



Official Newsletter of

CICH



**CHATTANOOGA INTERAGENCY
COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS**

**Virtual Board Meeting
June 11, 2021
2-3p**

IN THE LEAD

Mary Ellen Galloway

Welcome to our first newsletter! As the lead staff person for the Chattanooga Interagency Council on Homelessness (CICH), and the Director of Homeless Services at Signal Centers, I am very excited about what has been accomplished by CICH in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

CICH staff participated in all COVID-19 Task Force virtual tables, working with our community partners to provide the basic human needs of our homeless neighbors impacted by the pandemic.

CICH and its membership of community members, foundations, congregations, government agencies, healthcare organizations, social and homeless service providers will continue to move forward to complete the remaining Action Plan items. We are actively working with groups to investigate the number of people needing housings. It is important that we explore all housing option and supportive services to make Chattanooga a great place to live!

I am looking forward to working with Mayor Kelly and his staff to bring Chattanooga to functional zero, this involves offering safe, available, and affordable permanent housing for our neighbors without homes, and continuing CICH's responsibility to plan, coordinate, and accelerate the 2018 five-year Homelessness Action Plan for Chattanooga.

In closing, I would like to say a very special thank you to Betsy McCright, Executive Director of the Chattanooga Housing Authority and Donna Maddox, CEO of the AIM Center for their collaboration, guidance and leadership of CICH. They were the first Co-Chairs of CICH from its beginning until April 1, 2020.



Q&A with Tyler Yount

Board Member Spotlight

"If you see a problem, you must take the lead to fix it. There is no superhero coming to save us. It's just people like us."

**Director of Housing and Homelessness Policy
City of Chattanooga - Office of Mayor Tim Kelly**



Question: The past mayors of Chattanooga have expressed a real passion for the city's homeless initiatives, as an advisor for Andy Berke throughout his tenure, what was your most valuable lesson learned?

"We oftentimes think of city government or some other organization or institution as the entity responsible for fixing a problem. "Public works" needs to fix my pothole. "The bank" needs to make it easier for me to transfer my money. "The shelter" needs to expand their beds. The biggest lesson I learned is that we cannot look to someone else to fix these problems or feel like the problem is beyond our capacity to solve. If you see a problem, you must take the lead to fix it. There is no superhero coming to save us. It's just people like us."

Question: As a valued Board Member for CICH, continually making decisions for how to best eradicate homelessness in the city, how do you feel about alternative housing as a RRH (Rapid Re-housing) strategy for Chattanooga's homeless (i.e. shipping container apartments, 3-D apartments, tiny homes, etc.)? Do you have a preference on either in regards to housing the homeless?

"Today's housing market is insane - there are supply chain issues for construction, inflated home prices, and increasingly reduced supply. The idea of the single-family home with a white picket fence is disappearing and we must be creative to increase density and reduce costs. These alternative structures are not ideal, they do not fit our traditional "American Dream" conception of living, but it is our reality now. I think tiny homes are probably our best bet to start with, because that concept still retains that traditional image of having your own distinct space and a kind of suburban feel. It is more comfortable for people who are resistant to change."

Question: Based on your (9) years of experience in Chattanooga, how do you think the community may respond to alternative housing for homeless?

"Introducing a new concept, especially one associated with people experiencing homelessness, is hard. People will be resistant and the only thing that will change that is a lot of conversations, learning, and experience."



CICH Board of Directors

Lisa Maragnano, Executive Director of CARTA/ CICH Chair

Julia Bursch,- Deputy Chief of Staff for City of Chattanooga/ CICH Co-Chair

Erin Creal- Executive Director of Chattanooga Room in the Inn/ CICH Secretary

Wendy Winters- Executive Director of Chattanooga Regional Homeless Coalition

Major Mark Smith – Area Commander of Salvation Army

Lieutenant J. Montgomery – Chattanooga Police Department

Gayle Lodato- Senior Director at Helen Ross McNabb

Janna Jahn – Grants Planner for Hamilton County Government

Karen Guinn – Executive Director for Homeless Healthcare Center

David Denmark –Executive Director for Maclellan Foundation

Jens Christensen – President of Habitat for Humanity

Nicole Bates – Regional Director of Mental Health Cooperative

Sargent Mullins – Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

Orlando Gibson – Community Member

Dominique Brandt – Vice President of United Way

Jimmy Catlett –Director of Volunteer Behavioral Health

Joda Thongnopnua – Chief Policy Officer for City of Chattanooga

Betsy Kammerdiener – Market Director of Mission Integration at CHI Memorial

Suzy Sonnier-Vice President of Strategy and Development at United Healthcare

David Costello- Interim CEO of Chattanooga Community Kitchen

Ex Officio

Donna McConnico- CEO at Signal Centers

Mary Ellen Galloway- Director of Homeless Services at Signal Centers



Human Connection

Collaboration

Compassion