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October 14, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

3rd Annual Event Set to ‘Connect’ Record Numbers to Services

Agency Braces for High Number of Regional Residents Experiencing Homelessness Seeking Services

Richmond, VA – Homeward, the Greater Richmond region’s planning and coordinating agency for homeless services, is in heavy recruitment mode for volunteers for its third annual Project Homeless Connect. The one day, one stop service fair, taking place **November 19, 2009 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center**, is designed to connect single adults experiencing homelessness with on-site medical care, employment services, housing assessments and a variety of social service benefits. This year the agency is recruiting 1,000 volunteers to put on the day-long event.

Last year, several hundred volunteers assisted 575 area neighbors in housing crisis in connecting to over 40 local, state and federal human service offerings at Project Homeless Connect. At the event, “volunteer navigators” are paired individually with people in crisis to assist with prioritizing and accessing services at the event, including dental and vision screenings, birth certificate applications and free haircuts.

“Based on data collected from our twice yearly census, we know that there is a growing need for services for local residents experiencing homelessness,” said Kelly King Horne, Executive Director of Homeward. “We are working with area service providers to target limited resources to those who are not currently connected to services.”

This past winter, 1,150 people were counted in the region that were experiencing homelessness during the one day census. Compared to the previous winter’s count, this was an increase of 7.2% overall and a 10.8% increase in the number of unsheltered individuals in the region.

“We know the need is great, so we are depending on individual volunteers, corporate teams and area congregations to lend a helping hand to ensure those in need are connected to services,” continued Horne.

To register as a volunteer at this year’s Project Homeless Connect, visit www.homewardva.org or call 804-343-2045 for more information.

About Homeward

With more than 1,000 homeless children, single adults and families at a given point in time in Greater Richmond, Homeward is the regional catalyst to research, report and coordinate resources for people experiencing homelessness. In collaboration with regional partners in the City of Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield, Henrico, Hanover, New Kent, Powhatan, Charles City and Goochland, Homeward facilitates service provider trainings, client resource fairs, and conducts twice yearly ‘point-in-time’ counts of those at-risk and who are currently in the sheltered and unsheltered population. In 2008 Homeward launched the Ten Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Richmond Region. For more information on Homeward, visit www.homewardva.org.