

HOME FOR EVERY AMERICAN

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT AWARD: Denver's Road Home

In October 2007, more than 800 people experiencing homelessness were welcomed into the “living room” of the community by government and business partners, faith-based organizations, and local volunteers gathered for Denver's 5th Project Homeless Connect event. Project Homeless Connect, the one-day, one-stop engagement technology encouraged by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and intended to increase access to resources for homeless guests and to mobilize civic will to end homelessness, has produced new results through its adoption and evolution in Denver. To date, Project Homeless Connect in Denver has connected over 2,400 homeless with over 3,000 volunteers in the City and County of Denver.

Over the last three years, Denver has integrated Project Homeless Connect with the goals of its 10-Year Plan, Denver's Road Home. Since implementation of the plan in 2005, Denver has seen an 11% reduction in overall homelessness, a 36% decrease in chronic homelessness, and a 92% reduction in panhandling in a key downtown site.

Denver's Project Homeless Connect #5 was convened at INVESCO Field at Mile High as a partnership of Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, Mile High United Way, and event sponsors Regis University, Denver Broncos Wives, and INVESCO Field at Mile High, which was the first NFL venue in the nation to be the host facility for a Project Homeless Connect event.

Denver's Project Homeless Connect partners have invested both financially and through volunteerism. At the 2007 PHC site, the Denver Broncos Wives Drive presented a check for \$35,000 to Denver's Road Home. More than 700 Comcast employees, family members, and friends volunteered at the 2006 event. Students, alumni, faculty, and staff from Regis University along with Young Professionals of Denver (YPOD) work one-on-one with homeless individuals at the event site, helping them prioritize their needs and escorting them to services.

Expansive partnership is the standard of expectation for Denver's PHC events, which have been held twice annually starting with Denver's commitment to the Council's first National Project Homeless Connect Day in 2005. Denver's upcoming May 9, 2008 PHC reflects the partnership, resources, and expectation of results now established in the community. The event will be sponsored by Denver's Road Home, Mile High United Way, and Denver University, with the Denver Department of Human Services, Denver Health, Porter Hospital, Colorado Indigent Care Program, Regis University, Colorado Legal Council, Denver Public Schools, Denver Workforce (part of the City & County of Denver), Denver Housing Authority, Social Security Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the U.S. Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.