

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HEALTHCARE FOR THE HOMELESS PROGRAM TO HOLD MEMORIAL SERVICE AND  
CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR NATIONAL HOMELESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL DAY**

**Event in Middletown to honor the homeless who passed away in 2011; Service to  
feature speeches from community leaders and homeless individuals**

**MIDDLETOWN, Conn. (December 21, 2011)** – In recognition of National Homeless Persons' Memorial Wherever You Are Healthcare for the Homeless (WYA) —a program of Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC)— and St. Vincent de Paul Middletown hosted today a memorial service and candlelight vigil at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Middletown, in memory of the areas' homeless residents who passed away in 2011.

Each year since 1990, on December 21 – not coincidentally, the first day of winter and the longest night of the year – homeless service providers, in more than 150 communities across the country, conduct similar services to recognize the need for political advocacy and efforts to end homelessness. National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day is co-sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless, National Health Care for the Homeless Council and National Consumer Advisory Board.

“Each year, homeless residents in our communities suffer and die needless deaths,” said Agi Erickson, program director for Wherever You Are Healthcare for the Homeless. “Many of these deaths could have been prevented, had these individuals had shelter, food and access to health care. Communities must continue working together and sharing the responsibility to end the preventable tragedy of homelessness.”

According to the CT Coalition to End Homelessness, last year, Connecticut's emergency shelters served more than 11,000 people, including over 1,500 children. The number of people in shelters and transitional housing programs increased 3% from 2009 to 2010 and shelters have been operating over 100% capacity for almost two full years. Of the 4,465 total people counted during a one-day snapshot of Connecticut homelessness in 2011, 248 were counted in Middlesex County; more than one-third (36%) were families with children and two-thirds (64%) were adults without children.

The Wherever You Are Healthcare for the Homeless program is highly regarded for providing outstanding primary care to a difficult to reach population. The WYA team is comprised of health care professionals, including nurses, doctors, substance abuse counselors, psychiatric nurses and outreach workers who provide health care for the homeless and near-homeless in clinics at homeless, domestic violence and transitional shelters in New Britain, Meriden, Wallingford and Middletown. The program aims to assess the health needs of every shelter resident, provide prompt treatment, update the individual on necessary preventive care such as immunizations and screenings, and then connect him or her with one of CHC's 12 facilities for ongoing primary care.

For more information on the memorial services or program, contact Agi Erickson of the Wherever You Are Healthcare for the Homeless program at (860) 224-3642 ext. 5551 or ericksa@chc1.com.

**About Community Health Center, Inc.**

Since 1972, Community Health Center, Inc. has been one of the leading healthcare providers in the state of Connecticut, building a world-class primary health care system committed to caring for uninsured and underinsured populations. CHC is focused on improving health outcomes for its more than 130,000 patients as well as building healthy communities. Currently, CHC delivers service in 201 locations statewide, offering primary care in medicine, dentistry and behavioral health services. For more information, visit [www.chc1.com](http://www.chc1.com).

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