

**FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT**

**HONORING SUCCESS AND  
RESILIENCE AT THE  
SUMMER SOLSTICE**

# PRESENTERS

## Jeff Foreman

Policy Director, Care for the Homeless

## Nathalie Interiano

Policy Associate, Care for the Homeless

## David Peery

Board Member, Camillus Health Concern

## Katherine Cavanaugh

Consumer Advocate, National Health  
Care for the Homeless Council

# GOALS

- Explain the origins and purpose of the Summer Solstice Success Celebration
- Discuss three examples of current Summer Solstice Success Celebrations from New York, Miami, and Baltimore
- Provide tips and lessons learned from organizers of these events for people looking to bring these celebrations into their communities

# WHO IS IN THE ROOM?

- What is your role at HCH?
- Have you heard of the Summer Solstice Success Celebration?



# HOW WE INVENTED THE SUMMER SOLSTICE SUCCESS CELEBRATION

- Working on destigmatizing perception of people experiencing homelessness
  - Messaging about the incredible success of our clients in overcoming obstacles
  - Telling stories of success; presenting clients as unique, accomplished individuals
  - Emphasizes that we can end homelessness

# SUMMER SOLSTICE SUCCESS CELEBRATION

Building on the Success of Homeless Persons' Memorial Day

→ HPMD observed on the longest, darkest night of the year

→ Success Celebration celebrated on longest, brightest day



# SUMMER SOLSTICE SUCCESS CELEBRATION

- First recognized clients successfully obtaining/maintaining housing (2014)
- Second Celebration added awards for clinicians and clients nominated for overcoming major healthcare obstacles (2015)
  - Clinicians gave the awards to their own patients
  - CFH's Chief Medical Officer gave awards to those clinicians
- Last year CFH added a client Advocacy Achievement award (2016)

Our hope is that the Summer Solstice Success Celebration becomes established across the U.S. to recognize the individual stories of success people experiencing homelessness achieve despite incredible obstacles, and to provide a destigmatizing message about people who struggle to overcome poverty and homelessness



**CARE FOR THE  
HOMELESS**

# NEW YORK CITY – CARE FOR THE HOMELESS



NATIONAL  
HEALTH CARE  
*for the*  
HOMELESS  
COUNCIL

# FORMAT

- Provide a meal for attendees
- 1 hour program with awards, remarks and music
- Involve clients, providers, staff
- Invite elected officials to participate in the program



# AWARDS

- Housing Awards
- Health Care Success Awards
- Advocacy Awards (new in 2016)
- Writing Contest Winner  
→ Submitted prior to the event for review and award recipient selection





CARE FOR THE HOMELESS

Sponsored by Care for the Homeless and our Client Leaders.



TUESDAY  
JUNE 21  
5:00 P.M.

SUMMER SOLSTICE

SUCCESS CELEBRATION

Celebrating the health care, housing and advocacy successes of currently and formerly homeless New Yorkers.

Musical entertainment, celebration and story-telling.

Red Oak Apartments  
135 WEST 106TH ST.

(BTWN AMSTERDAM AND COLUMBUS AVE.  
SUBWAY: 1, C, B TRAINS TO 103RD ST.

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL! MEAL PROVIDED



# Care for the Homeless 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual “STORIES OF SUCCESS” WRITING CONTEST

- Seeking Short Stories or Essays about Overcoming Obstacles
- Open to all New Yorkers Who Are or Have Been Homeless
  - Not Longer Than 300 Words

We are constantly inspired by the real stories of real life heroes who overcome obstacles in the fight against unstable housing. We're looking for stories about success in overcoming health challenges, in finding and maintaining stable housing or in advocating for better policies to fight, prevent or end homelessness. Entrants may also submit an essay about what the writer thinks success would look and feel like.

If you have a story of success – or know someone who does – please consider submitting it into our contest. All entries must be submitted with the author's name and contact information. Submissions may be e-mailed to [policy@cfhnyc.org](mailto:policy@cfhnyc.org) or can be mailed or delivered to the Policy Office, 30 E. 33rd Street, 5th floor, New York, NY, 10016. One winner will be selected by Care for the Homeless, will receive a prize and be asked to read their winning story at the CFH Summer Solstice celebration on Tuesday, June 21st at 5pm. *All entries may be republished with credit to the author.*



**CONTEST DEADLINE  
IS TUESDAY, MAY 31,  
2016**

**Submissions will not  
be accepted after this  
date**

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# COMPONENTS

- “Wall of Success”
  - This wall encourages those in attendance to display their own success story
- Musical entertainment
- Tabling
  - Policy and advocacy materials on display
  - Voter registration
- Photographer
- Videographer
- Volunteers





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# MIAMI – CAMILLUS HEALTH CONCERN



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# PURPOSE OF THE EVENT

- Focus on individual, consumer “Success”
- Encourage role models, hope
- Consumer driven and focused
  - Not for institutional fundraising
  - Consumers must have sufficient and priority seating

# EVENT PLAN

- Skit showing transition from homelessness to housed
  - Song, dance, spoken word poetry performance at points in the skit
- Consumer artwork for flyers, program, and throughout the room
- Finale engaging audience with candles to illustrate their own light



Artwork by Gary Allen

# Summer Solstice Celebration: From our Darkest Day to our Brightest Day

**From the Darkness and Despair of Life on the Street to the Light and Hope of Life Beyond.**

In preparation for this year's Summer Solstice, the Camillus Consumer Advisory Board invites you to join us as we celebrate individuals who are breaking the cycle of homelessness.

**Friday, June 19, 2015  
starting at 2:30 PM**

**Camillus House Campus  
Bank of America Community Room  
1603 NW 7th Avenue  
Miami, FL 33136**

**Join us for an Ice Cream Social after the event.**

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**Campus parking is accessible through NW 15th Street from NW 7th Avenue**



Join us in a  
Special  
Celebration

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Camillus House  
Auditorium  
Friday  
July 1, 2016  
2pm to 4pm

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From the Despair  
of Life on the  
Streets

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To the Light and  
Hope of Life  
Beyond

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# SUMMER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

## FROM OUR LONGEST NIGHT TO OUR BRIGHTEST DAY

Music ~ Spoken Word Poetry ~ Singing ~ Choir

Snacks after the performance

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Camillus Consumer  
Advisory Board

Camillus House  
1603 NW 7th Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33136





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# IMPACT OF THE EVENT

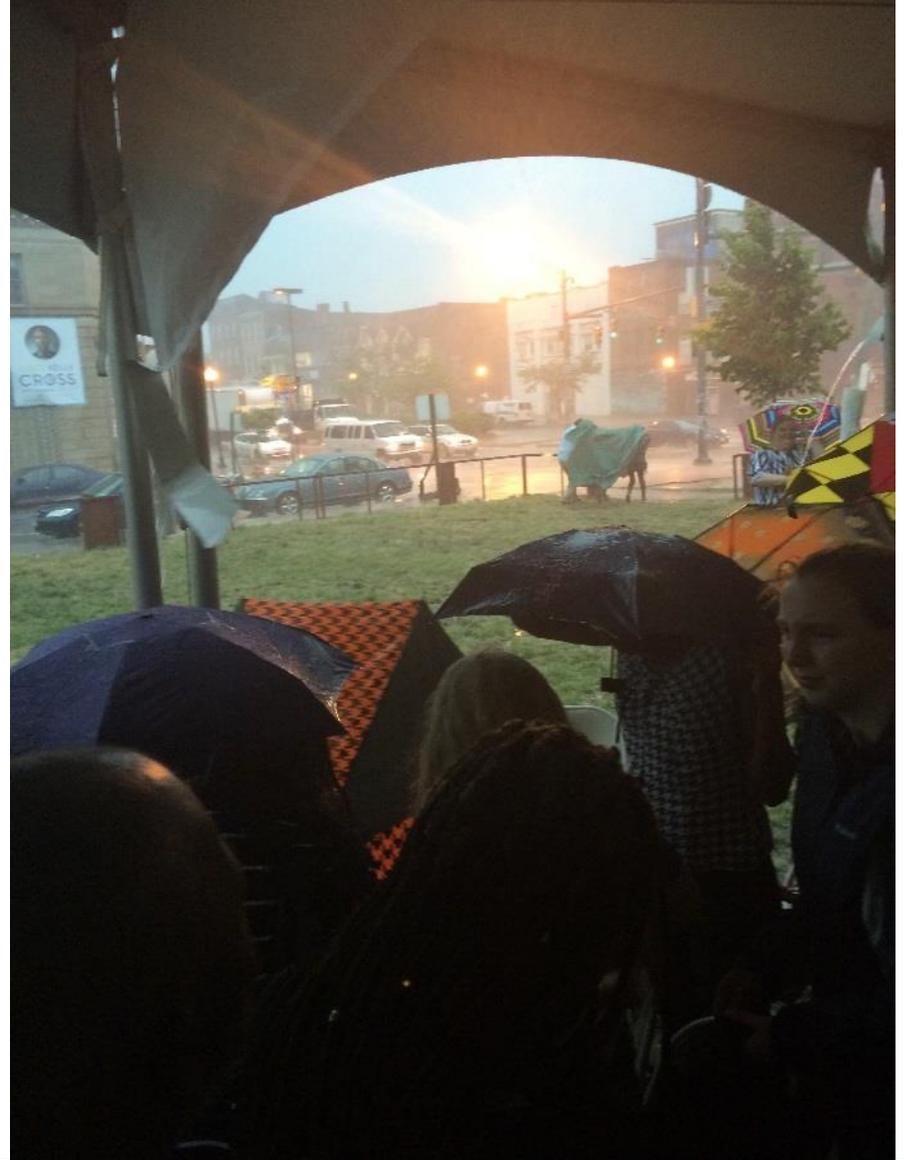
- Impact on Performers
  - Increase on self – esteem
  - Feeling of giving back
  - Being a positive role model
  - Opportunity to share their art
- Impact on Audience
  - Belief that we can rise above our current challenges
  - Reminder that others have overcome homelessness
  - Enjoyable performance with uplifting ending
  - 2016 –audience engagement with message

# BALTIMORE - HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS

- Done in coalition with community partners
- Storytelling
  - Partnership with Speakers Bureau
- Music and food



WEATHER IS  
UNPREDICTABLE,  
HOUSING  
SHOULDN'T BE!



# TIPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- Role of CABs
  - These events should be driven by the community and those with the direct experience
  - Involve Providers, Board Members and Staff
- Highlight specific policies that lead to success and call for greater support for those programs and policies
- Use social media to publicize
- NCAB Technical Assistance

# CONSIDER A “PILOT EVENT” FOR JUNE 21

Small initial events can be extraordinarily meaningful and provide a catalyst for greater recognition.

Contact Katherine Cavanaugh for ideas and assistance

[kcavanaugh@nhchc.org](mailto:kcavanaugh@nhchc.org)

(443) 703 – 1320

