



The Heading Home Partnership to End Family Homelessness Honors 27 Graduates

Formerly homeless parents complete workforce training and life-skills program to better themselves and their children

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – March 24, 2011 – [Heading Home, Inc.](#), one of the Boston area's largest non-profits devoted to helping the homeless, is proud to announce that 27 formerly homeless parents have completed the workforce training and life-skills course in the *Heading Home Partnership to End Family Homelessness* program. The graduates were honored at a ceremony at the State House in Boston on March 10th where Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray was the keynote speaker. A non-profit organization, Heading Home's mission is to end homelessness of individuals and families in Greater Boston by providing housing in conjunction with effective support services to help change the conditions that create homelessness.

Established in 2009 after years of research and collaboration, the Heading Home Partnership successfully completed its first year of a two-year program cycle in 2010. This comprehensive, milestone-based program builds upon the Commonwealth's emergency-oriented response to homelessness by providing local families with an intensively supported pathway to housing, job training, higher education, increased earnings through employment, and asset development. The Heading Home Partnership is able to do this by leveraging significant public resources (housing vouchers) and private resources (such as job training scholarships and matched interest earning accounts).

More than 60 people attended the ceremony where graduates were honored with achievement awards and well-deserved accolades for their hard work. Three students spoke during the ceremony about the many opportunities, life-skills, and empathetic care the program offered them, as well as their individual journeys to overcoming homelessness and achieving self-sufficiency. The select students also expressed their gratitude for the positive support in searching for and landing a job, moving to an apartment, and being able to provide for their children. The audience was moved by such heartfelt thanks and comments as "this program changed my life...it was a once in a lifetime opportunity," "[the Heading Home Partnership] helped me build

a solid foundation to reach my goals," and "since I completed the program, my life has changed completely. Today I walk with my head held high."

"Having a home is one of the most essential of human needs, and the Heading Home Partnership provides an effective program to support families in the Commonwealth," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray, who chairs the Governor's Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness. "The Patrick-Murray Administration is committed to implementing a new system that effectively links homeless and at risk families to housing resources and related support and stabilization services. As we think about this kind of reform, the Heading Home Partnership continues to provide the necessary services and support to create opportunities, provide stability, and change the lives of homeless families."

"Heading Home is proud of this class of graduates who have tirelessly worked and persevered to create better lives for themselves and their families," said Tom Lorello, executive director of Heading Home. "The Heading Home Partnership offers parents the tools and support they need to end the homelessness cycle. These graduates' futures are bright and promising because of their own hard work and courage."

The perilous housing market and wave of foreclosures have displaced many people, and the issue of homelessness has become absolutely critical in the Greater Boston community. On any given night, there are more than 7,000 homeless people in Greater Boston, and the average age of a homeless person – and Heading Home client – is just eight years old. Sadly, not since the Great Depression have so many families been homeless. The number of homeless families is staggering and offers a glimpse into the depth of the affordable housing conundrum. In 2010, Heading Home helped more than 2,000 homeless families and individuals in Greater Boston by providing them a place to call home and opportunities for self-sufficiency.

Many generous partners and funders support the Heading Home Partnership. Project partners include COMPASS for kids, Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office, MIDAS Collaborative, and Roxbury Community College. Major private funders include BNY Mellon Charitable Giving Program through the generosity of the Peter E. Strauss Trust, the Boston Foundation, Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation, Phill and Liz Gross, Highland Street Foundation, NAIOP, and The Procter & Gamble Fund. Major public funders include the Boston Housing Authority, Cambridge Housing Authority, City of Boston Dept. of Neighborhood Development, and Massachusetts Dept. of Housing and Community Development.

About Heading Home

Heading Home, formerly Shelter Inc., is a non-profit whose mission is to end homelessness in Greater Boston by providing housing in conjunction with effective support services to help change the conditions that create homelessness. Founded in 1974 by a small group of concerned citizens in Cambridge, Heading Home today operates programs focused on smaller home-like settings with individualized attention in the communities of Boston, Somerville, Cambridge, Malden, Medford, Everett and Quincy. For more information, visit <http://www.headinghomeinc.org>.

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