



NEWS RELEASE

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Homeless Memorial Service Memorial Service Held on ‘Longest Night’ *Community leaders and Advocates Push for Resources for Vulnerable Population*

HARTFORD— To commemorate the lives of homeless people who died in Hartford during the past year, individuals and organizations from the local community held a memorial service on December 21 at the Charter Oak Cultural Center in Hartford. The names of all homeless persons who died in 2010 and 2011 were read aloud voluntarily by advocates, friends and community leaders.

This event and others held around the state coincide with National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, which is held on December 21st – the first day of Winter and the longest night of the year. The Hartford service sought to bring attention to the need for more resources for permanent supportive housing for the homeless population who do not have adequate access to housing and services.

Before the official remarks, those in attendance walked through a photo gallery featuring stirring images of the homeless living conditions in and around Hartford. Leaders who addressed the crowd included Rabbi Donna Berman; Larry Deutsch, Hartford City Council; Carol Walter from the CT Coalition to End Homelessness and Matt Morgan from Journey Home. Harry Mitchell, a friend of two recently-deceased homeless persons, delivered eulogies.

Councilman Deutsch issued a proclamation from the City of Hartford to ensure the day to recognize yearly as National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. He called on the supporters to continue their work on behalf of the marginalized homeless population.

“We must stay strong in the face of discrimination of all kinds, which includes the displaced or homeless individuals and families that don’t have the public voice they deserve,” Deutsch said.

Jose Vega from Community Renewal Team followed by other advocates read testimonials from anonymous homeless individuals which described the hard life lived on the streets.

“People don’t know I exist- and when they do notice- I’m seen as a problem, and not a person,” read one of the 10 or so separate testimonials.

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A procession from the Charter Oak Cultural Center to the Ancient Burying Ground next to Center Church in Hartford, was postponed due to the rain, but some supporters still made the walk to pay their respects.

Community Renewal Team, Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency's mission is Preparing Our Community to Meet Life's Challenges. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families become self-sufficient while making sure basic needs are met. CRT's programs include Head Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut. www.crtct.org