

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 2012; Service to feature speeches from community leaders and homeless individuals

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. (December 17, 2012) – In recognition of National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day on December 21, Wherever You Are Healthcare for the Homeless (WYA) —a program of Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC)— and St. Vincent de Paul Middletown will host a memorial service and candlelight vigil in Middletown, in memory of the areas' homeless residents who passed away in 2012 and to bring awareness to the plight of the homeless in the city.

The event is held for the city's homeless citizens and affords them the chance to pay their respects to those who have lost their life and to be recognized on the longest night of the year. The program will include remarks from Senator Paul Doyle, Mayor Dan Drew and representatives from St. Vincent de Paul, CHC and Middlesex Coalition to End Homelessness; followed by a candle light vigil with a performance of Amazing Grace, sung by Middletown community members. Supply bags that include small winter accessories, hygiene products, and brochures on local service agencies will be given out to the homeless and near homeless folks that attend the event.

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 many pass away," said Martha Trevey, APRN, Family Nurse Practitioner for Wherever You Are Healthcare for the Homeless. "Many of these losses 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."

WHO: The memorial service is open to the public; those who are homeless or near homeless are encouraged to attend. Guest speakers include Middletown Mayor Dan Drew; Senator Paul Doyle; Ron Krom, Executive Director, St. Vincent de Paul; Martha Trevey, Nurse Practitioner, Community Health Center, Inc.; Kevin Wilhelm, Executive Director of Middlesex United Way.

WHAT: National Homeless Person's Memorial Day service and candlelight vigil

WHEN: December 21, 2012, 4:00 – 5:00 pm

WHERE: Church of the Holy Trinity, 381 Main Street, Middletown, CT

According to the CT Coalition to End Homelessness, in 2011 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 providers including nurse practitioners, substance abuse counselors 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, and update the individual on necessary preventive care such as immunizations and screenings. In some cases, patients are connected with one of CHC's 13 facilities for ongoing primary care.

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 underserved populations. CHC is focused on improving health outcomes for its more than 130,000 patients as well as building healthy communities. Recognized as both a Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home by the National Committee for Quality Assurance and a Primary Care Medical Home by The Joint Commission, CHC delivers service in more than 200 locations statewide, offering primary care in medical, dental and behavioral health services. For more information, visit www.chc1.com.

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