

Homeless Coalition

On August 15, 2007, Gerard Desmarais, Executive Director of the Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County spoke to the Palm Beach County Coalition for Children about The Homeless Coalition. The Homeless Coalition brings together 250 agencies and organizations that collaboratively work to help the homeless in Palm Beach County. The Homeless Coalition serves as a voice to the homeless people in Palm Beach County. In 2006, there were 80 murders of homeless persons and more than 2000 children are homeless in Palm Beach County. Homelessness impacts multiple systems including foster care, medical, mental health, school, housing, and jails and is associated with a large cost to our community.

The Mission of the Homeless Coalition is to mobilize the community to improve the lives of the homeless (1) by providing a forum to address the issues of homelessness, (2) by advocating and educating on behalf of the homeless, and (3) by maximizing resources to provide homeless citizens with the opportunity to have a safe and secure home and to become self sufficient. Individuals and the community can help to prevent homelessness first by learning more about the homeless population and homelessness as it pertains to our community. Secondly, advocate to make it end and to improve housing in Palm Beach County. Mr. Desmarais reported that we have no emergency shelters in our community and only one shelter with 18 beds. Third, increasing awareness and support for the prevention of homelessness by attending the Palm Beach County Homeless Coalition Symposium held on November 15, 2007 at the Health Department from 9:30AM to 11:30AM. The Symposium will be followed by a Memorial Service for all the homeless people who have died in Palm Beach County at 11:30 AM. Fourth, anyone interested in becoming involved in the Homeless Coalition is invited to attend meetings held every 2nd Friday of the month from 10:30AM-12:00PM. For more information about the Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County and for the location of meetings call 478-5351.