

# Senior Support Services

## Annual Report for the Year 2008

### Brief History of Organization

Senior Support Services (SSS) was established in 1976 when six churches in downtown Denver came together to assist low-income and homeless seniors who were being displaced by downtown redevelopment. As the need grew, our services expanded. In 1979, we began to provide day shelter, coffee, one hot meal per day and case management services to assist seniors in obtaining benefits and finding affordable housing. In 1995, SSS bought a building at 18th Avenue & Emerson Street where the full range of services – one-stop shopping – are provided for hungry and homeless seniors.

### Mission

Our mission is to make each day better and safer for Denver's low-income and homeless seniors by providing the resources and support they need to lead more self-sufficient and fulfilling lives.

### Programs

Our overall goal each year is to meet the full range of needs of more than 1500 hungry and homeless seniors.

We successfully operate the only day center catering to the needs of the hungry and homeless seniors of the Denver area. Clients get meals, emergency food and clothing, individualized case management, medical care, housing, government benefits, socialization, and activities. We provide:

- Safe daytime shelter located at 18th Avenue & Emerson Street  
Open for 12 hours each weekday and 5 hours on Sundays
- Daily breakfast for an average of 55 seniors
- Daily hot lunch for an average of 125 seniors
- Daily hot dinner for an average of 62 seniors
- Mid-day meal on Sundays for an average of 110 seniors
- Emergency food and clothing banks
- Access to medical care, health screenings and mental health care
- Transportation and escort to medical appointments, shopping, errands
- Access to computers and Internet for word processing, email, etc.
- Individualized case management and advocacy including:
  - Government benefits obtainment
  - Assistance in obtaining and retaining low-income housing
  - Rent and utility payment assistance
  - Tenant-landlord dispute mediation
  - Financial management counseling to prevent homelessness.

# 2008 Accomplishments

## Overall

Provided services to 1,355 low-income and homeless seniors<sup>1</sup>

## Nutrition

Served 62,838 individual meals

Distributed 1,497 emergency food bags

## Other Basic Needs

Distributed 1,859 clothing items

Distributed 2,207 hygiene items

## Housing

With a direct rent payment, obtained or retained housing for 180 seniors<sup>2</sup>

Through tenant-landlord mediation, retained or obtained housing on 1,900 occasions<sup>3</sup>

Provided direct utility payments on behalf of 188 seniors<sup>4</sup>

Physically moved the belongings of 45 seniors

Provided on-site storage for 106 homeless seniors

## Government Benefits

Obtained or retained government benefits on 520 occasions<sup>5</sup>

## Transportation

Distributed 15,000 free bus tokens

Sold 384 sharply discounted bus passes<sup>6</sup>

Drove/Escorted seniors to 981 medical appointments, government offices, shopping trips, home, etc.

## Health

Weekly visits by a mental health professional who provided counseling

Weekly visits by a health care outreach worker who helped or enrolled 129 clients in the Colorado Indigent Care Program at Denver Health

Semimonthly visits by the mobile Health Outreach Program (HOP) van of the Stout Street Clinic

3 times/month visits by nurses who provided foot care, health screenings and checkups

Arranged for free eye exams & eyeglasses for 15 seniors

## Employment and Life Skills

Clients benefited from 13,520 computer hours (word processing, email, Internet)

Obtained jobs for 21 seniors

## Socialization

TV Room

Monthly billiards tournaments and free pool everyday

Annual Holiday Party with a special meal and special gifts distributed.

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<sup>1</sup> These are unduplicated individuals.

<sup>2</sup> To get or keep clients housed, Senior Support made direct rent payments to landlords on behalf of 180 clients.

<sup>3</sup> Here we did not provide a direct rent payment but our efforts were critical to the obtaining or retaining of housing. This number is in addition to the 180 seniors helped with housing directly above it.

<sup>4</sup> The average payment to Xcel on behalf of each household was \$354.

<sup>5</sup> It takes an enormous amount of staff time and persistence to obtain government benefits for even one senior because the initial application is often denied requiring the filing of one or more appeals. Monthly government payments including Aid to the Needy & Disabled, Old Age Pension, Social Security, veterans' benefits, food stamps, and one-time payments for property tax and utility rebates are all included here.

<sup>6</sup> Our clients paid half the standard senior rate (or \$15) for each monthly bus pass.

## Demographics of clients

(Each client is at least 55 years of age)

### Ethnicity

- 38% -- African-American
- 43% -- White (non-Latino)
- 14% -- Latino
- 4% -- Native American
- 1% -- Asian

### Income Level

- 87% -- living at or below the federal Poverty Threshold<sup>7</sup>

### Physical Condition and Health

- 70% -- mentally ill
- 70% -- alcohol or drug abuse problems
- 50% -- physically frail or physically disabled
- 36% -- seventy years of age or older
- 34% -- Veterans

### Housing

- 40% -- homeless
- 80% -- live alone or are homeless alone

### Gender

- 22% -- women
- 78% -- men

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<sup>7</sup> The 2008 federal Poverty Threshold for our average client is \$1142 per month.