

COLLABORATIONS AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR REDUCING STREET HOMELESSNESS

Houston Police Department, Houston, Texas

Summary:

Houston is the fourth largest city in the nation and according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had a homeless population of 8538 in 2011. HUD's definition of homelessness is an umbrella term that includes many different living situations and encompasses everything from street habitation to permanent supportive housing. HUD estimates that approximately one fifth of the homeless population is living with serious mental illness and that population is more likely to have negative encounters with the police department. A majority of the calls for service that the Houston Police Department receives for civility type issues are generated by the chronic homeless population.

In 2003, the HPD began a once a month outreach to the homeless in and around the downtown area. This initial outreach was aimed at connecting the area help providers with the street population. The initial effort established a base line of cooperation between the police and the help providers but because of its limited duration it had limited effect. In 2010, in anticipation of a full time outreach effort, officers with the HPD interviewed 174 homeless individuals located in the downtown area in order to better understand the reasons behind their homelessness and the needs of this population. The most common complaints were lack of picture identification, and difficulty in being able to access a fragmented help provider system.

The HPD officially began its Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) as a pilot program in January 2011 at the request of community stakeholders concerned about the increasing number of homeless individuals in the metropolitan Houston area. The mission of the HOT was to reduce the number of civility complaints generated by the street population by helping them overcome the barriers that keep them on the streets.

HOT originally consisted of a sergeant and two officers and was assigned to the Special Operations Division. The team was transferred to the Mental Health Division because of the large numbers of mentally ill people who need the team's assistance. As the result of a memorandum of understanding between the HOT and the Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County (now The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD) a mental health case worker was added to the team in 2012. The case manager allowed HOT to help more people, opened up resources, and access mental health information. Two additional police officers and two mental health case managers were added to the team in 2014.

Additionally, the HOT developed a process that utilizes law enforcement data bases to confirm a person's identity and then produce an identification letter for the homeless. The homeless ID letter, which is accepted by the Department of Public Safety as supporting documentation for a state ID, has proven to be invaluable in helping get people off of the streets and allowing them to access available services.

Since its inception in 2011, the HOT has changed the relationship paradigm between the police department, the street population, homeless providers and local government entities. The homeless now see HOT as a friend, the providers now request help from the team, and local governmental offices use the team as a contact point with a here-to-fore invisible population. In addition, HOT is part of a larger public-private partnership formed between the HPD, The Harris Center, and several local private philanthropic organizations that has resulted in a total of approximately \$1.15 million in private financial support for the joint programs of the HPD and The Harris Center.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Scanning/Analysis

Over the years, the Houston Police Department (HPD) has received an increased number of calls for service involving homeless individuals. Many of these calls involve the homeless who are living with mental health issues. Traditionally, the role of police officers has been to cite, arrest, or otherwise remove these individuals for petty crimes such as trespassing, public urination, and public intoxication. While this kind of action might have an immediate effect, it is a very short-lived and ineffective intervention for a very complex problem.

While misdemeanor crimes related to homelessness are a nuisance and deserve some kind of intervention, calls-for-service involving these issues take valuable and already limited resources. This coupled with the fact that HPD, like so many other law enforcement agencies across the country, has been unable to maintain the needed number of police officers on its force for a city its size, has made it imperative that the fourth largest city in the nation find a more effective and efficient way to deal with the issue of homelessness.

In 2003, HPD Officers Mike Hill and Steve Wick began working together on civility complaints involving homeless individuals in the downtown area. Recognizing that a ticket or arrest was not the answer to the problem at hand, these two officers began to work with community service providers to organize a monthly outreach effort during which the HPD would accompany providers into areas where homeless individuals congregated. This was the start of a once a month outreach. The idea was simple; develop a partnership to take the help to the homeless community rather than expecting those living on the streets to somehow find their way to the providers operating in a fragmented and confusing system. Given the safety concerns that service provider organizations face when deciding how to proceed with street outreach efforts, the presence of the officers allowed outreach workers a unique opportunity to reach people who may otherwise never access services.

While the concept was simple in some ways, one of the biggest obstacles encountered during this time was an institutionalized distrust of the police department by the service provider community. Because of past experiences, it was hard for service providers to accept that this effort was not meant to be a “round-up” of homeless individuals for arrest or removal but rather a genuine attempt to get them the help they needed to meet their needs and hopefully exit homelessness. Adhering to the basic tenets of the community policing philosophy, these officers addressed this issue by continuing to engage with providers so as to develop a level of trust and

respect that allowed these monthly outreaches to continue and grow over time. This is truly when a shift began in terms of the relationship between service providers and the HPD that eventually evolved into the synergetic relationship that exists today.

As part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) requirements for federal funding, the Coalition for the Homeless Houston/Harris County conducts an annual point-in-time (PIT) count for the area it serves, which includes the City of Houston, Harris County, and Ft. Bend County. Statistical data collected by the PIT count found an increase in the number of homeless individuals in the greater Houston area from 2009-2011, with specific numbers being:

- 2009: 6,550 homeless individuals
- 2010: 6,819 homeless individuals
- 2011: 8,538 homeless individuals

HUD estimates that one-fifth of homeless individuals are living with a severe mental illness, something that serves as both a factor in an individual's entry into homelessness as well as his/her continued homelessness. Many of these individuals also develop co-occurring substance use disorders, at least in part as they self-medicate to relieve the symptoms of their mental illnesses. Further, approximately 80% of this population has some form of mental illness and/or substance or alcohol addiction. In addition, being homeless and having a mental illness make individuals more likely to come into contact with law enforcement, which traditionally has resulted in a vicious cycle of arrest and prosecution for petty crimes that are more likely to land individuals in jails rather than mental health facilities.

In 2010, the number of homeless individuals was steadily rising in the greater Houston area. Mayor Annise Parker's office called together a meeting with area stakeholders, including the HPD, to discuss the issue of homelessness. The discussion involved the idea of forming a full time unit within the HPD called the Specialized Street Homeless Outreach Team (SSHOT). This unit would later become the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT).

Recently promoted, Sergeant Wick asked the HPD to send him to the Center for Problem Oriented Policing Conference in Arlington (2010) in order to hear a presentation by the Colorado Springs Police Department's on their homeless outreach team. Sergeant Wick not only was allowed to attend the conference but was later allowed to go to Colorado Springs to be trained and certified in their program. Upon his return, HPD command staff approved the pilot project to create and implement a HOT.

Response:

In 2011, HOT officially began as a pilot program. While the Department was supportive of the initiative as an alternative to the traditional way that law enforcement dealt with the homeless population, Sergeant Wick struggled to change the relationship paradigm between police officers, help providers and the street homeless population. The relationship between the police, homeless, and the help providers had been largely negative because traditionally all contact had been law enforcement based.

The pilot officially launched in January 2011 with the following goals:

- Going to where the homeless live to build **relationships** with them in an effort to find out why they are on the streets and not currently accessing available help;
- Becoming **advocates** for the homeless in order to help shepherd them towards available help
- Help the homeless navigate provider and governmental bureaucracies that are often times intimidating to them.

As a pilot project, the HOT was required to submit regular monthly reports to HPD command staff detailing its work and accomplishments as well as the continued need for the program. During the initial phase of the pilot, the officers spent a significant amount of time networking and developing relationships with the many service providers found in the greater Houston area in order to be able to help homeless individuals navigate the very complex service delivery system that had failed them in the past. They also continued to develop their personal relationships with the homeless community so that these individuals would feel comfortable talking to them and, when ready, accepting their assistance.

Soon after the pilot began, Sergeant Wick made a presentation to a group of community stakeholders at the Harris County Jail. In the audience was Dr. Steve Schnee, the executive director of The Harris Center (then known as the Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County). The Harris Center is the local public mental health authority charged by the state with providing services to indigent residents of Harris County who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness. One of the agency's federally funded programs is the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH). As a result of the connection made first with Dr. Schnee and then others within the agency, one PATH case manager, Deidre Charles-Kimble, was assigned to work with the officers as a permanent member of the HOT in 2012.

The significance of this addition cannot be overstated. The case manager's experience in working with this population coupled with her vast knowledge of services and providers in the community greatly expanded and streamlined the assistance that the HOT was able to provide the individuals the team encountered. In addition, the PATH case manager brought along her access to mental health/medical records from The Harris Center that allowed her and the team to more fully understand the mental health background of their clients in order to better meet their needs. This is something that is not readily available to law enforcement under normal circumstances.

In addition to the daily and more formal partnership with The Harris Center, the HOT also began working on a consistent basis with outreach workers from other local service agencies. In contrast to years past, service providers began to actively seek out the opportunity to ride with the HOT because of the level of trust the officers have developed within the homeless community. Also, teaming up with the officers allows these outreach workers to access homeless camps and communities that would otherwise be off-limits for them due to safety concerns.

As it developed its role, the HOT began to work with what might be considered non-traditional partners (in terms of the issue of homelessness), such as local management districts that focus on

economic development of specific areas of the city. An example of this kind of cooperation is the HOT's relationship with the Downtown Management District in its efforts to help ease the effects of homeless individuals congregating on the streets of the downtown Houston area. In 2011, the Downtown Management District (DMD) agreed to pay the housing costs of ten homeless individuals who were identified by the HOT. The District support allowed the team to find housing/case management for some of the chronic homeless in the downtown area.

Having a specialized team dedicated to this work has also helped ensure that clients see more and better follow-up in their cases, since the HOT serves as a point of contact for them with service providers. The HOT routinely assists with transportation to and from service providers and helps meet other immediate needs. In addition, the HOT serves as a point of contact between other parts of the HPD and the homeless community. HOT has been instrumental with the arrest of murders and rapist with the homeless community as well as being able to locate complainants and witnesses for the District Attorney's office. Prior to the HOT, the street population had been largely invisible to the local government because of its transient nature.

Shortly after it was formed the HOT was transferred to the Mental Health Division (MHD). The MHD already had a strong working relationship with The Harris Center through its Crisis Intervention Response Teams (CIRT) and Crisis Consumer Stabilization Initiative (CCSI) as well as relationships other providers and advocates. The MHD also wanted to expand the public-private partnership that the MHD with local advocates and private philanthropic organizations. These partnerships would allow the MHD to help HOT access additional personnel and equipment.

In 2012, HOT began to work with One Voice Texas (OVT), a Houston-based collaborative of health and human services organizations focused on advocacy at the local and state levels. OVT worked at identifying HOT's needs and began to explore possibilities for external financial support. In the beginning, HOT had to drag the sack for most of their equipment, HOT's primary vehicle was a 1999 Ford van that had previously been retired by the HPD. The vehicle had constant mechanical issues, and at one point it injured two of the officers when it slipped out of gear, but there were no funds available for another vehicle.

OVT had previously helped the MHD's access funding from the Frees Foundation and Simmons Foundation, both Houston-based private philanthropic organizations, to pay the salary of the psychiatric technician assigned to that program. Building on this already established relationship, OVT worked with the HOT as well as the Houston Police Foundation to approach and then apply to these two foundations for funding for a new, wheelchair-accessible van.

Both foundations approved the requests, and in November 2013 the new vehicle was formally presented to Mayor Parker and HPD Chief Charles McClelland in a ceremony attended by officers, service providers, advocates, consumers/homeless individuals, other local funders, members of the media, and local elected officials. The event served as an opportunity to highlight the work of the HOT as well as the importance of continuing the development of public-private partnerships between local law enforcement's community policing programs and this part of the private sector that is actively working to address needs, including homelessness, in the community.

Further building on this collaboration, OVT and the HOT continued to work closely with members of the philanthropic community to expand the reach of the Team, with the following additional collaborations to date:

- Funding from the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation and the Houston Police Foundation for the purchase of a pickup truck (allows access to homeless camps along bayous and other hard to reach areas);
- Funding from the Houston Police Foundation for an all-terrain vehicle (allows access to camps in wooded areas previously not accessible by vehicles, only on foot or bicycle) and trailer (for towing the ATV);
- Funding from the Frees Foundation, the Simmons Foundation, and Funders Together to End Homelessness-Houston for a documentary on the work of the HOT to encourage other communities to replicate the Team's work entitled *The Shepherds In Blue: How Community Policing Is Guiding People Home*, as well as a premiere event for the documentary; and
- Funding from the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation for a discretionary fund to be used by the HOT as needed to meet the needs of the homeless individuals they serve.

As a result of this expanded community support, The Harris Center was able to access additional federal funding for the addition of two case managers to the HOT in 2014. Following through on a previous commitment made to the private funders supporting the HOT, HPD added two officers at the same time in order to match the contribution made by The Harris Center.

The HOT's proactive nature and willingness to collaborate with others in the community also led to a major breakthrough in addressing one of the main obstacles faced by homeless individuals, namely a lack of official **identification**. Shelters, public assistance programs, and other programs that were created to help the homeless all require something that many of the homeless often do not have and are unable to get a valid form of identification (ID).

HOT found that one of the best ways to help people get off of the streets was to get them an ID. Because there was no formal policy at DPS regarding this letter, the HOT's success rate in getting agencies to accept the ID letters was hit and miss. One Voice Texas had a strong working relationship with HOT and put them in contact with State Representative Jessica Farrar's office that was able to arrange a meeting with the decision makers at DPS. HOT was able to meet with Stephen Bell, a senior manager at DPS, who after hearing the HOT presentation conferred with DPS Austin and agreed to accept HOT's ID letter as a supporting documentation for State of Texas Identification. This was huge accomplishment because now the team's identification letter would be accepted by the majority of providers and grant access to people who had been shut out of the system because they lacked ID.

Since the formal agreement was signed in 2014 the HOT has issued **845** identification letters to homeless individuals. In addition, to the homeless individuals directly served by the HOT, numerous other service providers routinely open their doors and provide much needed service to this population by accepting the ID letter in their agencies. The ID letter then allows them obtain a state issued ID, access services, obtain employment, SSI benefits, and anything else that

requires an ID. The identification card has been the single biggest asset for HOT and area service providers in getting a population previously denied services off of the streets.

Assessment:

The team is now regularly called to assist other officers on homeless related issues. They teach a class on homeless issues at the Academy, which changes the way future officers interact with the homeless. They are consulted on missing person's cases, homicides, assaults, and numerous other crimes involving the homeless community. The HOT has also become the liaison between the department and the street population. Other local law enforcement agencies have sent their officers to do rotations and train with the HOT. The METRO Police Department, a local law enforcement agency in Houston that focuses on the public transit system, has assigned a permanent officer to work with the Team. In 2015, the Harris County Sheriff's Office created its own version of the HOT based on the HPD's model. The Harris County's team will replicate the services offered by HOT in the county.

A combination of increased community focus and collaboration has helped the greater Houston area reduce the overall number of homeless individuals in the community. In 2016, the PIT counts show that show Houston's homeless population had dropped 3626. HOT has had a significant role in reducing street homelessness because of its unique role as a hybrid law enforcement/service provider initiative. Through relationship building, collaborations, and recognizing gaps in the service provider systems, the HOT has managed to more effectively serve a population that here-to-fore had been over serviced yet underserved.

The HOT has been able to successfully meet the goals that it set because it has been able to "think outside the box" and create mechanisms that allow it to meet the unique needs of homeless individuals. Some of the prime examples of the HOT's innovative aspects include:

- Adding PATH case managers from The Harris Center to provide better targeted and holistic services to homeless individuals living with a mental illness;
- Developing a public-private partnership with local philanthropic organizations that has helped the HOT fill gaps in its resources to better reach its targeted population; and
- Developing a unique and official ID letter that meets the fundamental need of so many homeless individuals to obtain state issued IDs and; once that need is met, other services that are off-limits without this documentation become accessible.

In addition to these bigger picture achievements, the HOT has been able to work directly with a significant number of clients since its start in 2011, meeting everything from the basic need for transportation to a shelter/service provider to helping individuals gain and maintain permanent housing and employment. Since its inception, the HOT has been able to make one on one contact with 1573 individuals, been able to house (temporary and permanent) 975, and created 845 homeless identification letters which have allowed the homeless re-entry into the system that was designed to help them.

The following two videos have been made about the work of HPD's HOT.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6BPKLbus1A>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqWdlDABmvo>

Yearly Stats	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 (Jan-May 31st)
Consumer Contacts	700	1968	2211	2416	3881	1573
Housed	87	122	123	210 *	301	132
Identification Letters	Did not track	Did not track	Did not track	160	416	207

*Team Expanded

Members of the Homeless Outreach Team:

- Sergeant Stephen Wick
- Senior Police Officer Jaime Giraldo
- Police Officer Janice Terry
- Senior Police Officer Colin Mansfield
- Police Officer Sheldon Theragood
- Metro Police Officer Theresa Guerrero
- Harris Center Case Manager Deidre Kimble
- Harris Center Case Manager Cami West- Puentes
- Harris Center Case Manager Ashley Mullins

Sergeant Stephen Wick
Homeless Outreach Team
Houston Police Department
150 N. Chenevert #200
Houston, Texas 77002
832-868-4522(cell)
832-394-4246
Steve.Wick@houstonpolice.org

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Greetings,

- *HOT-Grown by 2 case managers (at no cost) and 2 officers. 301 housed in 2015. According to HUD, homeless cost communities \$40,000 per year whereas housed consumers cost ~12,000. Based on this estimate, the HOT put homeless on the path to being housed, saving a potential \$28,000 a year for each individual, or \$8,428,000 per year.*
- *Based on HPD interactions with 10 of the housed homeless, before being part of the homeless outreach, these individuals cost the City of Houston more than \$64,000 including costs from:*
 - *971 days in jail (including only public intoxication, criminal trespass, criminal mischief, theft, pcs-cocaine, and possession of marijuana, if all offenses were included, it would add more than 700 days).*
 - *33 police contacts*
 - *9 emergency detention orders (only assuming one day)*
- *After their interactions with the team and the subsequent housing, none of these ten consumers have been arrested, generated a call for service resulting in a report, or were transported to the hospital by HPD.*
-

*Officer David P. Rose
Crime Analyst, Mental Health Division
The Houston Police Department*

Dear HPD Homeless Outreach Team,

Hope Impacts is an organization that serves the homeless population in Katy TX. We are so appreciative of the Homeless letters that you provide for our clients to serve as identification! Many of our clients have used this identification letter to better their situation. We have had clients use their letter to get jobs in the community. We had a client be able to board a bus to get home to out of state family because of their homeless ID. We have had clients that used their homeless ID to receive medical as well as mental health help so desperately needed. Some of our clients have even been accepted into transitional housing because of the ID letters you provide!

Without these ID letters our clients would not have been able to improve their life situation. We know first-hand what a difference it makes to have identification letters available to our homeless population. Without those letters we have not been able to provide bus tickets home, clients can not get employed, and medical help is much more difficult to obtain.

We wish to sincerely thank you for this service!
Blessings,
Tina Hatcher



...restoring dignity, self-respect & hope to Houston's poor & homeless

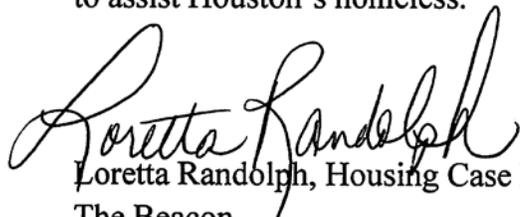
Date: May 27, 2016

Mr. Jaime Giraldo, Senior Police Officer/Investigator
Mental Health Division, Homeless Outreach Team
150 N. Chenevert Suite 200
Houston, Texas 77002

Dear Office Giraldo,

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support regarding the many ID Letters provided by your agency. The ID assistance has made a tremendous difference for our homeless clients waiting to be housed. Especially in cases where client is eligible for housing program with available unit. Also, extremely beneficial for individuals who have a high Vulnerability Index Score due to serious health issues and require immediate housing. Once client is offered housing the process is designed to move quickly and if client does not have proper ID the entire process is delayed. The normal process of having clients go to DPS would slow the entire process down, force client to continue living on the streets, misplace necessary documents, or possibly lose hope.

In conclusion, I fully support the ID Letter referral program and commend HPD Hot Team for their dedication, support, and willingness to assist Houston's homeless.


Loretta Randolph, Housing Case Manager
The Beacon
Coordinated Access – The Way Home

Greetings,

Homeless people struggle to find jobs, room in an emergency homeless shelter, access to psychotropic medication, or safe affordable housing for a number of reasons, but the lack of a state-issued identification card is by far the largest obstacle for an unsheltered individual to overcome. Wow! That's a big deal - right? Let's pretend for a moment that you disagree – lose your identification card or drivers' license, lose your social security card and birth certificate, and lose ties with your family - that is if you still have any. Now aside from any mental health issues or disabling conditions you face - go get a job, enter into a lease agreement, or apply for benefits – good luck. I think you get the picture.

So why it is that homeless individual do not have any form of identification, and more importantly what is being done to address this concern? Well first, a homeless person's identification card, birth certificate, and especially the delicate fragile paper social security card may be lost in the disruptive process of losing his/her home and many of his/her possessions on the road to homelessness. Further, without shelter, a homeless person may lose his/her identification or other documents because he/she does not have a consistently secure place to keep identification documentation. Finally, without shelter, a person is often exposed to inclement weather and may be vulnerable to acts of theft, robbery, and violence through which his/her documents are lost - and with it the prospect of access to stable housing and employment.

Undaunted, if not challenged - the **Houston Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)**, a specialized unit headed by Sergeant Steve Wick, and comprised of a mix of hand – selected, highly trained veteran police officers working alongside a team of mental health social workers, developed an “out-of-the box,” radical approach to address this need, because truthfully the homeless agencies and the clients themselves were at wits end. Sgt. Wick and his officers worked with the Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS) and the City of Houston Department of Vital Statistics, and drafted an innovative plan that would allow the HOT to issue a laminated identification letter that allows homeless individuals to obtain a certified copy of his/her birth certificate, enter into a lease agreement, and obtain SNAP benefits.

Through their interactions with the homeless community, Sergeant Wick's staff check to verify their identify, as well as being assessed and enrolled in the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) mandated Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) database. The homeless individual is then issued a verification of their state issued identification card which bears their full name, date of birth, age and a recent photograph, and is honored and accepted by DPS and the City of Houston.

But all that aside, I really wish you the reader could witness firsthand the look on a homeless individual's face when they first receive the HOT homeless identification letter. First they stare at it for a moment, and then they break out in this huge goofy, toothless smile, followed by a sigh of relief. That is the reaction to literally hundreds, if not thousands of homeless individuals that have been assisted with permanent supportive housing, and/or employment through the issuance of the HOT identification letters. But equally important, the homeless identification cards have

allowed those broken souls - separated by years from family, friends - and in some instances – themselves – to take the first step in reentry into society. Who among us cannot identify with that?

William Queenan
SEARCH Homeless Services / Downtown Management District
wqueenan@searchhomeless.org>

May 31, 2016

To whom it may concern,

The homeless ID letter provided to the homeless population by Sgt. Wick and the Houston Police HOT team plays a pivotal role in our clinic providing the necessary care for our clients. A homeless ID letter is required for clinical, dental, and also needed for some agencies our case management team at Healthcare for the Homeless refers to. There have been so many changes in the community that have affected the homeless population drastically and it has become difficult for individuals to obtain identification because of these changes. The HOT assistance in this area it is beneficial not only for the client, but also for the agencies assisting the clients. The HOT Team is well trusted by the homeless population as well as the community, and agencies would have no problem about the authenticity of the homeless letter provided by them. This team has benefitted our agency tremendously and we could not do the work we do without this collaboration. Thank you in advance for consideration of such a great asset to our homeless population and provided by this great unit.

Sharon Agee
Community Health Worker
Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston

*SEARCH Homeless Services
2505 Fannin Street
Houston, TX 77002
Re: Letter of Support*

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to give high praise to HPD's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT). Sgt. Wick, Officer Giraldo, Officer Terry, Officer Mansfield and Officer Thurgood have been invaluable to our street outreach team. We have been utilizing the "HOT ID's" to help our clients obtain their birth certificates and Texas state identification cards, in order to place them into jobs and housing. These ID's have been used by several different programs at SEARCH, and have helped many of our case managers to assist their clients to access much needed services. We are very appreciative of all the members of HOT and extremely grateful for all of their guidance and assistance with our clients.

Thank You!

Sincerely,

*Charity Dominguez
Community Outreach Team Lead
SEARCH Homeless Services
(713) 276-3008
cdominguez@searchhomeless.org*

The HOT ID Letter is truly a boom to the City of Houston's initiative to end homelessness. It has been used several times by Operation ID to obtain Texas Birth Certificates and ID Cards for the homeless and It has been accepted by at least one out of state Vital Statistics Office to issue a Birth Certificate for a person homeless in Houston.

Phil Pierce
Main Street Ministries Houston
Director, Operation ID

