

January 9, 2006

Media Advisory

'One Congregation, One Family'

Mayor Hickenlooper, Faith Community To Launch Mentoring Program Tuesday, Jan. 10 For Homeless Families & Seniors

Mayor John Hickenlooper will join faith community leaders from 200 metro-area congregations Tuesday, Jan. 10 to kick off a mentoring program for homeless families and seniors. Nearly 450 people will join the Mayor at a noon luncheon at the Colorado Convention Center to launch the initiative, which the Mayor announced during his State of the City address last July.

The program, known as the ***Family and Senior Homeless Initiative: One Congregation, One Family***, is part of Denver's ***Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness*** and is coordinated by the Denver Rescue Mission. At Tuesday's luncheon, faith community leaders will explain the program to congregations that have signed on to participate and those considering joining the program.

Families and seniors who are just entering housing and wish to participate in the program are referred into it by community service agencies. They are matched with mentors who work with the participants on budgeting, parenting, maintaining employment and building community support systems. There are no religious requirements for families and seniors who participate, however, every effort will be made to match congregations with participants who request mentors from a specific religious faith.

Since July, 55 families and one senior have been paired with mentoring teams and 45 congregations are in training to provide mentoring assistance. Twenty-one families are waiting for a mentoring team.

A broad-based leadership team from Denver's faith community is guiding the initiative and the Denver Rescue Mission is coordinating the mentoring program for the City and the faith community. Congregations interested in participating may contact the Rescue Mission at 303-313-2440.

Mayor Hickenlooper called for the program to help promote stability among homeless people who are just entering housing and prevent them from returning to the streets. Studies conducted by the Denver Rescue Mission show a direct connection between mentoring and the ability of a family or individual to stabilize and remain in housing. Families that are mentored have an 80% chance of maintaining housing six months later, while non-mentored families have only a 30% chance of being off the streets in six months.

The Denver Rescue Mission is training and supporting the mentoring teams. The City of Denver and the Rescue Mission each are contributing \$120,000 to finance the initiative, and participating congregations will be asked to provide \$1,200 for each family or senior they agree to mentor. The City's share of the funding comes from federal funds designated for use in ending homelessness.

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Comprising the leadership team for Denver's **Family and Senior Homeless Initiative: One Congregation, One Family** is:

Pastor Paul Burleson, Greater Metro Denver Ministerial Alliance
Fran Maier, Chancellor, Archdiocese of Denver
Dr. Jim Dixon, Cherry Hills Community Church
Dean Peter Eaton, St. John's Cathedral
Doug Johnson, Friends in Transition
Dr. Tom Melton, Greenwood Community Church
Brad Meuli, Denver Rescue Mission
Deborah Ortega, Executive Director, Denver Commission to End Homelessness
Rev. Stan Perea, HIS Ministries
Don Reeverts, Denver Leadership Foundation
Rev. Jim Ryan, Colorado Council of Churches
Rabbi Joel R. Schwartzman, Rocky Mountain Rabbinical Council
Dr. Liyakatali Takim, Denver University
Roxane White, Chair, Denver Commission to End Homelessness
Bishop Warner H. Brown, Rocky Mountain Conference, United Methodist Church
Rev. Lucia Guzman, Director, Denver Office of Human Rights & Community Relations

WHAT: Launch of Denver's **Family & Senior Homeless Initiative: One Congregation, One Family**, a mentoring program for homeless families and seniors who are entering housing.

WHEN: Tuesday, Jan. 10 at noon

WHERE: Colorado Convention Center, 700 14th St., Denver
Ballrooms 1 & 2, off Lobby A
Enter from 14th St.; parking garage entrance is at Speer Blvd. and Stout St.

WHO: Mayor John Hickenlooper
Don Reeverts, Denver Leadership Foundation
Rabbi Joel Schwartzman, Rocky Mountain Rabbinical Council
Dr. Tom Melton, Greenwood Community Church
Brad Hopkins, Denver Rescue Mission
Roxane White, Denver Human Services, Denver Commission to End Homelessness
Rev. Paul Burleson, Greater Metro Denver Ministerial Alliance

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