

Gaithersburg Hoarding Task Force

Annual Report 2014-15

Gaithersburg Hoarding Task Force was established as a consortium of providers in February of 2009. Since then it has served city residents who are dealing with a hoarding behavior, trained professionals on how to work with hoarding behaviors and provided outreach and education to the general community. This is the Task Force's third annual report.

2014-15 List of Participating agencies

Name	Agency/Organization	Agency Role
*Tawana Lofton, Maureen Herndon and Steve Marquina	City of Gaithersburg, Maryland Community Services and Code Enforcement	Client base
*Susan Smith, MSW *Rebecca Grayson, MSW	Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission	Client base
*Dr. Elspeth Bell		Provides cognitive behavior therapy & family support
Howard Pumphrey	Montgomery County's Core Services	Information on county programs
Miriam Yarmolinsky		
Alisa Levy	Embrace Your Space	Professional organizing
*Emma Byrns	Rebuilding Together	General Support
Matthew Kelleher	Fire and Rescue Service	Safety
Diana Schofield, LCSW-C *Chris Carmello, LGSW	Child Welfare Services Code Enforcement	Safety

Current members are denoted by a *

2014-15 Summary of Accomplishments

TO UPDATE

Task Force Membership

- Membership remains stable.
- Monthly meetings are held with consistent participation.

Case Coordination and Management

Over the past year, the Task Force consulted on 10 cases within the City of Gaithersburg. On-going cases were re-visited as needed. Facilitated staffings to discuss intervention plans complemented the Task Force's role.

Below are three examples of the type of work we did.

Case 1

Client failed inspection. A referral was made to the Task Force by her landlord. Client was known to Task Force and agreed to work with staff to resolve the situation. Client worked with staff on a weekly basis to slowly de-clutter her space and to develop the necessary skills to sustain a home that is within expected standards. Clients has since been able to pass inspections independently

Case 2

After failing two inspections, the client was referred to the Task Force by an inspector. He was not known previously to the Task Force. Client agreed to work with the Task Force, albeit, reluctantly. In addition to the severe clutter, he also had infestation in his apartment which complicated the work. He worked with the Task Force's professional organizer and was able to pass inspection.

Case 3

A home owner on a fixed income has been working with the Task Force for a couple of years. Her home needed major renovations, and Rebuilding Together was able to support her. In preparation for Project Day work, professional organizers worked to de-clutter and box all items on client's first floor. They moved items to storage. The old, soiled flooring was replaced. The client also received new kitchen appliances, lighting

and the entire first floor was painted. Post-Project Day, after the new flooring was installed, the items were returned to the home and organizers continued to work with the client to organize her “new” home.

Family Member Education Support Groups

- JSSA has been offering its monthly support group for family members of people with hoarding behaviors since November 23, 2011.
- During FY 2013, there were 42 occurrences of attendance at the monthly support group by 24 family members.
- JSSA created a tip sheet for family members of people with hoarding behaviors for distribution at its support and education groups.
- JSSA continues to send periodic emails to participating education and support group participants with relevant updates of services, activities and recourse in the community.

Client Therapy and Support Groups

- FSI is implementing a therapy group for people with hoarding behaviors.

Community and Service Provider Education

- The Task Force presented *Stand Up and Be Counted – Support A Hoarding Task Force* at the [National Association of Professional Organizers](#) 2012 Annual Conference.
- As a result of NAPO presentation, the Task Force was asked to contribute to a book to be published by [the Institute for Challenging Disorganization](#). The book is entitled *The ICD Guide to Collaborating with Professional Organizers: For Related Professionals* and will come out in early 2014.
- The Task Force presented a day-long training *Effective Hoarding Interventions: Hands On De-Cluttering Techniques for Professionals* in early 2013. The training was designed for mental health and other professionals who serve people with hoarding behavior. It was well attended and had a waitlist.
- As a result of the success of the Effective Hoarding Intervention training, the Task Force offered a day-long training in November 2013 for professionals. This was in partnership with the Montgomery County Continuing Education Center.
- HOC staff presented on hoarding intervention for HOC property managers working in the county and City.
- The Task Force developed a postcard to be used for outreach and education for the general community.
- A Task Force member co-presented at the NAPO Special Interest Group for Working with Seniors. The Task Force was an example of how to provide services to low income seniors .
- The city has improved the website for the task force. See <http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/hoarding>.
- We have updated and improved on a Resource List for Working with Hoarding Situations.

Volunteer Recruiting & Other Efforts

- Trained Montgomery College students and Rebuilding Together volunteers.
- Since 2011, HOC has been training social work student interns to perform de-clutter sessions for its residents. The interns have been working with five hoarding cases within city limits.

Advocacy

- Task Force success was leveraged to obtain funds to pay for crisis intervention services

Grants

- The CDBG grant which was renewed in FY 2011 as the result of the Task Force's efforts became a part of the City of Gaithersburg's community services operating budget.

Research and Consultations

- Task Force members consulted with a variety of professionals from across the county and around the country about how to establish a Task Force and best practices.