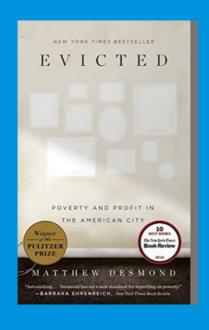
Sponsor a blanket, food, or essential items drive or organize the collection of nonperishable items such as food, hygiene products, clothing, blankets, books, toys etc. at local business and use this as an opportunity to educate the public about basic needs for those experiencing homelessness

# ABCs | Education | Click for Lists















# ABCs | Education | Click for Lists













#### **Project 111**

For Homeless Awareness Month in 2021, Community Collaborative Planner in Livingston County held a call to action event. The event drew people to the Courthouse lawn in Howell to bring attention to homelessness in the county. For the event, participants lined up in three straight lines to make a '111' to symbolize the number of people who are homeless in the county. Participants also wore t-shirts that they could order before the event, or purple which was the event's color theme. Community Collaborative Planner took

• Make a plan with other area homeless service providers to hold the event.

the following steps to set up the event.

- This way, if public turnout isn't as high as hoped, you will have a baseline of attendees for your event.
- It helps to hold the event in an area that sees lots of traffic to increase public engagement.
- Promote event on Social media, invite the public to attend
  - Community Collaborative Planner sold t-shirts for the event, so it could also be a fundraising activity for your organization
- Hold your event.
  - Be adaptable. The Livingston County event didn't get the 111 participants they'd hoped for due to acclimate weather and Covid cases, so they instead organized attendees in three straight lines to form the number '111'.
- Use the event to raise awareness for homelessness in your area and continue the conversation.
  - Community Collaborative Planner Executive Director Amy Johnston said the event helps people to recognize homelessness as an issue in the rural county. With the increased attention, local officials may be more likely to take action.





# **ADVOCATE**

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## ADVOCACY 101

Advocacy is the act of showing public support with the aim to influence decisions in political, economic, and social institutions. Advocacy outreach has been shown to help with the recruitment of individuals for events, gaining public support and participation, and ultimately influencing public policy in your community.

Advocacy can be an explicit goal for your event but even if it is not, remember that the information you present can shape the minds of those who enact policy in your community.

Make sure your information is accurate and properly reflects the need in your area. Using reliable data - like the Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness' 2021 annual report - will ensure your audience has the most accurate regional information.





### GREAT IDEAS | ADVOCACY

- There are many activities that can engage decision makers in your community during Homeless Awareness Month. Consider the following:
  - In Michigan, official proclamations have been secured by MCAH for more than 20 years from the Governor and/or the legislature. This can be easily replicated at the local level (see Communications section) and is a good way to raise awareness in your community and increase engagement with decision-makers
- Assist homeless and low-income individuals in registering to vote
  - Michiganders can now register to vote up to and including election day! By encouraging civic engagement, you are empowering them to use their voice and the power of their vote to support candidates who can enact change for Michigan's homeless response system and those experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity
  - MCAH is leading state efforts to encourage voter registration, education, and candidate engagement and we play a role in national efforts to increase voter participation like Our Homes, Our Votes and Every One Votes
- Encourage grassroots participation in advocating for solutions to housing insecurity and homelessness by helping people in your community:
  - Write their elected officials about the importance of programs for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and at risk of experiencing homelessness



JOIN MCAH'S LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE TODAY

FIND YOUR LOCAL AND STATE REPRESENTATIVES AND FOLLOW THEM ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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### Lights, Camera, Action

In honor of Homeless Awareness Month in 2020, Beacon of Hope Family Care Center produced a video highlighting the growing issue of senior homelessness in the county. The video highlights the lived experience of Edward Price, a Marine Corps Veteran, and Donna Root, a retired nurse. The video serves as an effective tool to spread awareness about homelessness in the rural community.

#### How to make your own awareness video:

- 1. Select an aspect of homelessness you feel needs to be highlighted in your area.
  - Clinton County chose senior homelessness, but said they're interested in doing a video with a broader look at what homelessness looks like in the county and the services available.
- 2. Select speakers for the video.
  - People with lived experiences often leave powerful impressions.
  - Homeless service providers can be knowledgeable about issues facing communities and services available.
- 3. Find a video producer.
  - These projects can be expensive, so working the video into your budget or receiving grant funding can help.
- 4. Record your video.
  - Beacon of Hope asked speakers questions and recorded their responses.
  - Some speakers may prefer to work off a script.
- 5. Distribute video to community.
  - Showing video to local officials could influence them to help tackle the issues presented.
  - Promoting video to local church and community groups could drive local interest.





# **COMMUNICATE**

W W W . M I H O M E L E S S . O R G

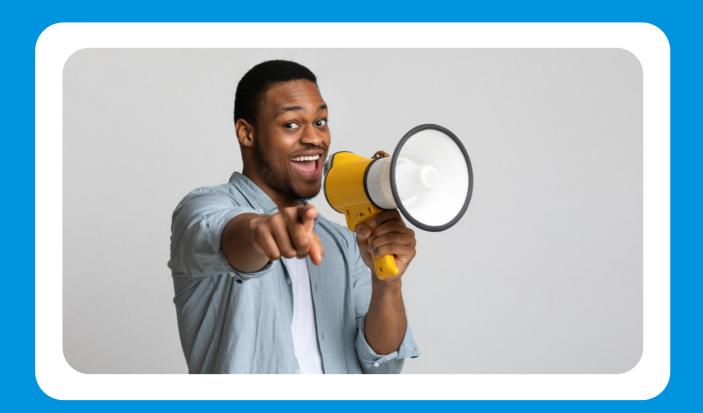
**-万-** #HAM2022

# COMMUNICATION 101

Homeless Awareness Month is first and foremost an opportunity to talk about homelessness with a wide range of audiences:

- Donors
- General public (who may rarely thinks about housing insecurity
- Local and State decision-makers

MCAH, along with service providers throughout the state, coordinates messaging and activities designed to build awareness, break stereotypes, and create champions for issues related to homelessness.





### **GREAT IDEAS | COMMUNICATIONS**

- Participate in MCAH's HAM social media campaign by sharing our daily content and engaging in conversation about the data and narratives used in our materials. Make sure to tag us on Facebook and Twitter at @mihomeless, and to use our hashtags: #HAM2020 and #EndMIHomelessness
- Engage with traditional media (such as your local newspaper and radio or news stations) to produce content related to homelessness, such as educational information, stories from people who are now experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness, and homeless service providers
- Promote your HAM events in the local newspaper
- Partner with the graphics department at a local school or business to create flyers and posters for your events or fact sheets with information about homelessness (and offer recognition opportunities to those who participate/contribute)
- Market your events, activities, and educational materials to community organizations, schools, and businesses and ask them to help disseminate through their networks.
- MCAH promote your events, activities, and educational materials to a statewide audience!
   Register your activities with us and we'll post on social media and our website.



UTILIZE THE SOCIAL MEDIA OF YOUR ORGANIZATION
AND YOUR NETWORK TO EXPAND YOUR INFLUENCE AND
RAISE AWARENESS FOR YOUR EVENT



#### OTHER RESOURCES

- Your agency or organization's contact list (for email or mailing) and the contact list of your community partners
- Local media such as TV, newspaper, radio, student publications, and local influencers
- Your social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Use the hashtag #HAM2022 and #EndMIHomelessness to connect to the larger statewide conversation
- Homeless Awareness Month #HAM2022



Feel free to check out our own Facebook and Twitter and retweet/share our materials, or modify them to include your local info

### ABCs | Communications | Click For Samples











SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS (SECTION PENDING)













### MCAH Is Here For You

Email <u>Amy Stephenson</u>, Communications Manager, for any assistance with communications.

#### Housing Search Initiative Good Samaritan Ministries'

Housing Search Initiative, put on during Homeless Awareness Month 2020, will help people struggling to find housing in Ottawa County for years to come.

Good Samaritan Ministries, the Housing Assistance and Resource Agency (HARA) for Ottawa County, met new landlords and property managers for months as part of the eviction diversion program that aimed to provide additional support for individuals and families facing eviction during the pandemic. A case manager compiled a list of contact information for local landlords, which was passed on to the small team of volunteers tasked with reaching out and gathering their information.

In preparation for the initiative, Good Samaritan Ministries wrote a questionnaire for landlords to gather basic information and guide the interview. Questions sought information like the availability of units, price of units and utilities, unit size and location, and income requirements. Additionally, volunteers were given a brief training session on how to conduct the calls.

"It was a pretty easy initiative to put in place," said Dillene Van Beek, director of engagement and strategic initiatives for Good Samaritan Ministries. "We were pretty satisfied and happy with the results that we got."





# THAT'S A WRAP

W W W . M I H O M E L E S S . O R G



# WRAP UP

When Homeless Awareness Month has concluded, there will still be a few loose ends that you will need to tie up on your way to the finish line.

- 1. Remember to send thank you letters to all of your contacts and your support network. You or other Homeless Awareness Month organizers will probably refer to these same people in the future.
- 2. Meet with your team to discuss what went right and what went wrong during Homeless Awareness Month. Make sure everyone evaluates their own project, as well as how they viewed Homeless Awareness Month as a whole. Gather these individual and group evaluations to comprise a resource folder—one that you and other groups will be able to refer to in following years. This resource will allow you to have a foundation upon which to build your future awareness activities.
- 3. Contact the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness to let us know how things went with your awareness activities send us newspaper clippings, posters, commentary and other news! Forward to astephenson@mihomeless.org
- 4. Start planning for next year!

#### Roundtable

#### Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness

To increase awareness about homelessness in Northern Michigan and encourage officials to work towards a fix for the issue, the Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness hosted a roundtable to discuss homelessness in the area. "We've invited stakeholders in the community, we've invited elected officials, city government and county government, community members, and also members within the other service systems--healthcare, justice, community mental health, all the big players," said Ashley Halladay-Schmandt, director of the Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness.

The roundtable is a kickoff to a longer awareness campaign being put on by the coalition and the Traverse City Human Rights Commission. The commission made it one of its missions to end homelessness in the area and the roundtable took place during one of its regularly scheduled meetings.

At the meeting, coalition members discussed what homelessness looks like in the area, why people are homeless and what it means to and homelessness. Two speakers shared

and what it means to end homelessness. Two speakers shared their lived experiences. The meeting then opened up for a discussion amongst attendees.

Halladay-Schmandt said that she hopes that community members realize how big of an issue homelessness is in the area, as many don't recognize it as a problem in Traverse City. "We hear that all the time, that there aren't homeless people in Traverse City, when in fact we have about 251 people right now experiencing homelessness," she said. "Too many of them are actually unsheltered."

#### Roundtable

Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness

Additionally, there is hope the speakers with lived experience gave community members a new perspective on homeless people.

We want "people treating people experiencing homelessness with the dignity and respect that they deserve, getting involved with the community to make the community better for everyone," Halladay-Schmandt said.

Outside of awareness, Halladay-Schmandt hopes real solutions come out of the roundtable. She would like to connect with landlords so they can use assistance money the coalition has available and get people housed. She also hopes there will be policy solutions and a bigger push to build affordable housing in the area.



#### Clinton County Video Project

"My son in law didn't pay the bill and he didn't let me know," said Edward Price in an <u>awareness video</u> created by Beacon of Hope Family Center. "I never would have let it get that way because I've taken care of [rent] before." Price, an 82-year-old war hero who served in the Marine Corps, was telling of his brush with homelessness, a problem far too common for veterans.

"I was a patriot, I wanted to die for the country," Price said.

After losing his home, Price bounced around to a couple of temporary

After losing his home, Price bounced around to a couple of temporary housing locations before receiving assistance from Capital Area Community Services' rapid rehousing program.

The video transitions to Donna Root, a retired nurse telling her story of being kicked out of her son's house after she refused to give him control of her bank account. She too was aided by Capital Area's rapid rehousing program. The video was created by Beacon of Hope to give insight to the emerging issue of seniors finding themselves homeless in Clinton County. Due to the county's rural nature, the issue of homelessness isn't seen by much of the public, explained Beacon of Hope Director Karen Leif.

"It's hidden homelessness because people are in places kind of out of sight," Leif said. "They might be in their vehicle, they might be on some farmers property, or at a storage unit, or at a truck stop."

This isn't the first awareness campaign Beacon of Hope has done. Prior to the pandemic, they had held speaking events, the first featuring homeless service providers and the second centered around people with lived experience of homelessness. To Leif, the event featuring people with lived experience seemed more effective.

"I think that one had a bigger impact on those who attended," she said. "To just hear people tell their stories and look at them and think, 'You look just like me, you have a family just like I do.'"

The awareness campaigns have helped. They serve a role in a presentation Beacon of Hope gives to Clinton County commissioners each year for Homeless Awareness Month. Leif said this has strengthened their relationship with the commissioners, who are committed to helping reduce homelessness in the county.

To produce the video, Leif contacted the owner of Sleekfire, a digital marketing company based out of Clinton County. Leif had known the owner since he was a child through the church, and the Sleekfire team produced the video at a discounted rate.

Beacon of Hope had met Root and Price when working with Clinton Transit to deliver essential home products. Leif said she thought they'd be good voices to highlight the issue of senior homelessness in the county.

The speakers didn't work off scripts, rather they answered a series of questions while being filmed. The end result was edited down to a video less than eight minutes long.

Leif said she's happy with the project and hopes to do more video awareness campaigns in the future. She said that another video focused on what homelessness looks like in Clinton County that highlights services available may be a useful tool to get people in need of help to reach out.



### THE WORK DOESN'T END HERE

During HAM, as community members begin to really think about issues relating to homelessness, it is crucial that you provide information on how they can take action after HAM has concluded. Provide them with the following information and any other material that you believe is important for your own community.

- The name, address, email, and phone number of a local shelter at which they can volunteer.
- The names, addresses and phone numbers of local, state, and national homeless coalitions and advocacy groups which they can join.
- Information about writing Members of Congress.

A truly successful HAM will inspire people to become further involved with the issue of homelessness.

# Homeless and Housing Roundtable

To kick off an awareness campaign on homelessness in Northern Michigan, the Northwest Michigan Coalition End Homelessness and Traverse City Human Rights Coalition partnered to host a roundtable discussion on the topic. The roundtable featured community members, local officials and workers in service professions. Coalition members and two people with lived experience of homelessness spoke at the event, in hopes of drawing attention to the issue and work towards solutions. The coalition took a few simple steps to arrange the roundtable.

- Identify how big of an issue homelessness in your community is, the causes and potential solutions.
  - Evictions are a cause of homelessness in all communities. Working with landlords at the roundtable would be ideal.
  - Make sure to data on homelessness, as many people don't recognize homelessness as a problem in their communities.
- Assemble a team to speak at the roundtable.
  - People with lived experience often leave an impression telling their stories.
  - People knowledgeable about the circumstances surrounding homelessness can offer solutions.
- Invite people to attend the roundtable.
  - It's good to have local officials, community members, landlords and people in service professions like healthcare and the justice system.
- Work towards solutions.
  - Change won't happen overnight, but a goal of the roundtable should be to build relationships with people who can work to end homelessness and use those connections going forward.