

2012 NCSHA Awards

HFA: Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)

Category: Special Needs Housing

Subcategory: Combating Homelessness

Entry Name: From Homeless Camp to Housing Campers & Providing Hope – Camp Take Notice (CTN)

Innovative/Replicable/Respond to an Important State Housing Need

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness supporters partnered in 2012 with state agencies and local authorities in an unprecedented effort to provide housing solutions for the homeless people of Camp Take Notice, a tent community located on state-owned land near an I-94 highway interchange in Washtenaw County. MSHDA's innovative strategies were based on a replicable template developed by the MSHDA-led Campaign to End Homelessness coalition.

The peaceful closing of Camp Take Notice in June and the provision of safe and decent housing for the displaced homeless campers was spurred by requests to MSHDA to help resolve a two-year-long local impasse, including appeals from the administration of Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, representatives with law enforcement including the Michigan State Police, and the Michigan Department of Transportation. They cited the camp closure and relocation of Camp Take Notice residents as an important state housing need due to concerns about health and public safety, liability issues and fears that similar encampments would spread to state-owned land in other Michigan communities. MSHDA's leadership toward a successful resolution won overwhelming praise from local authorities, Camp Take Notice advocates and state officials, as well as earning positive statewide and national media attention.

Demonstrate Measurable Benefits to HFA Targeted Customers

Since May 2010, crowds of 15–80 homeless adult campers occupied tents in an encampment on state land designated as a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Right of Way near Ann Arbor and Scio Township where I-94, M-14 and Wagner Road intersect. The camp had no amenities, sewage facilities, running water, or electricity. Camp Take Notice campers issued a statement to neighborhood residents near the camp location on October 11, 2010, saying they intended to remain at the MDOT site until they could find a sponsor willing to donate private land for the camp's relocation. No such land sponsor emerged.

By May 2012, public safety, transportation and health officials became increasingly wary about risks the camp posed to the campers and nearby property owners. A propane tank that exploded May 8, 2012, in one of the tents ignited a fire that local firefighters were unable to immediately extinguish because the Camp Take Notice site was too far removed from fire hose access. Firefighters with two township departments eventually quelled the flames with shovels and fire extinguishers. Local authorities and MDOT cited the incidents and lack of sanitation as reasons to preserve public safety and avoid potential liability claims by peacefully relocating Camp Take Notice campers. The tent city residents and their advocates resisted multiple proposals by MDOT and law enforcers to find alternative lodging.

In a fresh move to bridge the divide, MSHDA and Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness officials asked to team with local and Washtenaw County housing experts. Their goal was to develop a range of housing opportunities that could help Camp Take Notice campers choose more permanent and attractive living arrangements.

Six weeks after MSHDA's entry into the controversy, Camp Take Notice was closed down on June 22, 2012, without incident. More than half of its inhabitants have moved into proper housing, which state and local government officials attribute to MSHDA's leadership. Many other former campers are currently

staying at downtown Ann Arbor's homeless shelter and are in line to receive housing subsidies from MSHDA. Veterans who were staying at the camp are now in line to receive Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers. And a potentially volatile conflict between law enforcers and Camp Take Notice residents was averted with no arrests.

Camp residents were initially skeptical when on May 29, 2012, MSHDA announced a new program that would provide them with one year's rent. The program was announced in conjunction with a notice from the Michigan Department of Transportation that the camp would be shut down and residents arrested for trespassing if they were not gone by June 22. People preparing to move into homes free of charge are now singing a different tune, AnnArbor.com recently reported.

"I have no complaints," David Williams, who had resided at the camp for a year, told the city's online newspaper. "It's getting there. I think it'll help me get my life together. Once I get my apartment I think I can save enough money, get a job, maybe go back to school."

Have a Proven Track Record of Success in the Marketplace

Tactics effectively used to resolve the Camp Take Notice matter were based on the proven track record of success demonstrated by the Campaign to End Homelessness (CTEH). Launched in 2006, the Campaign is a statewide effort to ensure safe and stable housing for all state residents, one individual and one family at a time. The Campaign emphasizes cooperation and collaboration by more than 600 partner agencies and by the workers and volunteers at these organizations. The Campaign's coordinated efforts and greater attention to data have enabled local agencies to make informed decisions about the use of resources. The Campaign focuses on preventing homelessness or, when that's not possible, quickly finding housing solutions, while addressing the issues that led to the individual's or family's housing crisis.

A Campaign report released May 16, 2012, shows there were 6,143 fewer Michigan residents who were homeless for any part of 2011 than who were homeless during 2010. A total of 94,033 people were homeless in Michigan sometime in 2011, according to CTEH data. That was down from 100,176 in 2010. All of the figures are from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is used in communities across Michigan to track the numbers of homeless individuals and the services they receive. HMIS was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for nationwide use. The 6 percent reduction between 2010 and 2011 is strong evidence that the Campaign's strategies of prevention and rapid re-housing are helping individuals and families find and sustainable places to live.

Provide Benefits that Outweigh Costs

MSHDA will continue to focus its efforts to help local service providers find opportunities to keep former Camp Take Notice residents housed, to support people to gain income, and to get into a safer and healthier housing environment. This means working collaboratively with many partners to see that individuals are assessed for their current needs and then matched with services and supported to stay housed as long as possible, and to use the resources for homelessness effectively.

Demonstrate Effective Use of Resources

Because of the specific situation of the Camp Take Notice campers, MSHDA provided \$270,000 in additional vouchers to help with locating and paying for housing for one year. Another \$60,000 in funds from the Salvation Army is being used for emergency transitional housing in motels, and for security deposits when more permanent housing is found. MSHDA understands this may be only a temporary solution at best. The homeless population faces many challenges that have brought them to the streets including loss of income, loss of family or support network, mental illness or substance use and the inability to find affordable and stable places to live. Camp Take Notice, like most transitional housing, was intended to be temporary. Many of the campers who lived there stayed only three to four months, but

some had been there much longer before finding a job or locating a safer and more stable place to live. The campers who remained through June 2012 were those whose options are more limited, who have no source of income or whose mental or physical vulnerability prevents finding and maintaining the means to have permanent housing.

MSHDA is committed to working with local government and nonprofit agencies to ensure Camp Take Notice residents have access to services such as mental health treatment, connecting the campers to health care, finding temporary shelter and, for some, even permanent housing.

Effectively Employ Partnerships

MSHDA brought together an array of state and local leaders with MDOT, Michigan State Police (MSP), Michigan Department of Human Services (MDHS), and Ann Arbor care providers, clergy and homeless advocates to identify concerns, find compromises and ultimately resolve the Camp Take Notice conflict. MSHDA hosted meetings within the community and discussed viable options with Camp Take Notice leadership, including a Washtenaw County–based nonprofit called Michigan Itinerant Shelter System Interdependent Out of Necessity (MISSION). MSHDA coordinated its efforts with Washtenaw County Administration, the county departments of Community and Economic Development and Community Support and Treatment Services, and the county’s Human Services partner agencies. Collectively, these organizations stepped up to join MSHDA’s response to the immediate concerns of the campers at Camp Take Notice.

For example, the \$270,000 in MSHDA housing subsidies for the 50–70 people who were staying at Camp Take Notice will be managed by Michigan Ability Partners (MAP) and the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County, and those agencies will help find permanent housing for Camp Take Notice residents. The county’s office of community and economic development will manage the \$60,000 in Salvation Army funds for Barrier Busters, which helps coordinate efforts of local human services agencies.

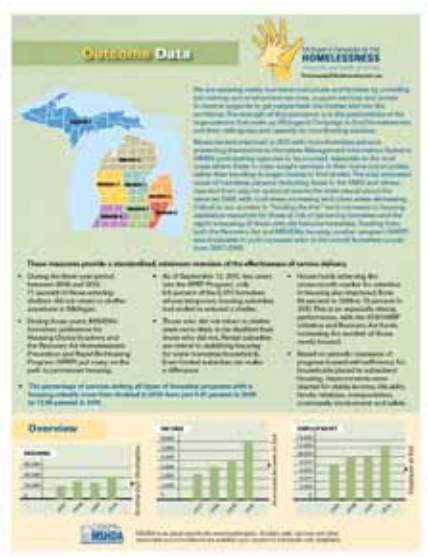
Achieve Strategic Objectives

In cities across the country, people with nowhere to live have done what many would have thought unthinkable before the economic crisis: moved into tents. Tent camps once associated mainly with the “Hoovervilles” of the Great Depression are springing up in places as varied as Sacramento, California; Nashville, Tennessee; Pinellas County, Florida; Providence, Rhode Island; and Seattle, Washington. There are no definitive numbers on how many people have taken to living in homeless camps. A recent annual report from the Department of Housing and Urban Development showed an increase in homelessness among families while overall rates of homelessness stayed roughly the same. But those numbers are only the initial waves of what could be a larger crisis, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

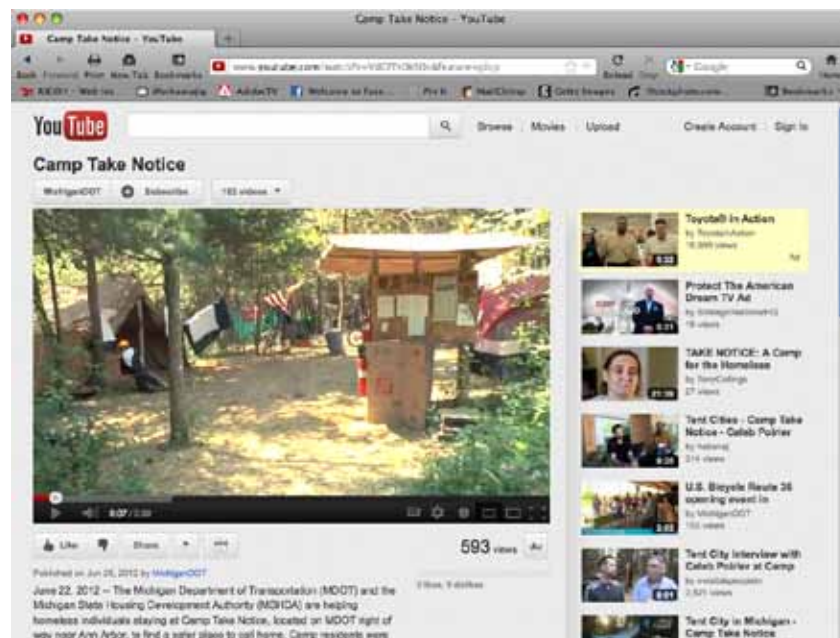
The tent camps have often led to standoffs between local governments that say the camps violate housing ordinances and homeless rights advocates who argue that people struggling to get back on their feet need a permanent place to stay.

MSHDA’s successful end to the Camp Take Notice impasse establishes a model for the nation to follow in hopes of settling future standoffs and combating homelessness.

Data Outcomes



Camp Take Notice YouTube Video



Unpaid Media Coverage

Tents, equipment remain at Camp Take Notice; march planned to governor's house

6/29/12 11:48 AM



By [John Counts](#)
Crime and courts reporter

Tents, equipment remain at Camp Take Notice; march planned to governor's house

Posted: Fri, Jun 22, 2012 : 2:59 p.m. Topics: News

A dozen people - about half former camp residents and half volunteers - remained at **Camp Take Notice** on Friday afternoon.

Many tents and equipment had also yet to be broken down.

John Little, a camp supporter, said he was willing to get arrested for trespassing on the land past last night's midnight extension.

"I'd be happy to do it for a statement," he said.

Some of the campers plan to make a statement Friday by marching to **Gov. Rick Snyder's** residence in Superior Township on Friday evening. The march is scheduled to start at **Geddes Dam** at 3:45 p.m. There will be an hour-long rally before the group departs at 5 p.m.

"We'll go as far as the footpaths will take us," read a flyer tacked to the camp's community bulletin board.

Camp Take Notice once housed dozens of people before the Michigan Department of Transportation initiated an eviction from the state-owned property in Scio Township near Wagner Road.

With most of his former co-residents gone, Little sat Friday near a smoking barbecue grill being stoked by another supporter, **Art Taylor**, as they prepared lunch.

Tate Williams, who co-founded the camp, sat on a cooler nearby.

He said the only reason anyone was still on the land was for the clean-up effort.

"We want to cooperate with MDOT," he said. "We will make every effort to do so. We've developed a good enough relationship (with MDOT) I don't want to destroy," Williams said. "We're hoping MDOT will allow us not only to relocate the individuals that left, but also (find new) property to continue to satisfy the always present need."

MDOT said they plan on giving the camp at least another day, but that could be extended. Williams estimates that it will take two or three more days to clean up the rest of the camp.

John Counts covers cops and courts for AnnArbor.com. He can be reached at johncounts@annarbor.com or you can follow him on [Twitter](#).



Supporters Jim Radtke (left) and Art Taylor (right) remained at Camp Take Notice Friday to help with clean-up efforts.

John Counts | AnnArbor.com

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Unpaid Media Coverage

Camp Take Notice founder waits to be arrested as cleanup efforts wrap up

6/29/12 11:47 AM

 ANN ARBOR.COM



By [Pete Cunningham](#)

Camp Take Notice founder waits to be arrested as cleanup efforts wrap up

Posted: Mon, Jun 25, 2012 : 7:03 p.m. Topics: News



Camp Take Notice resident Jermaine C. pulls a cart full of chairs to help move things out of the camp before their eviction last week.

Angela J. Cesere | [AnnArbor.com](#)

Though most of the residents of [Camp Take Notice](#) have moved on from the recently closed [Ann Arbor](#)-area homeless encampment, its founder says the only way he'll be leaving is in handcuffs.

Caleb Poirier - who founded Camp Take Notice in 2009 - said he and other supporters have been staying at the tent city overnight since Thursday with the intention of being arrested by Michigan State Police on trespassing charges.

Residents of Camp Take Notice - which is located on a [Michigan Department of Transportation](#) parcel of land in Scio Township just west of Ann Arbor city limits - were ordered to vacate the property or face trespassing charges in May, with a move-out date of [June 22](#).

"The choices that they have made needs to be evaluated by a larger group of people," said Poirier.

Poirier said he has been joined every night by 8-10 people - most of whom are Washtenaw County church leaders - at the Scio Township site as most of the 65 residents of the camp [moved out and cleaned up](#).

Poirier is a board member for the [Michigan Itinerant Shelter System-Interdependent Out of Necessity \(MISSION\)](#), the non-profit that supports Camp Take Notice, but said this is "not an action that is representative of the non-profit."

This isn't Poirier first foray into [civil disobedience](#). He was arrested twice for trespassing in a five-day span when the camp was forced to move from its original location in 2009. All charges against him were eventually dropped.

Other than the protestors, MDOT has been pleased with the move out of the site.

"MISSION has been working really hard to work on getting anything out of there," said MDOT spokesperson **Jeff Cranson**. "They're really being good partners in the cleanup efforts."

MDOT regional manager **Mark Sweeney**, explained why MDOT can't allow the camp on its property in a [video released by MDOT](#) on Monday.

"This is just not something that the department can allow for a lot of different reasons. Safety, because of the proximity to the freeway. Sanitation, because there is no running water," Sweeney said. "Quite simply, it is a liability for the state."

MDOT extended its deadline for move-out through the weekend for the camp residents who have been working to clear the area.

Unpaid Media Coverage

Rick Snyder's staff met with Camp Take Notice protesters at mobile office hours in Ann Arbor

6/29/12 11:44 AM



By [Pete Cunningham](#)

Rick Snyder's staff met with Camp Take Notice protesters at mobile office hours in Ann Arbor

Posted: Wed, Jun 27, 2012 : 3:18 p.m. Topics: News



Ann Arbor resident Janelle Nystrom holds a sign protesting the eviction of Camp Take Notice on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Ann Street, in Ann Arbor on Wednesday morning.

Angela J. Cesere | [AnnArbor.com](#)

Members of Gov. **Rick Snyder**'s staff received an unfriendly welcome on their visit to downtown Ann Arbor on Wednesday. Dozens of supporters of **Camp Take Notice** rallied to protest the recent eviction of the homeless encampment from [Michigan Department of Transportation](#) land.

During June and July, Snyder's constituent relations team is holding several "mobile office hours" per day throughout the state and were scheduled to meet at the TeaHaus, 204 N. Fourth Ave., on Tuesday from 10 a.m.-noon.

With protesters lining the street and lying on blankets as a demonstration of the homeless problem in Washtenaw County, the meeting had to be moved down the street to an open courtyard.

According Snyder's official website, the mobile office hours are an opportunity to "discuss and register positions on issues" with information available on the budget and ways to get more involved in state government, and the ongoing reinvention of Michigan.

Wednesday's office hours were dominated by the Camp Take Notice issue.

"We're down here to protest the [eviction of Camp Take Notice](#) and bring greater visibility to homeless issues in Washtenaw County and Michigan at large," said **Arthur Endsley**, who serves on the board of [Michigan Itinerant Shelter System-Interdependent Out of Necessity \(MISSION\)](#), a nonprofit organization that helps support the tent city.

Residents of Camp Take Notice were recently forced to leave the MDOT parcel of land in Scio Township they have inhabited for two years. While many former campers are currently staying at the **Delonis Center** - downtown Ann Arbor's homeless shelter - and in line to receive housing subsidies from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, there hasn't been room to house everyone.

After several MISSION board members, campers and supporters of the camp spoke to **Steve Sachs**, manager of constituent relations for Snyder's staff, about homeless issues and the plight of former campers, blankets were stacked in front of him to signify the number of people who are being turned away from the shelter.

According to several accounts, several former campers have been turned away from the Delonis Center and have been handed a blanket and instructed to seek out public space for the night.

"That's not acceptable. Camp Take Notice was designed to, and did, accommodate to these people when none of the other service agencies in the area had any room for them and now there's no place for them to go," Endsley said. "(Lying on blankets on the sidewalk) is literally what it's like for the homeless community now, that's their home now."

Campaign to End Homelessness Website



Campaign to End Homelessness Dome Ad



Program Collateral



Michigan's Campaign to End HOMELESSNESS
One person, one family at a time.
TheCampaignToEndHomelessness.org

OUR DECLARATION

Homelessness ends with a place to live. Michigan's Campaign to End Homelessness is driven by partners and other service groups across the state, working together toward a single goal: making stable, sustainable, and affordable housing available to every person in Michigan. This goal guides our more than 60 dedicated and coordinated partner organizations. Together, we know that:

- We must plan together, focusing all of our energies on the single goal of permanent, affordable housing for every individual and family in Michigan.
- We must understand that homelessness is a risk that we all share – people of all means, of all backgrounds, of all abilities, in all regions.
- We must be willing to speak in one voice, throughout our communities, for the need for supportive housing and systems-based solutions to make housing for all an accessible reality.
- Because only through our united efforts can homelessness be eradicated in Michigan.

MSHDA is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids, services and other reasonable accommodations are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

MSHDA
Michigan State Housing Development Authority



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Understanding Homelessness



- Homelessness is truly an equal opportunity risk – it affects people from all walks of life and all kinds of backgrounds.
- There are 106,300 homeless people in the state of Michigan.
- Most of the homeless population in Michigan consists of adults and children in families. Half of those families are first-time homeless.
- 42 percent of homeless Michigan residents have a long-term disability.
- About one-third have significant medical debt that contributed to their homelessness.

The Progress We've Made

The Campaign to End Homelessness is far from complete, but we are seeing progress.

Some recent success stories:

- Federal and state resources **showed the increase of homeless families and individuals.**
- During the three-year period between 2008 and 2010, 71 percent of those entering shelters **did not return to shelter** anywhere in Michigan.
- Temporary housing **subsidies more than doubled** in 2010 and only 6.5 percent of recipients re-entered a shelter when the subsidies ended.
- More than 79 percent of youth served were discharged to a **positive housing destination.**
- Household's achieving the seven-month marker for **retention in housing** improved from 64 percent in 2009 to 74 percent in 2010.

Data are gathered from the Michigan Statewide Homeless Management Information System (MSHMIS), thanks to the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) and the Michigan Housing Development Authority (MHDA).

What You Can Do

Public Officials
Please make homelessness a priority and support this campaign.

Citizens
There are lots of ways you can help. Financial support is great, but we also have a tremendous need for volunteers at the grassroots level. For more information about how you can help, go to TheCampaignToEndHomelessness.org/help.

What We Do

Michigan's Campaign to End Homelessness is striving to make stable, sustainable, and affordable housing available to every person in Michigan.

This goal guides our statewide plan, which coordinates the efforts of 600 partners, including 82 counties. Coordinating all these local groups increases efficiency and makes it possible to help more people.



OUR DECLARATION

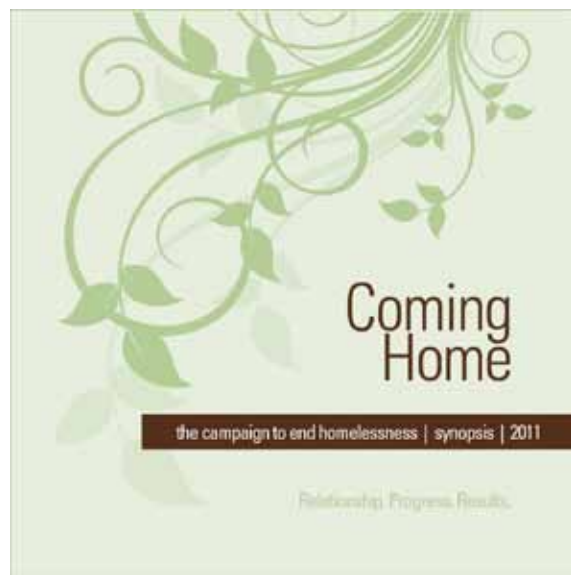
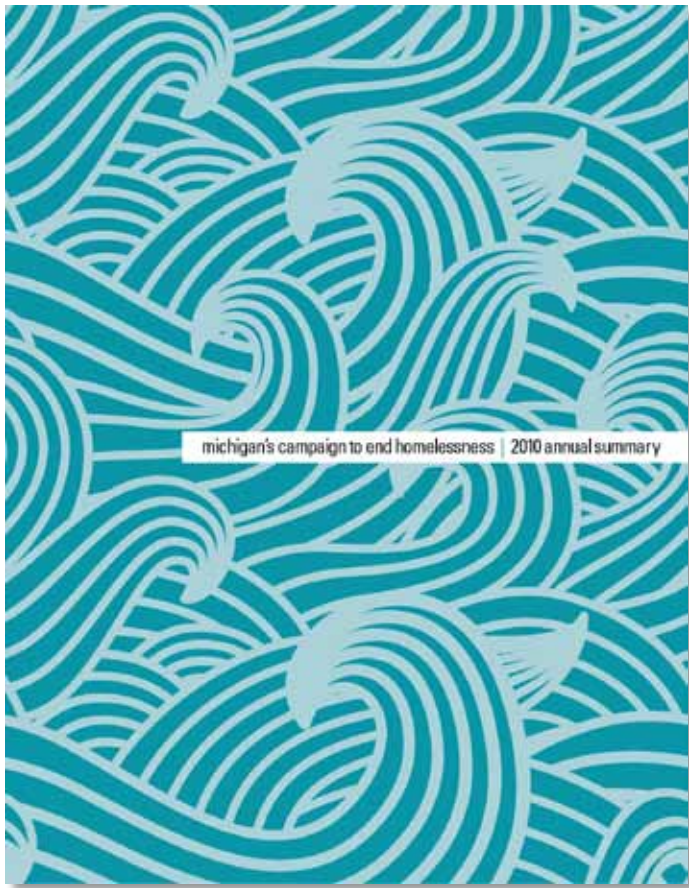
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Annual Reports



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Contact: Mary Lou Keenon
MSHDA Communications Director
Telephone: 517.373.0011
Cell Phone: 517.881.0216

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 29, 2012

MSHDA Partners With State, Local Authorities to House Camp Take Notice Campers

LANSING – The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and Michigan Campaign To End Homelessness supporters announced today they will partner with state agencies and local authorities in a new effort to provide housing solutions for the homeless people of Camp Take Notice, a tent community located on state land near an I-94 interchange in Washtenaw County.

“Homelessness ends with a place to live,” said Sally Harrison, director of the Rental Assistance and Homeless Solutions division for MSHDA. “We look forward to collaborating with all of the key stakeholders to develop long-term solutions for the members of the Camp Take Notice encampment.”

Since May 2010, crowds of 15-80 homeless adult campers have occupied tents in an encampment on state land designated as a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Right of Way near Ann Arbor and Scio Township where I-94, M-14 and Wagner Road intersect.

Public safety and health officials say the camp poses potential risks to the campers and nearby property owners.

A propane tank that exploded May 8, 2012, in one of the tents ignited a fire that local firefighters were unable to immediately extinguish because the Camp Take Notice site is too far removed from fire hose access. Firefighters with two township departments eventually quelled the flames with shovels and fire extinguishers.

Local authorities and MDOT cite the incidents as reasons to preserve public safety and avoid potential liability claims by peacefully relocating Camp Take Notice campers. A public notification letter was distributed on MDOT's behalf today to Camp Take Notice campers informing them that all campers must leave the encampment by June 22 or face possible arrest on trespassing charges.

Camp Take Notice campers issued a statement to the residents near the camp location on Oct. 11, 2010, saying they intend to remain at the MDOT site until they find a sponsor willing to donate private land for the camp's relocation. But, that whether a land sponsor becomes available or not, that they plan to leave in the spring (2011).

In a fresh move to bridge the divide, MSHDA and Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness officials say they will team with local and Washtenaw County housing experts to develop a range of housing opportunities that could help Camp Take Notice campers choose more permanent and attractive living arrangements.

MSHDA funding can support the relocation of a substantial number of Camp Take Notice campers, but there is only finite funding available, Harrison said.

The alternative housing proposals were outlined by MSHDA today. Representatives of Camp Take Notice, MSHDA, MDOT, the Washtenaw County-based nonprofit Michigan Itinerant Shelter System Interdependent Out Of Necessity (MISSION), Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC), the Michigan Ability Partners (MAP) nonprofit that helps veterans and people with disabilities achieve self-sufficiency, and local homeless shelters, among others, provided information that helped shape MSHDA's proposals.

"Our success in Michigan's Campaign to End Homelessness proves that collaboration between state and local authorities is a key to positive outcomes," said Bob Guenzel, chair of the Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA) board. "We are grateful the state has stepped up to the plate to assist us in providing safe housing solutions and critical services to the struggling campers currently staying at Camp Take Notice."

The Campaign to End Homelessness, launched in 2006, is a statewide effort to ensure safe and stable housing for all state residents, one individual and one family at a time. The Campaign emphasizes cooperation and collaboration by more than 600 partner agencies and by the workers and volunteers at these organizations. The Campaign's coordinated efforts and greater attention to data have enabled local agencies to make informed decisions about the use of resources. The Campaign focuses on preventing homelessness or, when that's not possible, quickly finding housing solutions, while addressing the issues that led to the individual's or family's housing crisis.

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The 6 percent reduction between 2010 and 2011 is strong evidence that the Campaign's strategies of prevention and rapid re-housing are helping individuals and families find and sustain stable places to live, Harrison said.

"Local agencies throughout Michigan have been extremely successful in reducing homelessness in their communities in large part because of the focus on rapid re-housing," Harrison said, referring to the strategy of quickly finding longer-term housing solutions, rather than simply relying on shelters.

"Across Michigan, we've seen how the work of community organizations has been crucial in ending homelessness for thousands of individuals and families," she added. "We're hopeful that by collaborating with local agencies and dedicated volunteers in Washtenaw County we will succeed in preventing or ending homelessness for our Camp Take Notice friends and neighbors struggling to sustain a safe, affordable place to live."

About MSHDA

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) provides financial and technical assistance through public and private partnerships to create and preserve decent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents and to engage in community economic development activities to revitalize urban and rural communities.*

*MSHDA's loans and operating expenses are financed through the sale of tax-exempt and taxable bonds as well as notes to private investors, not from state tax revenues. Proceeds are loaned at below-market interest rates to developers of rental housing, and help fund mortgages and home improvement loans. MSHDA also administers several federal housing programs. For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/mshda.

###



By Pete Cunningham

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After several MISSION board members, campers and supporters of the camp spoke to **Steve Sachs**, manager of constituent relations for Snyder's staff, about homeless issues and the plight of former campers, blankets were stacked in front of him to signify the number of people who are being turned away from the shelter.

According to several accounts, several former campers have been turned away from the Delonis Center and have been handed a blanket and instructed to seek out public space for the night.

"That's not acceptable. Camp Take Notice was designed to, and did, accommodate to these people when none of the other service agencies in the area had any room for them and now there's no place for them to go," Endsley said. "(Lying on blankets on the sidewalk) is literally what it's like for the homeless community now, that's their home now."

Ellen Schulmeister, CEO of the Delonis Center, confirmed that there hasn't been room to accommodate everyone despite [increasing the shelter's capacity](#) to warming center capacity to accommodate former campers waiting on housing subsidies.

"If we don't have room for you tonight and you need to get through the night, we may give you a blanket and we may give you a sleeping bag, or we may give you whatever we have to help you with for the moment if we don't have room.... We do whatever we can to hook someone up with what is necessary at the moment." Schulmeister said. "(When a person is turned away for the night) that doesn't mean we're not going to help them. We do have services only where we work with people until we can get them a bed if they need a bed."

Contact Pete Cunningham at petercunningham@annarbor.com or by phone at 734-623-2561. Follow him on Twitter [@petcunningham](https://twitter.com/petcunningham).



Supporters of Camp Take Notice stacked blankets in front of Steve Sachs, manager of constituent relations for Gov. Rick Snyder.

Photo courtesy of Brian Nord

Tags: Camp Take Notice, Rick Snyder, homeless,

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By [John Counts](#)
Crime and courts reporter

Tents, equipment remain at Camp Take Notice; march planned to governor's house

Posted: Fri, Jun 22, 2012 : 2:59 p.m. Topics: News

A dozen people - about half former camp residents and half volunteers - remained at **Camp Take Notice** on Friday afternoon.

Many tents and equipment had also yet to be broken down.

John Little, a camp supporter, said he was willing to get arrested for trespassing on the land past last night's midnight extension.

"I'd be happy to do it for a statement," he said.

Some of the campers plan to make a statement Friday by marching to **Gov. Rick Snyder's** residence in Superior Township on Friday evening. The march is scheduled to start at **Geddes Dam** at 3:45 p.m. There will be an hour-long rally before the group departs at 5 p.m.

"We'll go as far as the footpaths will take us," read a flyer tacked to the camp's community bulletin board.

Camp Take Notice once housed dozens of people before the Michigan Department of Transportation initiated an eviction from the state-owned property in Scio Township near Wagner Road.

With most of his former co-residents gone, Little sat Friday near a smoking barbecue grill being stoked by another supporter, **Art Taylor**, as they prepared lunch.

Tate Williams, who co-founded the camp, sat on a cooler nearby.

He said the only reason anyone was still on the land was for the clean-up effort.

"We want to cooperate with MDOT," he said. "We will make every effort to do so. We've developed a good enough relationship (with MDOT) I don't want to destroy," Williams said. "We're hoping MDOT will allow us not only to relocate the individuals that left, but also (find new) property to continue to satisfy the always present need."

[MDOT said they plan on giving the camp at least another day](#), but that could be extended. Williams estimates that it will take two or three more days to clean up the rest of the camp.

John Counts covers cops and courts for AnnArbor.com. He can be reached at johncounts@annarbor.com or you can follow him on [Twitter](#).



Supporters Jim Radtke (left) and Art Taylor (right) remained at Camp Take Notice Friday to help with clean-up efforts.

John Counts | AnnArbor.com



By Pete Cunningham

Camp Take Notice founder waits to be arrested as cleanup efforts wrap up

Posted: Mon, Jun 25, 2012 : 7:03 p.m. Topics: News



Camp Take Notice resident Jermaine C. pulls a cart full of chairs to help move things out of the camp before their eviction last week.

Angela J. Cesere | AnnArbor.com

Though most of the residents of [Camp Take Notice](#) have moved on from the recently closed **Ann Arbor**-area homeless encampment, its founder says the only way he'll be leaving is in handcuffs.

Caleb Poirier - who founded Camp Take Notice in 2009 - said he and other supporters have been staying at the tent city overnight since Thursday with the intention of being arrested by Michigan State Police on trespassing charges.

Residents of Camp Take Notice - which is located on a [Michigan Department of Transportation](#) parcel of land in Scio Township just west of Ann Arbor city limits - were ordered to vacate the property or face trespassing charges in May, with a move-out date of [June 22](#).

"The choices that they have made needs to be evaluated by a larger group of people," said Poirier.

Poirier said he has been joined every night by 8-10 people - most of whom are Washtenaw County church leaders - at the Scio Township site as most of the 65 residents of the camp [moved out and cleaned up](#).

Poirier is a board member for the [Michigan Itinerant Shelter System-Interdependent Out of Necessity \(MISSION\)](#), the non-profit that supports Camp Take Notice, but said this is "not an action that is representative of the non-profit."

This isn't Poirier first foray into [civil disobedience](#). He was arrested twice for trespassing in a five-day span when the camp was forced to move from its original location in 2009. All charges against him were eventually dropped.

Other than the protestors, MDOT has been pleased with the move out of the site.

"MISSION has been working really hard to work on getting anything out of there," said MDOT spokesperson **Jeff Cranson**. "They're really being good partners in the cleanup efforts."

MDOT regional manager **Mark Sweeney**, explained why MDOT can't allow the camp on its property in a [video released by MDOT](#) on Monday.

"This is just not something that the department can allow for a lot of different reasons. Safety, because of the proximity to the freeway. Sanitation, because there is no running water," Sweeney said. "Quite simply, it is a liability for the state."

MDOT extended its deadline for move-out through the weekend for the camp residents who have been working to clear the area.

"Cleaning the site is an important way for us to show MDOT that we appreciate their support for our community. We are very grateful," said camp resident **Jackie Starkey** in a press release put out by MISSION.

Starkey is currently one of 33 former camp residents waiting to be placed in housing subsidized by the **Michigan State Housing Development Authority** specifically for camp residents.

Poirier pointed out that none of the 33 former camp members waiting for subsidies have been housed yet, which **Julie Steiner**, executive director of the **Washtenaw Housing Alliance** confirmed.

"Now it's just a matter of getting landlords and finding units," Steiner said. "Most of the folks we're working with have bad credit and eviction history...Most of the landlords we're working with, they have students they can rent to and charge whatever they want and have parents cosign."

Steiner said she hopes having the guaranteed rent from the MSHDA subsidy program will get landlords involved.

"These are issues we deal with every day...Hopefully having it paid for makes that a little easier," Steiner said. "Nobody is housed yet. There are several steps that have to happen, so that's not surprising."

Steiner said roughly 18 people per night have been taking advantage of the **Delonis Center's** increased capacity since the closing of the camp. She also noted that some veterans that were staying at the camp are now in line to receive Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers.

Poirier said he has had no trouble getting to and from the camp yet, but acknowledged that might change as MDOT finished installing its eight-foot fence around the camp on Monday.

"I might have a different answer for you tomorrow," he said.

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Tags: Camp Take Notice, Delonis Center, homeless,



Camp Take Notice founder Caleb Poirier, shown as he was arrested in 2009 when the camp was forced to move from its original location. (AnnArbor.com file photo)

Caleb arrested