

# Local advocates discuss ways to help homeless

**By Pat Kimbrough**

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HIGH POINT - The community has made progress on addressing homelessness, but plenty of work remains to be done.

That was the consensus that emerged from a public forum on the topic Monday at Open Door Ministries. An audience that included clients of Open Door, representatives from local human service providers, elected officials and others gathered for a discussion of the Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Guilford County.

Sponsored by Rabbit Quarter Ministries, a High Point-based homeless outreach program, the gathering included a group of Guilford College freshmen who will undertake a service project related to homelessness in High Point.

"The chronically homeless, those are folks who have some issues. They may have substance abuse, health or other issues," said David Miller, chairman of the Ten Year Plan and chairman of Open Door's board of directors. "Housing ... is the essence of the plan - take them off the street and give them a safe home. Bring support services to them."

The plan was established three years ago and counted more than 200 chronically homeless - those who have been without basic necessities for an extended period - in the county. Since then, about 100 have been housed, but challenges remain because of the number of "situationally" and "serially" homeless in the community who are close to being on the street on a long-term basis but manage to find shelter sporadically.

Advocates now are trying to meet another need by raising money for a day center for local homeless, said Dan Hodgson with Hope Outreach Center in High Point.

"One strong element of the plan has been allowing the faith-based community to come alongside and give support," he said.

Miller pointed out that the strategy of the Ten Year Plan makes sense economically for the community as a whole because so many chronically homeless people end up in places such as hospital emergency rooms and local jails if left on their own.

"It costs more money to not do it," he said. "It's very expensive institutionally for chronically homeless people to be out on the street."

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