

History of California Supportive Housing

Jonathan Hunter, Corporation for Supportive Housing

CSH grew from a revolutionary idea that would become the solution to homelessness for the neediest people. In 1991, approached by two Franciscan priests, Fr. John McVeen and Fr. John Felice, Julie Sandorf went to see their St. Francis Residence, which they created when their mentally ill parishioners were on the brink of being evicted from a community single room occupancy hotel. The Fathers John raised the funds needed to buy their own building and brought in psychiatrists and social workers to provide services to the tenants. The result: the tenants at St. Francis Residence stayed housed and healthy.

Encouraged and supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, Julie spent the next year studying this new housing approach. During that time, she found hundreds of miracle-workers around the country, each telling essentially the same story: troubled people who had eddied among the shelters, streets, hospitals, jails and treatment programs were suddenly making lives and plans all because of this mixture of quality housing and the support services they needed to stay healthy and whole. The Corporation for Supportive Housing was established in 1991 with funding from three of the nation's leading philanthropies – the [Pew Charitable Trusts](#), [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#), and the [Ford Foundation](#) – to support the individual efforts of local nonprofit pioneers developing service-supported housing for those most in need: people coping with homelessness and extreme poverty, as well as chronic health conditions such as mental illness, addiction or HIV/AIDS.

Today, CSH delivers its core services primarily through ten geographic hubs: California, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Washington DC and Southern New England (Connecticut, Rhode Island). CSH also operates targeted initiatives in Kentucky, Maine, Oregon, and Washington, and provides limited assistance to many other communities. CSH provides project specific assistant and predevelopment loans, training and capacity building, and works to build better public systems for the creation and maintenance of supportive housing.

Since inception in 1991, CSH has committed nearly \$119 million in loans and grants to support the creation of 17,318 units of supportive housing, with an additional 11,882 units in the pipeline now. The units in operation have ended homelessness for at least 21,000 adults and children.