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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Preliminary Findings Reflect Gains in Fight to End Homelessness

Homeward releases data from winter 2010 Point-in-Time Count

Richmond, VA – Homeward, the Greater Richmond region’s planning and coordinating agency for homeless services, today released initial findings from its 12th Annual Winter Point-in-Time Count. The twice-yearly census provides a snapshot of the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single day. Preliminary results reveal 1,012 people in the region experiencing homelessness on January 21, 2010. This number reflects a 12% decrease in the number of people overall experiencing homelessness, with a nearly 18% decrease in the number of unsheltered individuals, from January 2009 to January 2010. The number of homeless children continues to go down, with a 4% decrease since last winter’s count.

“Despite a negative economy, as a region we are realizing tremendous results in preventing and ending homelessness,” said Kelly King Horne, Executive Director of Homeward. “As a coordinated service delivery system, we have cut the median length of homelessness for families in half, and can see a direct impact from our community’s *Ten Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. Targeting housing resources for our most vulnerable residents has led to significant improvements in the situation of homeless families.”

January 2010 Point-In-Time Count

OVERALL POPULATION	
Total point-in-time	1,012
<i>Total children in Point-in-time count</i>	<i>131</i>
UNSHELTERED POPULATION	
Unsheltered	152
SHELTERED POPULATION	
Emergency Shelter: unaccompanied adults	294
Emergency Shelter: persons in families (incl. children)	90
Transitional Shelter: unaccompanied adults	352
Transitional Shelter: persons in families (incl. children)	122

In addition to performing a count of people experiencing homelessness, individuals also completed a detailed survey conducted by local volunteers. Answers to the 70-question survey are used to obtain specific information on how to better respond to the issue of homelessness.

“While homelessness defined as people in shelter or on the streets is down overall, we are still seeing the impact of the economic crisis on our community through increased emergency shelter usage and increased demand for prevention services to help families and individuals to stay in their housing,” continued King Horne. “As a community, we have spent over \$220,000 on homelessness prevention and assistance and helped over 150 households.”

In March Homeward will release comprehensive findings from the count, including results from questions on a variety of economic indicators and health-related topics.

The primary site for the count and survey was the weekly lunch program at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Richmond and included a resource fair with medical screenings, flu shots, benefits information and free haircuts. The point-in-time count was also conducted in secondary areas in the City of Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico in cooperation with local social services and law enforcement agencies and area shelter staff. For a complete list of partner agencies, visit www.homewardva.org.

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.

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