



# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FOR HOMELESS, INC.

A Narrated History  
by  
Alvah H. Chapman, Jr.,  
Founding Chairman



As recorded in a series of interviews conducted  
as an oral history project by:

Dennis P. Kendrick



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**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FOR HOMELESS, INC.**  
*A Narrated History by Alvah H. Chapman, Jr., Founding Chairman*

**PREFACE**  
**By Dennis P. Kendrick**

In the course of Miami's history, many caring organizations and individuals have reached out to assist the homeless. In 1913, **The Salvation Army** first came to Miami. In 1922, the Moody Bible Institute established the Grace Mission, now the Miami Rescue Mission. In 1960, **Camillus House** was opened by the Brothers of the Good Shepherd. Dade County had programs such as **Beckham Hall**. In the 1980's, the number of homeless increased and became more and more visible on the streets. Individual churches and synagogues throughout the county reached out to the homeless and more local organizations formed to serve their needs. The courts became involved in homelessness in Miami-Dade County with the decision of Judge Atkins in the Pottinger case which ensured the right of the homeless to congregate and sleep in public places. However, there was no unified countywide plan to address the issue of homelessness until Alvah Chapman, in 1991, resolved to dedicate his leadership skills to the issue.

By the summer of 1992, Alvah Chapman had been appointed by Governor Lawton Chiles as chairman of the **Governor's Commission on Homeless** in Miami-Dade County. In August of 1992, the work of the Commission was slowed by Hurricane Andrew as most efforts were focused on **We Will Rebuild**, also chaired by Alvah Chapman. In the spring of 1993, the Commission convinced the Florida State Legislature to authorize a one cent tax on meals in restaurants grossing over \$400,000 annually in Miami-Dade county as a source of dedicated income to address homelessness. Then the Commission created a **Task Force** with Alvah Chapman and Commissioner Alex Penelas as co-chairmen to determine how the public money would be spent and convince the Miami-Dade County Commission to levy the tax.

In July, 1993, the Task Force created the **Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan** which has never been changed or amended. The Miami-Dade County Commissioners approved the Homeless Plan by unanimous vote to enact the tax and to create the **Homeless Trust**. Commissioner Alex Penelas became the first chairman of the Homeless Trust – the public partner.



In September, 1993, Alvah Chapman became the chairman of **Community Partnership for Homeless, Inc. (CPHI)** -- the private partner whose mission was and is to site, construct, and operate Homeless Assistance Centers and to raise private money.

The Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan has resulted in generous grants on an annual basis from the U.S. Department of Housing (HUD) for homeless housing programs. The construction and operation of permanent housing by **Carrfour** and the operation of permanent housing by **Camillus House** are examples of U.S. HUD grants through the Homeless Trust.

The following is a narrated history of the **Community Partnership for Homeless, Inc. (CPHI)** by Alvah Chapman, retired chairman and CEO of Knight Ridder. As the undisputed business and community leader of the 1970's and 1980's, he addressed the core issues of homelessness in the 1990's, identified himself with the poor, rallied the community to a unified plan of action, solicited the necessary funding, and made CPHI a model to the nation. To date, CPHI has admitted over 43,000 homeless and successfully outplaced more than 23,000 or 58.5 percent. There can be no doubt that Alvah Chapman is a hero to Miami-Dade County's homeless and that his organization exemplifies all that is best in our community.

October 2004



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*In the following interviews between Dennis Kendrick and Alvah Chapman, Dennis Kendrick's questions/comments are indicated in bold italics and Mr. Chapman's follow in plain type.*

## **FIRST INTERVIEW MARCH 10, 2000**

***Mr. Chapman, this is the beginning of our Oral History Project, and I really would like to understand, first of all, your motivation for becoming involved in the issue of homelessness in Miami. -- When did it begin? What spurred your interest?***

Dennis, my motivation for being involved started in 1991. It was part a civic motivation and part a spiritual motivation.

### **Motivation – Civic**

The civic motivation came about because of my involvement in the revitalization of downtown. As the chairman of the New World Center Action Committee (the group responsible for many of the new buildings that came into downtown Miami in the '70's and '80's), I was reasonably familiar with downtown Miami.

I was also motivated to get involved because of changing my residence from Bay Point, where I lived for thirty years. When I left my Knight Ridder office to go home in the evening, I drove north on the boulevard and was not made aware of the homeless problem.

In 1991 when we decided to move to Coconut Grove, I left my Knight Ridder office and drove south. I was appalled at the sea of humanity that was living under the expressways in conditions that would have been a disgrace to a third world nation.

This was a terrible condition that existed in the middle of our city. I was sure somebody was "working on this." It was too serious a problem for someone not to be working on a plan. I wasn't aware of the plan, but I was sure that I would find the plan somewhere if I looked hard enough.

That turned out not to be the case, because there was no plan. There was no money; there was no leadership; there was no ownership. The county said it was a city problem. The city said it was a county problem. And the Chamber of Commerce was not sure it was their problem. It turned out to be a problem that was awaiting resolution, awaiting leadership, awaiting someone to be in front of the parade.

In 1991, I said to my wife, Betty (my loving wife and partner for 56 years), "We need to find out more about the homeless." We decided to go



see the people who were taking care of the homeless. We visited a number of agencies. We visited Brother Paul at Camillus House, and we visited the Miami Rescue Mission. (I later visited Better Way and New Horizon Mental Health Center.)

We were impressed with the dedication and the commitment of the people who were leading these organizations. We were also impressed with the fact that they were inundated with homeless people, and that they could only serve a few. But outside of their doors there were hundreds and even thousands of people who were not getting any help, and that impressed Betty and me.

About the same time in 1991, there were efforts by the City of Miami, Governor Lawton Chiles and his representative Jack Peeples to try to deal with the homeless concern. Jack Peeples was able to get several hundred thousand dollars from the state to set up trailers under the expressway at I-395 and Biscayne Boulevard where initial screening could be offered. But this was a band-aid solution to a problem that required major surgery.

In my years of working as a community leader and working as an executive of Knight Ridder, I had not focused on the homeless. But I set out to try to learn what I could learn.

I was told that there was a facility in Orlando that was quite successful. Eventually I made a visit there. I established contact with Michael Poole, who was the leader of that organization.

We learned about the concept of a "continuum of care." Under this concept, a community provides not only food, shelter and clothing for the homeless, but also services that will help the homeless return to society. Orlando had a limited continuum of care. They didn't have a full-fledged continuum of care as we eventually came to have here in Miami. But Orlando was an impressive operation.

### **Motivation-Spiritual**

I was motivated spiritually through a Disciples Bible Class that my wife and I attended in the fall of 1991. That class involved a very intensive study of the Bible by a group of thirty of us in our church (First United Methodist Church of Coral Gables). We met Sunday evenings where we focused for three hours on what we had learned the previous week. We read the Bible everyday. As the 37th week ended, we were asked to make a commitment to serve our God with a stronger commitment by virtue of our deepened insight into the Scriptures.

As Betty and I analyzed the homeless problem, we saw that there was an enormous need for resources, need for a plan and for leadership. But



the missing element seemed to be leadership.

I had been blessed throughout my life to have been given opportunities to serve in leadership roles. When I was in college at The Citadel, I was the number one ranking of 2,000 cadets. That was an opportunity given to me by God to be a leader at a very young age. I benefited greatly from that. In the Air Force, I was a squadron commander in charge of 1,800 people when I was 23 years old. That too was a wonderful leadership opportunity.

I have had other leadership opportunities in business. At an early age I became the chairman/CEO of Knight Ridder with 22,000 employees. This was an international public company. So leadership was not a challenge to me. It seemed to Betty and me that the missing element in the homeless program was leadership, and I felt that could be my contribution.

I relate that to Romans, Chapter 12, where "many grace given gifts" are described. Leadership is one of the "grace given gifts" mentioned in the Bible. Mentioned also are "preaching" and "teaching" and "being missionaries" and "serving." All my life I have tried to do what I could to serve the Lord, but I was not a particularly good Sunday School teacher, although I taught Sunday School for years. I never was a preacher; I never was a missionary. But I tried to do what I could do from a leadership standpoint. The need for "leadership" in the homeless program seemed to be a real need. The commitment to "do something" was very strong in my heart and my wife Betty's heart. We made a commitment to our class and to our God that we would together provide leadership to the homeless problem in Miami.

### **Governor's Commission on Homeless Formed**

Following-through on that commitment, my friend Jack Peebles and I met with Governor Lawton Chiles. The governor was frustrated because earlier efforts in '91 had not produced a permanent solution to the problem. I told the governor and Jack that if he were serious about the homeless program and would help us at the state level that I would commit to be the leader of a civic, business group in Miami to develop a plan and begin implementation of a plan.

I said there are some conditions that must prevail for me to accept this. And he asked me what those conditions were. The first condition was that Mayor Steve Clark of Metro Dade County must agree to ask me and agree to serve. (I didn't want there to be somebody saying, "Well, what's Chapman doing leading this effort when the County Commission has already appointed a group -- as has the United Way and the circuit



court judges.") So one of my conditions was that Steve Clark and the County Manager, Joaquin Avino, had to ask me and agree to serve, if we got it together. The second condition was that Xavier Suarez, the Mayor of Miami, and Cesar Odio, the Manager of Miami, had to ask me and agree to serve. And the third condition was that Ray Goode, former county manager and now private sector executive, had to agree to serve as the executive director. So I told the governor, "If you get those conditions met, then I am your man. If you can't get it done that way, then I really can't do much."

So I sat back and waited for the phone to ring, and over a period of about four or five weeks, the phone rang. Steve Clark and Joaquin Avino and Xavier Suarez and Cesar Odio all asked me to lead the Homeless Commission and said they would be glad to work with me if we put it together. Then later Ray Goode agreed to be executive director.

***Mr. Chapman, was this in late 1991, or was this in 1992 that you met with the governor?***

This was in the spring of 1992. The governor's formal request came in June of 1992. Jack Peeples and I developed a list of people that the governor could appoint to the first Governor's Commission on Homeless. Jack Peeples agreed to be co-chairman with me in that endeavor. The governor's order says that the "Governor's Commission on Homeless is charged with developing and beginning implementation of a strategic plan to serve the homeless in Dade County." That was a broad-based mandate. We were an official body of the State of Florida. We were, therefore, under the Sunshine Law. We had to conduct "public meetings" whenever we convened.

In early July, there was a press conference with the governor and me and Jack Peeples to announce the Commission and me as chairman. This was held under the expressway at I-395 and we met with homeless people on camera and later at Camillus House.

Then later in July, the first meeting of the Governor's Commission on Homeless was held in the County Administration Building. The Commission was composed of 33 members and most of them were present for that first meeting. The governor was there and officially appointed us. He asked me to chair the Commission and I accepted.

My first act as chairman was to explain to the group that I knew very little about the homeless. I suggested that if we started our meeting with a prayer and asked for God's help and God's guidance and God's miracles that we would have a better chance for success. I led them in an



opening prayer. We have continued to have all of our meetings of the Community Partnership for Homeless and the Dade County Homeless Trust start with prayer. And God has blessed our efforts in the years that have intervened!! We organized ourselves in mid-July.

### **Strategic Plan Developed**

Our Strategic Planning Committee was led by Cleveland Bell and Anita Bock. Anita Bock was then with the Department of Children and Families. Cleveland Bell spent four years on the streets of Miami as a homeless person. Now he is the executive director of the Riverside House.

And so our plan was not a "theoretical" plan. It was part theory, part best practices of other communities and partly the innate wisdom of Cleveland Bell. Bell had been on the streets of Miami and could counsel us as to what would work and what wouldn't work. When we were criticized about our plan, I reminded those who criticized us that the plan was developed under the leadership of Cleveland Bell and Anita Bock who had excellent credentials.

In the fall of 1992, we set out to explore other communities. We took a group up to Orlando to see what I had already seen up there. Another group went to New York and Philadelphia. We went to a lot of different places and checked out a lot of different programs that worked. We were beginning to get our Plan together. However, in August our plans were interrupted!

### **Hurricane Andrew Intervened**

On the 24th of August 1992, Hurricane Andrew came our way with the greatest devastation to be inflicted upon an American city in the 20th Century. Hurricane Andrew was the largest natural disaster to hit our country in over 100 years.

It was a decimating blow for the community. It also complicated my life in that President George Bush and the same Governor (Lawton Chiles) that got me into the homeless business, invited me to be the chairman of We Will Rebuild -- the major civic, business response to the hurricane. As chairman of We Will Rebuild, I was charged with the responsibility of assembling an organization to lead the rebuilding and the recovery from Hurricane Andrew from a private-sector standpoint. That delayed the homeless activities for almost 60 days.

Ray Goode was heavily involved with me in the We Will Rebuild program. But by the late fall of 1992 we could see enough daylight on hurricane recovery to begin to focus again on the homeless program. We



reorganized ourselves, reconstituted our committees, and continued to focus on the homeless plan.

By the end of 1992, we had developed a Strategic Plan, which essentially is what we have today. It was a conceptual plan. It did not have cost or revenue estimates. But it was a sound plan, well conceived, and eventually was voted favorably by the Governor's Commission.

Then Mayor Suarez abstained from voting on the plan. He had some concerns. I told him that he had to either vote yes or no, or abstain. He finally abstained. We went ahead and voted and everybody else voted for the plan.

The plan was then taken to the provider community, who approved it. The plan was taken in the early winter months of 1993 to the Dade County Legislative Delegation led by Rudy Garcia, the chairman. Mike Abrams and Daryl Jones were heavily involved.

We met with the Legislative leaders and explained to them that this plan would work, but we needed a dedicated public-funding source. We said we could raise private money, but not enough private money to fund this program. And we couldn't get private donors to support this program unless we had a dedicated public-funding source.

### **Food & Beverage Tax**

The Governor's Commission recommendation on funding was ultimately approved by the Florida Legislature. This was a 1 percent sales tax on the sale of food and beverages in the larger restaurants of our community.

We were then faced with the enormous task of convincing the full Florida Legislature to support this tax. The Legislature felt initially that the sales tax was an instrument of the state government and not to be used by local government. That was a big obstacle to overcome at the state level, even though the Dade Delegation was supportive. Surprisingly we got no real opposition from the restaurant owners.

We were wisely advised by Rudy Garcia that we should exempt the smaller restaurants. The restaurants that didn't gross \$400,000 a year were exempt. Also, we should exempt the fast-food places like Burger King and McDonald's because our designation was restaurants that gross \$400,000 a year and have a liquor license. Including the fast-foods would have brought in revenues but would have incurred opposition.

We then spent many days and weeks lobbying the Legislature in Tallahassee. GCH had quite a delegation – Archbishop McCarthy, Armando Codina, Rabbi Schiff, Jack Peebles, Ray Goode, Anita Bock, Dennis Pastrana and others went with us to Tallahassee. It was a miracle



that we were able to pass the bill. We had gotten the bill through the House in good shape several weeks before the Legislature adjourned in '93, but we had trouble in the Senate.

Our bill had never been heard by a Senate committee. Two days before the Legislature was scheduled to adjourn, I was made aware of this. I asked then President of the Senate, Ander Crenshaw, who is from Jacksonville, if he could help us. He said, "Alvah, I want to help you, but the bill has never been heard by a committee." I asked him if there was a way you could get it to the floor of the Senate without it being heard by a committee. He said, "The only way that can happen is if the Senate unanimously votes to have it come to the floor." I said, "Well, why don't you recommend that the Senate take a unanimous vote on it?" He said, "We have never done that." I said, "Well, why don't you try?" He tried it and the resolution did pass. The tax bill was passed in the final six minutes of the 1993 session. It was one of God's many miracles. There were 20 different church groups praying for that action.

The amusing part of the story is that when our bill got to the Senate floor, it got bogged down. In the final six minutes of the session, it was passed by making our bill an amendment to "The Golf Hall of Fame" bill, a Jacksonville project. The Golf Hall of Fame was construed by some not to be in the public interest. But it was a project very dear to the heart of Senate President Crenshaw. He was willing to have the homeless bill go as an amendment to his Golf Hall of Fame and it got passed that way. The problem was that after the session ended, the governor threatened to veto the bill because he thought The Golf Hall of Fame was a "turkey." Jack Peebles and I finally were able to convince him to let it become law without his signature. We had one narrow escape after another. The bill wasn't heard by a Senate committee and it got to the floor unanimously. Then it got passed as an amendment to The Golf Hall of Fame and almost got vetoed – but the bottom line is that it survived.

***That is amazing. It takes a faith perspective to truly understand what happened.***

It was one of the many miracles that have occurred in this activity. The next thing that happened was that the Governor's Commission considered how best to deal with this with the Dade County Commission. The law required that the tax had to be implemented by the Dade County Commission.



## Presentation to "New" County Commission

In the spring of 1993, the Dade County Commission was changed from a 9-member commission, elected mostly countywide, to a 13-member commission elected by districts. The newly elected 13-member group was to be seated in May, and the old group was going out in April. We were advised by our political wisemen, including Jack Peebles that we should not try to run this through the old commission but deal with the new commission after they came into office.

There were enormous risks involved. Here are the 13 newly elected commissioners who barely know where their offices are, and all of a sudden this group shows up on their various doorsteps saying, "Look, we have got this wonderful idea. As one of your first actions as newly elected commissioner, you can levy a tax on the citizens of our community to help the homeless." It was not an easy sell by any matter or means.

A group of us from the Governor's Commission visited each one of the 13 Commissioners in their offices. We spent an hour and a half to two hours with each explaining the plan. We answered their questions and eventually received a 13-0 vote on the tax. That was one of our stellar accomplishments. Getting it through the Legislature was not easy, but getting it through the County Commission – a new County Commission – was another of God's miracles. The Legislative bill specified that there should be a task force to develop a detailed strategic plan. The Legislature had voted on the conceptual strategic plan, which the Governor's Commission presented, but the Legislators wanted to have the County Commission deal with a more detailed strategic plan. The detailed strategic plan would include a financing plan. The plan should specify sources of income and how much would go to temporary care facilities, to primary care, to advanced care. The plan should specify how much private money would be raised, and how much public money we could reasonably expect. The plan was to specify a system of governance – how the public money would be administered. The Governor's Commission on Homeless was not to be permanent, and was not to be part of the administration of the plan. There would likely be a public-private partnership to be formed, neither part of which had been brought into being.

The Dade County Homeless Trust had not been created. Community Partnership for Homeless, Inc. had not been conceived. All of this was scheduled to come from the planning process that was given to this task force of nineteen people to accomplish.



## Homeless Task Force

The Task Force was a very interesting exercise. The Task Force met nine times – all public meetings – three hours each. There were 27 hours of public debate and discussion on what we would do to flesh out this plan and make it what we have today -- the Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan.

One interesting thing happened at the very beginning. When we went into the room, there was no agreement on the part of anyone as to who would be the chairman of the Task Force. About half the members of the Task Force served on the Governor's Commission and they thought I would be the logical person to be chairman. The other half was from the provider community and from the political community and other groups. Some of those thought that Alex Penelas, (chairman of the County Commission Homeless Committee) should be Task Force chair. In the preliminary discussions, the idea was advanced that Alex Penelas and I be co-chairs. I said that will be fine with me and the word came back that it was fine with Alex. So when the group convened, someone called for election of Penelas and me to be co-chairs and that's what happened. Alex and I were both voted co-chairs and that was the beginning of our friendship and partnership, which continues very strong today. As we went through the debate on many issues of the plan, there were many things that he and I did not see alike. But when it was all over, it was our plan. We finally agreed on everything.

Normally, Alex chaired half the meeting and I chaired half. He was not always on time, so I was usually there to start the meeting; he usually finished it. In the first meeting we discussed many issues but we couldn't come to "closure" on anything. At the beginning of the second meeting, I remembered some of my labor negotiating experience from the newspaper business. I suggested we agree to make "tentative" decisions "as we go along." We would take a "tentative" vote on matters, and if it was a divided vote, that was okay. We would have the understanding, "Nothing is final until everything is final." Those were very fortuitous words. "Nothing is final, until everything is final." People could then vote without the matter being "cast in stone." We started taking votes as we went along on all these very contentious matters and we had a lot of votes that were 10-9 or 11-8 or whatever. There were very few things that were unanimous. We made many such decisions on a "tentative" basis.

During the ninth meeting, approaching the 27th hour of discussions, Penelas was chairing the meeting. By this time we had formulated plans for the Trust and the public-private partnership. We had a tentative plan about how much private money would be raised and how much money



would go to temporary care, how much would go to primary care, and how much would be public money and private money. Many very difficult matters had been resolved on this "tentative basis" – "Nothing is final, until everything is final." Alex was in the chair and he said, "Mr. Co-chairman, I am going to turn the chair over to you and make a motion," because he saw we were close to "decision time." But I said, "No, Mr. Co-chairman, you and I are going to turn the chair over to Rudy Garcia and we together are going to make a motion." The discussions among Task Force members had frequently been quite contentious. So it was quite surprising – even quite moving that somebody in the back of the room said, "Why don't we all hold hands and second the motion.!!"

***That's truly amazing. That is a story that has to be known.***

I thought about this for quite a while. There were many fortuitous circumstances of that Task Force. The choice of co-chairs was one of them. Another fortuitous circumstance is that one of the appointees was Jeb Bush. Jeb was on the Task Force and now, as governor of our state, he is quite familiar with the plan. Another fortuitous thing was that Penelas and I became very close through the process and that has continued.

***The Dade County Community Homeless Plan – this is what you proposed together? A handshake and seconded unanimously.***

It's never been changed. It's never been amended.

***That's another amazing thing.***

There were several things in the Plan that I was not real happy with, and there were several things that Penelas was not happy with, but since we've agreed on it, it is our Plan. I have never criticized the Plan and he has never criticized the Plan. We've tried to make it work.



## **SECOND INTERVIEW-FEBRUARY 16, 2001**

*Mr. Chapman, we ended the last time with the decision made by the Task Force to move forward and with the handshake by you and Alex Penelas, now Mayor Penelas. Would you continue from there?*

We spent several weeks explaining the Plan to the various constituents – including the political and provider community. We had a press conference in which we explained the Plan to the public. We met with Editorial Boards.

### **Metro Commission Approval**

Groups of us met individually with each of the 13 commissioners to explain the Plan to each one. The matter came before the County Commission in the form of two ordinances. The first ordinance levied the tax. The State Legislature had authorized the tax, but the tax had to be levied by the Miami-Dade County Commission. The second ordinance created the Trust and set up a system of governance for the program. The second ordinance also included the Plan and provided for the Trust to select a private-sector partner (which turned out to be Community Partnership for Homeless).

In late July, the Miami-Dade County Commission took action after a public hearing with a number of speakers in favor of the Plan and relatively few people speaking against it. The Commission voted 13-0 to enact the tax and to create the Trust and to create the opportunity for there to be a private-sector partner.

### **Organization of Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust**

The Trust was organized, as the Plan required. There were appointees coming from various sectors, some from the private sector, some from the public sector. The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and The League of Cities recommended members, the provider community recommended members. There were two formerly homeless people appointed, and the County Commission selected a member. This 27-member Trust was formed in the month of September 1993. I was not a member of the Trust, so I am not as familiar with that procedure.

The Trust agreed that Alex Penelas would be the chair of the Trust. Jack Peeples, who was very active with the Governor's Commission, would be co-chair of the Trust, and several members of the Governor's Commission, including Sister Jeanne O'Laughlin and Rabbi Schiff, ended



up as members of the Trust. The Trust moved forward with its organizational plan.

### **Organization of Community Partnership for Homeless, Inc.**

There was no Community Partnership for Homeless at that time. There was a Governor's Commission on Homeless, but the Governor's Commission on Homeless was not intended to be a permanent player on the scene as far as implementing the homeless plan. There needed to be formed a broad-based, countywide leadership group to become the private-sector partner of the Dade County Homeless Trust. Several of us from the Governor's Commission set out to form the group that would be known as Community Partnership for Homeless.

We approached about thirty organizations -- the Junior League, the Miami-Dade Chamber, the Greater Miami Chamber, the Latin Business Chamber and various other groups. We wrote each a letter and asked them to send us the names of their 20 most-effective leaders. In late July and early August we received approximately 400 to 500 names. We wrote each of those individuals a letter and asked them if they would be interested in helping to form an organization to represent the private sector in implementing a plan to help the homeless. We invited them to attend a meeting on August 27, 1993 at the Omni Hotel in downtown Miami.

We had no idea whether we would have ten people or whether we would have 100 people attend. Much to our surprise, we had 400 people show up in August for a briefing on the homeless plan for Miami-Dade County. Pat Pepper had joined the leadership team and she was very active in this planning as were Doug Harris, Ray Goode and others. At the meeting we discussed a broad outline of what the private-sector organization would be expected to do under the Plan (construct, site and operate Homeless Assistance Centers, and to raise private money). And we asked these 400 people to make a commitment to the project. We had over 200 of the 400 people sign commitment forms at level one or level two -- work, serve, and give money. That group became the nucleus of Community Partnership for Homeless.

From that group of 200 we formed a steering committee of approximately 25 individuals. That steering committee was to select a name for our organization, and define the mission within the parameters of the Plan itself. The steering committee also recommended board size, board membership, committee structure, and the corporate structure.

Then we had our first meeting of the board of CPHI. The original board members met in late September 1993 and organized Community Partnership for Homeless. Once we were organized, our first mission was



to reply to an RFP that the Trust was issuing requesting that an organization make a public proposal to do four things -- the four things being to site, construct, and operate Homeless Assistance Centers, and to raise private money.

We had no idea whether there would be four or five groups responding or whether we would be the only group. But while we were developing an organization, we had to develop a response. We responded to the RFP, and we committed ourselves among other things to raise \$8.5 million in private money. The Trust received only one proposal and that was the proposal from Community Partnership for Homeless. The Trust voted to accept CPHI's proposal and authorize the officers of the Trust to negotiate with the officers of Community Partnership.

At the first meeting of Community Partnership for Homeless the committee that nominated the board, nominated the initial officers. I was selected to be the chairman. The other officers were: Armando Codina, Jim Armstrong, Dr. Evalina Bestman, and Dr. Douglas Harris, as co-chairmen. Lynn Lewis was elected to be the secretary, and Carlos Migoya was elected to be the treasurer. Those officers served since the beginning in 1993 and today many continue to serve Community Partnership in leadership roles. Pat Pepper was elected as the first executive director of CPHI. This was an excellent choice by the CPHI Board.

### **Contract CPHI & Trust**

Developing a contract between Community Partnership for Homeless and the Trust was not easy. The Trust had the county attorneys draft a contract. When I first saw it I was almost ready to "give up the ship." This was one of the most discouraging moments of my involvement with the homeless. When I took a first look, over one weekend, at what the county wanted us to sign, I was most discouraged. In this first draft, CPHI was committed to do a thousand things, and we had little flexibility and no benefits. It was not really a partnership. It was a dictatorship by the Trust to us as to what we would do, and how we would do it and under what terms we would do it.

Pat Pepper suggested that before I became totally overwhelmed with this draft contract, that we engage attorney Osmond Howe, one of our volunteer board members. Osmond had been formerly an assistant county attorney, so he knew the workings of the county attorney's office. We asked Osmond to help us to negotiate this contract with the Dade County Homeless Trust. He did a marvelous job. The final contract that we negotiated is a good contract. It is fair to the Trust and it's fair to Community Partnership for Homeless. It spells out what we are expected to do and



the terms under which we are expected to do it. It provides that if there are disagreements on matters between the Trust and the Partnership, they are finally to be mediated by the chairman of the Community Partnership for Homeless and the chairman of the Trust. I felt with Alex Penelas as chairman of the Trust and me as chairman of Community Partnership for Homeless that we could mediate disputes and there would not be any reason for any unilateral action to be taken.

After many, many negotiation sessions with Osmond and members of the Trust, we finally worked out a contract that was agreeable. We presented it to the CPHI board and it was accepted. This contract was also accepted by the Trust board. The essence of the agreement was that we would be partners for a five-year period, subject to five, five-year renewals. We signed that contract in November 1993. We have renewed it one time. The first renewal period of five years ends in October '03. The agreement is a true public-private partnership. It was not what was intended in the first draft of the contract, but the final draft was one that was very fair to both parties.

### **Early Days of CPHI**

So the early fall of 1993 was spent organizing Community Partnership for Homeless. During those days the staff of Community Partnership for Homeless consisted of Pat Pepper, our executive director, and a volunteer chief financial officer, Tony Dinio. Tony served for almost a year as a volunteer, but later became a paid employee. When the Governor's Commission closed out its affairs and disbanded, it turned over \$250,000 to Community Partnership for Homeless. So CPHI had start-up money to pay its bills and pay its staff and to move forward.

The initial office space for Community Partnership for Homeless was at the Coral Gables office of We Will Rebuild, because at this time I was still heavily involved in We Will Rebuild. Pat Pepper later was successful in negotiating with Citicorp to take over some available space in the Barnett Bank Building on Brickell Avenue on the 14th floor. These were nice offices that were given to us by Citicorp on a pro-bono basis. Starting with a small three-person staff we began to build a larger staff to fulfill our mission with the Trust.

### **Initial Fundraising by CPHI**

Fundraising activities began in '93 with an effort to tell our story to leaders of the business community. We had luncheons that were hosted by community leaders. One was hosted by Tony Burns, CEO of Ryder; one was hosted by Jim Batten, CEO of Knight Ridder. At each luncheon



we invited 10 or 15 members of the business community to hear our story. Mark Stevens of Northern Trust, and Carlos Migoya also hosted luncheons for CPHI. As we asked community leaders for financial support, we explained to them that this was not to be an inexpensive operation. It was going to require significant, private-sector involvement.

We needed our lead supporters to come in at the level of \$200,000 to \$300,000 (over the period of several years). We were not looking for \$5,000 and \$10,000 gifts to start this program. We were very fortunate to have the major leaders of the business community come in at that level. Burdines, Ryder System, Lennar, the major banks – Northern Trust, SunTrust, First Union, Nations Bank and Barnett Bank – ten or twelve major organizations came in at the level of \$200,000, some at \$300,000 to provide our initial support. That gave us initial encouragement.

My wife, Betty, and I felt that in order for this program to have some credibility that we needed to make a personal, financial commitment. We talked and prayed a lot about what we would do, and we decided that we would make a personal \$500,000 commitment.

We went to two couples who were our personal friends – Charlie and Mary Babcock and Ted and Lin Arison and told them of our plan and told them of our commitment. We discussed a concept; a thought; a dream; an idea. We didn't have anything to show them, except our good intentions, but we said that Betty and I were planning to put \$500,000 of our personal money into the program. We asked if they would join us. We said, in order for us to raise money in our community, and to establish credibility, we needed to have some very significant individual gifts from people who care about this community. We presented this story to Charlie and Mary Babcock at their home one afternoon and they promised to take it under consideration and let us know. Later, we had an evening with Ted and Lin Arison aboard the beautiful yacht My Lin, which was docked at Fisher Island. The evening ended up with a Miami Heat basketball game. In between the boat and the lovely dinner and the basketball game, we were able to make our proposal to Ted and Lin and they said they would take it under consideration. In a matter of a few of weeks we heard from both that they would support CPHI. They each made \$500,000 commitments, which were paid promptly. This support was very, very encouraging. The support of the Arisons, the support of the Babcocks and the gift by us made it possible for us to go to the corporations and say, "we are serious." Otherwise the corporations would have given \$5,000 or \$10,000. I am convinced that without these personal commitments, we would not have received the corporate support that we needed.



With the personal commitments and with the corporate support, we then went to the Knight Foundation and asked them for a very large gift to kick off our program. We outlined the program to the Knight Foundation trustees and to their staff. We and they believed then and believe now that this is potentially a national model. On that basis, the Knight Foundation gave us a \$2 million grant.

This grant was approved in December of '93. It came in after the individual commitments had been made. It came in as the corporate gifts were being solicited. All of that gave us fundraising momentum. The initial fundraising success gave us the credibility we needed.

### **Planning First Homeless Assistance Center**

In the fall of '94, we started planning the concept of Homeless Assistance Center. We spent hours with our friends in Orlando. We retained them as consultants to help us design and plan our Homeless Assistance Center. A number of our committee members went to Orlando to visit the center.

We enlisted the aid and assistance of the Salvation Army leadership, Captain Steve Hedgren. Frank Jacobs, the chief executive of the Rescue Mission, was on our board. He helped us with our planning, as did members of the provider community, including Beth Lang and others. The Operations Committee, chaired by Susan Moll, finalized the operating concepts.

We had a Construction and Design Committee led by the wonderful Bob Chisholm who was an angel in disguise. He took on this project as a volunteer and guided us through the design/construction phase of both HAC I and HAC II. Bob Chisholm put in an enormous amount of time and talent into designing the first Homeless Assistance Center. It was his concept that the center would be a campus-style facility. It was his concept that there would be an interior courtyard where all of the activities would be off the streets, inside the courtyard. That was good for the neighbors.

As we began to develop the concept, a committee led by Adolfo Henriques selected the site for the first center. That was quite a task! Adolfo's committee considered a number of sites, and finally recommended the site at 1550 North Miami Avenue.

### **Dade County Public Schools-Our First Partner**

The site was owned by the Dade County Public School Board. Following the site recommendation, we had to negotiate with the School Board to get their approval to let us use their land for our purpose.



Dade County Public Schools had its own reasons for wanting to do this. Octavio Visciedo was the superintendent of schools. Miami Skills Center, located several blocks away, was in need of expansion. Octavio made a deal with us that if we would build the Homeless Assistance Center on this School Board property, and would build six classrooms for the vocational skills center that would justify his leasing us the property for \$1 a year.

Dade County Public Schools later agreed to pay the capital costs of the classrooms. We in turn agreed with them that we would specify what subjects would be taught in the classrooms (subjects most appropriate for the homeless population). Adolfo's committee recommended the School Board site to our board, and our board approved.

### **Community Support-And Opposition**

That was the beginning of a tumultuous period in CPHI's life. We not only had to convince our board that this was the right site, we had to convince the School Board at a public hearing to lease the property to us.

But importantly we had to meet with neighborhood groups who, in most cases, were violently opposed to the site or any site within a thousand miles of the City of Miami. I recall attending a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce New World Center Action Committee, which I thought would be a friendly, supportive group. It turned out that the group was violently opposed. To them, the concept of a Homeless Assistance Center would "destroy downtown," and lower property values. As the Chamber committee members expressed it, the center would bring homeless people and vagrants into the city. 1550 North Miami Avenue was a "beautiful area" of town and this action would "destroy the neighborhood" -- or so they said. Of course, the truth of the matter was, this was a crime-ridden part of town. There were crack dens within 100 feet of where we proposed to put the center and the crime rate was very high. Property values had been declining for years. But to hear this Chamber of Commerce group talk about it, it was the garden spot of Miami and we were going to desecrate it by putting a Homeless Assistance Center there.

We spent many, many hours meeting with neighborhood groups to win their support. We eventually won the support of the New World Center Action Committee of the Chamber by a very close vote. We met with the Overtown Advisory Board three times. They were opposed to the idea initially. We met with them three times and eventually got their support. We met with the Wynnewood neighborhood group and eventually got their support. We met with the Venetian Islands group. We met with the Performing Arts Center Trust. We met with the Downtown



Development Authority. Eventually we had fifty neighborhood meetings. I personally attended nineteen of the neighborhood meetings. Pat Pepper attended twenty-four of the neighborhood meetings.

We had a team of people who were doing this. Doug Harris was a part of the team as was Jerry Fernandez. We had a committee, the Community and Neighborhood Support Committee, that was to tell our story. And that story had to be told over and over again. We took leaders of Overtown, Wynnewood, and the Downtown Development Authority to Orlando. We used the Knight Ridder plane for several trips to show them that a Homeless Assistance Center did not destroy neighborhoods. When they saw the homeless center in Orlando, many of them were encouraged.

But to be honest, when we talked about a Homeless Assistance Center (despite our renderings and drawings of what it would look like), many people had a mental picture of Camillus House -- the Camillus House that slept 70 people but fed 1,000 and had long lines of people standing outside the building for hours waiting to get the meal. Camillus House had been in Miami for a long time. We said the Homeless Assistance Center is not going to be like Camillus House -- "trust us." People said, "No, we don't believe you -- it's going to be another Camillus House and we don't want it." It was a very, very difficult sell to convince people that we were going to do this in a different fashion.

This was a very emotionally charged period. None of these meetings were easy. Most of them lasted two or three hours. Most of them were in the late afternoon and early evening. But we persisted and continued to paint our picture, show our renderings and tell what we intended to do. This was a very, very difficult time for CPHI.

***When you made your commitment, a religious commitment to utilize your leadership talents to help solve this problem, did you ever think you would be in this kind of a situation trying to convince neighborhood groups?***

I did not anticipate that kind of a problem. This was a problem I was not equipped to deal with initially, because it was a political problem. This was almost like running for public office. One had to go door-to-door and tell the story and hope people would believe that you were telling the truth.

As an executive of a major public company, I wasn't used to having my views and my credibility and integrity challenged. But it was challenged on a fairly regular basis with these meetings. I had to learn to have



patience, which is not one of my virtues. It took a lot of calmness and a lot of prayer to make all of this come together.

The Good Lord wanted this to happen, and that is why it happened. It wasn't that we were all that convincing. It wasn't that these people were that easy to convince, because they were not.

### **Lawsuit to Stop CPHI and the Trust**

One group filed a lawsuit. We had to contend with a lawsuit that was designed to put us out of business. We had a wonderful attorney, Alan Dimond of Greenberg Traurig, who guided us through this. He did a marvelous job in preparing our case. We had a number of us from Community Partnership for Homeless testify in the lawsuit. We had people in opposition testify, people from the Trust testified in our favor. All this was a very difficult time for us, but we won the lawsuit. The lawsuit was filed mostly by neighbors of Community Partnership for Homeless at 1550, people in the Omni area.

#### ***In the Omni area. There was a special committee formed within the Omni area?***

Yes, mostly people in the Omni area filed the lawsuit. Many of those people now serve on the Neighborhood Advisory Committee of Community Partnership for Homeless and today are among our strongest supporters. The lawsuit was won at the Circuit Court level before a wonderful Judge, Martin D. Kahn, who was very fair, very hard, but very fair. Then it was appealed to the State Appeals Court, and we won again in the Appeals Court. The opposition did not take it to the Supreme Court of the State of Florida.

### **School Board-Public Hearing**

The hearing before the School Board was our first exposure in a public hearing. We had been told that there would be some opposition and that we should bring a lot of friends. We encouraged 100 -150 supporters to attend the School Board meeting. There were about 50 - 75 people in opposition. It was a very, very spirited meeting. The hearing lasted about two hours. The vote from the School Board was 7-0 to support us. Unanimous !!

***What personal criticism did you hear most often from your opponents when they would attack you in regard to your desire to resolve this?***



Mainly, that we did not know what we were doing. We were inexperienced. We had never built a Homeless Assistance Center. The Camillus House model was thrown up as something that it would turn out to be, despite our best intentions. (We couldn't guarantee that we could conduct all activities "inside" the building.) Our plans were refuted by the opponents because they said we had "no experience," and "no track record." They were right. We had no experience, no track record. We had to convince them that we were acting in good faith and eventually we were able to convince the School Board (despite the opposition) to support us by a 7-0 vote.

### **The Grand Condo-Opposition Central**

The one group we were never able to convince was the board of The Grand Condominium. Much of our opposition came from there. The Grand continued to be the hotbed of opposition before the School Board hearing and in later months before the Zoning Board of Miami and the City of Miami Commission. The opposition continued to be headquartered at The Grand.

### **Planning Refined**

We were doing many of these things simultaneously:

- We were raising money;
- We were fighting neighborhood battles;
- We were taking people to Orlando;
- We were designing a Homeless Assistance Center.

Under the original concept, the center was going to be a 25,000 square foot warehouse-type building that would sleep 500 people. The budget was based on this "primitive" concept. After much planning and advice from our operations committee, the concepts were "refined" and our board eventually approved a 70,000 square-foot building that was to cost \$8 million. The "conceptual building" was to cost \$2.5 million.

As we developed these concepts in the planning stage, more space and a larger building were required. We needed space for the Social Security office, the Veterans Administration office, the Department of Labor office, and the Child Care facility had to be expanded. The case management staff was larger than we originally contemplated. There were many activities that we didn't contemplate when we did our original plan.

But we did the right thing. We built a facility to accommodate our mission. We did not build what Orlando built, which was a place for people to sleep on the floor – 250 people in Orlando sleep on painted



squares on a concrete floor, a heated concrete floor, but a concrete floor nevertheless with little bed pads. We made a decision that we were going to have bunks and beds and we did. We were going to have all these partner agencies. We needed a healthcare facility, which we never considered seriously.

The name of Community Partnership for Homeless was suggested by Pat Pepper. I didn't like the name too much at the beginning, but finally I went along with it and the board adopted it. I had no idea what Community "Partnership" for Homeless meant. I had no idea that we would have 10 partner agencies that would provide an array of services for the homeless in our facility.

### **Health Foundation of South Florida-Second Partnership**

Health Foundation of South Florida came to us through its chairman, John O'Neil, and asked us what we were going to do for healthcare. I responded, "John, we don't have any money. We have got it in the budget, but we don't have a nickel to pay for it." He said, well maybe we can be of help. I said, "Who is we?" He said, "Health Foundation of South Florida" -- a foundation funded by the sale of Cedars of Lebanon Hospital. I said, "What do you want us to do?" He said, "I want you to get your executive director, Pat Pepper, to talk to Health Foundation's executive director and tell us about your plans and we will see if we can work something out."

I did not get back "in the loop" with John until four or five weeks later when I received a call from John who said, "Alvah, our board is going to be voting on your proposal tomorrow night to do the healthcare for the homeless center." I said, "John, tell me about our proposal, what are you proposing?" He said, "Health Foundation is going to vote to provide \$3 million to provide the healthcare, the staff, and the services for the 350 residents of the homeless center." I said, "What do you want me to do besides pray? Do you want me to make phone calls or come to your meeting?" "No," he said, "just sit tight. I will call you tomorrow night and let you know how it comes out."

So he called me the next night and he said, "We have to schedule a press conference because the board voted unanimously to approve your plan." So we had \$3 million. It turned out when we had the press conference that we had \$3.3 million and not \$3 million. This was one of the many wonderful miracles that God provided to help CPHI succeed. Health Foundation of South Florida has been a wonderful partner for us. They provided \$3.3 million to run the program for five years. Their staff has done such a good job of managing, that the money is going to last eight years!!



***Congratulations, that is an amazing story.***

It's an amazing story. In this tumultuous period of '94, we were getting prepared to start construction of the first Homeless Assistance Center and explaining our program to the neighbors.

### **Miami Planning and Zoning Board**

***But all of those meetings with the neighbors were in preparation for the vote by the Miami City Commission in regard to the zoning.***

Absolutely, absolutely. We would have been dead in our tracks if we had gone before the Zoning Board or the City Commission with all of those neighborhood groups in opposition.

The School Board hearing was our first taste of a "public hearing." The School Board had to hear it twice – first reading and second reading. Then, we went before the Miami Planning and Zoning Board with our proposal to build a Homeless Assistance Center of 70,000 square feet at 1550 North Miami Avenue. At that meeting we had the support of the major neighborhood groups, but we had major opposition of The Grand and we had the major opposition of the people who filed the lawsuit, and we had the major opposition of many, many people. It was a very, very tumultuous hearing before the Planning and Zoning Board.

But we got a positive vote. It wasn't a unanimous vote. It was 7-2 (or 6-3) in our favor.



## THIRD INTERVIEW-APRIL 24, 2001

*Mr. Chapman, where are we going to begin today in regard to the history of Community Partnership for the Homeless?*

A major event in the development of the Community Partnership for Homeless and the Dade County Homeless Trust program in our community was the hearing before the City of Miami Commission.

### **Watershed Event-City of Miami Zoning Appeal Hearing**

The Zoning Board approved our special exception to construct the Homeless Assistance Center located at 1550 North Miami Avenue. However, the approval of the Zoning Board was challenged and was taken before the City Commission for review and final approval.

The hearing was scheduled initially in late June at the Miami City Hall (at Dinner Key). Late June is warm in the City of Miami. The hearing was scheduled for 3 p.m. And at 3 p.m., there were approximately 400-500 people in and around City Hall. Many were standing in the streets in the hot sun. Mayor Steve Clark surveyed the crowd outside and realized that it would be a very great imposition to ask people to stand in the sun for several hours while all of this was being discussed, because only 125 people could be accommodated in the hearing room. He wisely postponed the hearing to the fifth of July, and scheduled it for 6:00 p.m. at the James L. Knight Center at the Hyatt Hotel in downtown Miami.

The hearing occurred as scheduled at 6:00 p.m. There were 1,200 people in the room. CPHI had gone to great lengths to bring in our friends and supporters. We had people in approximately 20 different churches praying for the outcome of this hearing. We brought our friends, board members, friends from the churches -- anybody that we could get that supported our program -- to come in with us. Our supporters (700 strong) wore green tags saying, "Vote YES for the homeless."

The opposition numbered about 500 people that were led by a group from The Grand Condominium, our neighbor on Biscayne Bay about five blocks from the proposed center. There were vicious rumors that a homeless center would destroy the value of their property. Grand residents assumed their property would be flooded with homeless people. The truth of the matter is, once we were able to get our center in operation, the homeless people in front of this facility disappeared. Many of them have gone into the Homeless Assistance Center. The property values have increased in the neighborhood. The opposition bussed in a number of



people from other neighborhoods. I don't know this for sure, but I am told that they even paid some of the people \$20 to participate in the hearing. At any rate, the stage was set – 500 people on one side in opposition, very vocal, 700 in support on the other side.

The City Commission of five members had to make a decision. Each side was given an hour and one-half to make a presentation. The other side – the opposition – went first, and they spoke with few facts to support their case. They went to great length to point out that CPHI would destroy the neighborhood. They assumed we would bring thousands of homeless people from all over the country into the center. And they assumed that the Homeless Assistance Center would be a replication of the Camillus House, where many activities occur on the sidewalks adjacent to Camillus House. The opposition's presentation lasted an hour and one-half and then it was appropriate for our side – the pro side – to speak for an hour and one-half.

Our first speaker was Archbishop McCarthy of the Catholic Archdiocese. He talked about the moral imperatives of taking care of the least, and the last and the lost in our community. His was a good talk, but he was interrupted about five times by boos and catcalls which made it very difficult for him to be heard. But to the credit of the late Mayor Steve Clark, who was presiding, he told the opposition that they had to be calm and to be quiet and to hear our presentation. He said that our side had been quiet through their presentation and they had to be quiet through ours. And if they did not provide the appropriate conduct for our speakers to be heard, that he had enough policemen in the place to put them all in jail. That calmed down the opposition and we were able to go through our presentation.

Mayor Alex Penelas and I were the two concluding speakers on our side. Earlier we presented two people from the Homeless Partnership in Orlando to talk about how well their center had worked up there. One of the speakers was an officer of the Orlando City Police Department. He spoke about security and the positive effect of the center on the security of the neighborhood. Adolfo Henriques, the site selection chairman, described the site selection process. Armando Codina, a co-chair of CPHI, spoke as a property owner in the neighborhood. We had a very logical, orderly, persuasive presentation. Our presentation was within the allotted time.

The City Commissioners then took over the meeting and asked questions and moved to vote. By this time, it was around 10 p.m. The meeting finally adjourned at 11:00 p.m. As the hearing progressed two commissioners spoke in our favor – Commissioner Willy Gort and Mayor Clark;



two commissioners spoke in opposition to us – J. L. Plummer and Miller Dawkins. The swing vote was Commissioner Victor DeYurre.

### **Presidential Review Committee, Monitor & Other "Conditions"**

Victor DeYurre took about 45 minutes to deliver his vote. He asked a number of questions. He stated that he wanted to impose upon us 13 conditions that he assumed would make our life more difficult and thereby placate the opposition. One of the conditions was that he wanted a presidential review committee of some of the major colleges and universities to come once a year to review our operation and report back to the City Commission. He also wanted a monitor at CPHI's expense to report on a regular basis to the City Commission.

So we reluctantly agreed to those conditions. (The conditions were removed "in the public interest" by the city in 2001.) And so we had his vote. He cast his vote with a big fanfare in favor of our Homeless Assistance Center being located at 1550 North Miami Avenue!!

### **Victory**

As you can imagine, that was greeted with a lot of applause from our side and a round of boos from the other side. But the hearing was over; we had the vote by a 3 - 2 margin. We were on our way. This was a watershed victory. And I must say that the victory goes to the people who were there and who made presentations and to the audience who supported us.

But the victory is another one of God's miracles. We had people in 20 churches praying for us. We had a lot of people saying their prayers that this would be another of God's miracles. I think it was one of a series of miracles that occurred and kept us moving forward.

The hearing was a landmark event in the history of Community Partnership for Homeless. In the city, a number of prior hearings involving homeless issues -- the potential move of Camillus House (and other matters that many people thought were good ideas) -- simply didn't materialize. The City Commission backed away from their own proposals in several instances and most of the hearings in recent years on homeless matters had been a defeat for the advocates of the homeless. This was a major political victory and it set the stage for what happened in South Dade. It was a very, very important event and we are very grateful for the votes of Victor DeYurre, Steve Clark and Willy Gort (and answered prayers). We were then free to move forward with construction.



## Construction of First Center

We were busy planning our Homeless Assistance Center. The planning took us from a 25,000 square foot warehouse, which we originally conceived to be appropriate, to what eventually became a 70,000 square foot building. The proposed facility would accommodate the work of ten partner agencies and would house 350 people. We constructed it to house 500, but we were limited by the city. We didn't object very strenuously because our plan was to operate at 350 for a few years until we gained experience. We had no thoughts of ever going to 500 in the first few months of the operation. The 350 limit was not a deal breaker.

The Operations Committee, led by Susan Moll and Dr. Evalina Bestman, was doing the planning for the operation, drafting the operations manual, and planning of the partnership activities.

Pat Pepper was very involved in getting partner agencies committed to bring their staffs into our facility. We requested these social agencies serve the homeless people on the site of the center, as opposed to having homeless people chase all over town to get the help they needed.

But while all of this was going on, the Design and Construction Committee was led by Bob Chisholm, David Blumberg and Mark Small. Wolfberg Alvarez is the architectural firm that did the work for us professionally. Bob Chisholm and his team were all pro bono and wonderful! The concept of the design and functionality was the idea of Bob Chisholm and the pro bono team. The actual design of the building with respect to construction details so the contractors could bid on it was done by Wolfberg Alvarez. They were very cooperative and gave us what we felt was a good job and fair price. We had competitive bidding for the general contractor. The first bids came in within the budget. The successful bidder was Sunhouse International. They constructed our building for us and did a good job.

We had groundbreaking in October of '94. It was a very moving event with many supporters present. It was a thrilling experience to be actually breaking ground on the first, new Homeless Assistance Center in our community. During this time (1994) we were beginning to hire our staff. We had already selected a contractor. We were moving forward! The official opening came one year later in October of 1995. The dedication was in November of 1995. The September-October time frame was very busy for us because we hired many staff members in September leading toward the October opening date.



## **Leadership-Pat Pepper's Contribution**

In August 1995 we were given notice by Pat Pepper that she was going to move her residence from Miami to New York. She expected to be married and would likely live in New York. Pat was at that time (unbeknownst to her) in the early stages of contracting a very serious, debilitating disease which has affected her life considerably since that time. But at the time she gave us notice her health had not been affected significantly.

Pat was doing a wonderful job in managing CPHI. We hated to lose her. She made a marvelous contribution to the planning and the execution of our activities up through the time of her departure. She had done a splendid job in getting us through all of the neighborhood visits with 50 neighborhood groups. She personally visited many of the groups herself, or led the team to visit several groups. She probably had 30 visits personally. I had 19. But she was the mainstay leader in that activity to get this neighborhood support that was so key to our zoning success.

We really were indebted to Pat. Pat's concept was Community Partnership for Homeless. It was her idea to have the name. It was her idea to bring all of the partner agencies together in the concept that has become so successful. The partner agencies provide an array of services for the homeless people at the Homeless Assistance Center. She made a remarkable contribution as CPHI's first executive director.

## **Opening of Center # 1-October 1995**

But we were able to get Lynn Summers to come in and Lynn was qualified to provide the leadership. To Lynn's credit, she came in about a week before we opened the doors of the first center, and it was a very difficult time for a new executive director to take over. But with the staff in place that Pat had hired, and with Lynn cooperating in providing the leadership we were able to open on time and introduce our first homeless residents to the center.

Our plan was that we would bring in twenty persons a day – beginning in mid-October – until we were able to move up to capacity. We gradually "ramped up" our resident count. It was March '96 before we reached our full count of 350 because although we were bringing in 20 a day, we were losing some residents for a variety of reasons including successful outplacements.

The thing that surprised us remarkably in the earliest days was the number of families that showed up needing help – families who were homeless; families who had been living in the back of automobiles;



families who had been living behind warehouses or under the expressways. We were prepared for a few families – we had 132 family beds – but we could have filled our entire facility in the first month or two with families if we had had the capacity to do that. The families were the big surprise for us. However, in our four years of experience since then, we have now learned that families with children are a big part of the homeless population, and we are proud of the fact that we have been able to serve them very effectively.

The dedication of the first center was a very moving day. Andrew Cuomo came down from Washington as the U.S. Secretary of HUD. Lawton Chiles, governor of Florida, came down. They were the two leading speakers. We had a wonderful program, which Ray Goode chaired. It was conducted at the center. We had two high school bands – one out front playing to bring people in, another playing inside the patio, which created a lot of noise and a lot of excitement. We had beautiful music, very moving speeches. We thanked the residents for their cooperation in helping us to move our program to the success that we enjoyed in the early days. We thanked our staff. We thanked our donors. We thanked the community. We thanked the political leadership. We thanked everybody in sight for doing important things. And above all we thanked God for doing important things, because without God's help, or without the political leadership to pass the tax, without the business leadership to provide the funding, without the staff leadership to make the center work, without the cooperation of the residents to help us achieve our operating goals, it simply would not have happened.

The winter of 1995 was a time of escalating population. We moved up from about 100 residents in the center in October, to March 1996 when we reached 350. We have been at capacity since that time.

It was time we had to do a lot of staff training, because we had a lot of new people and we had to learn to work together. The management team led by Lynn Summers, included Tony Dinio, Al Brown, Trev Flowers, and Dr. Dwight Turner. We had a wonderful team to lead our effort, and we were very pleased with their leadership. And many of them are still with us today. They are doing a wonderful job.

In the early part of '96, we started working on the acquisition of land for the South Dade Center. In the '95-'96 period we had several public hearings in South Dade.

## **Homestead Air Force Base-Site for Center # 2**

The site at the Homestead Air Force Base had been selected by our Site Selection Committee, again led by Adolfo Henriques. The two largest



public hearings were held at the Perrine Baptist Church and the Mennonite Church in Homestead. We had approximately 400-500 people attending each hearing. There was significant opposition. Metro Commissioner Katy Sorenson asked us to postpone our Board vote and give her six months to calm the neighbors down. We told her we had momentum and we thought we had the votes on the Commission to go forward and we were not going to delay and didn't delay.

### **Opposition Melts to Homestead Site**

This offended her greatly that we didn't take her suggestion. But she has now become one of our strong supporters. She appears in our video saying wonderful things about us. She subsequently voted for us when it came to the County Commission.

***I remember from our last interview that in October of '95 when the center opened many of the residents of Homestead were able to come to visit the center and that swayed their vote in your favor.***

It sure did. We had a very strong opposition at our first hearing in Homestead. The second hearing was in the late fall of '95, but after we had opened the Homeless Assistance Center at 1550 North Miami Avenue we were able to bring several busloads of neighbors from Homestead and from South Dade to visit the Homeless Assistance Center.

When people saw what we were doing at 1550, they said, "We like this. We are not opposed to this. If you are going to do this in South Dade, we will welcome you and not oppose you." So the opposition between the first hearing before the County Commission and the second hearing before the County Commission diminished greatly. We had almost no neighborhood opposition for the second hearing.

***Whose idea was it to expand to more than one site, not simply downtown Miami but south or possibly north?***

Well, the Plan itself called for there to be up to three Homeless Assistance Centers.

***The plan developed by the . . . .***

The plan was developed by the Task Force. Remember the conceptual plan by the Governor's Commission on Homeless said that in addition to the Homeless Assistance Center (temporary care) there would be primary



care, and there would be advanced care. The Plan did not specify how much of each one. The Task Force reviewed the matter and formulated factual decisions to replace concepts. The Task Force discussed how many Homeless Assistance Centers to build. Some thought three centers – some thought two centers. The Task Force decided. I thought three was the right number. Some of them thought two was the right number. So we voted to build "up to three." So we have built two. We are now in a holding pattern because we think that two will probably get the job done.

***And the issue of homelessness was intensified after Hurricane Andrew, which made you select the South Dade site. Is that right?***

We selected the South Dade site because South Dade has the largest resident homeless population outside of the City of Miami. There have been a number of studies done by the Department of Children and Families where the location of homeless people in our county by districts has been ascertained. The districts in South Dade have the second largest homeless population. That is why we put the second center there. If there was to be a third center, it would probably be built in the northwest section somewhere. But at this point we believe that the two centers, as long as they can operate as regional centers, will be effective in taking the homeless population down to zero, which is our goal.

### **South Dade Groundbreaking**

The groundbreaking in South Dade was held in October of '96. The actual opening in South Dade was in October of '98. It took two years between groundbreaking and opening in South Dade. It took one year between groundbreaking and opening at 1550. But the business of acquiring the land and getting the approvals of the various County agencies to build this center was much more complex. It was complicated by the fact that it was on land that had never been developed before, on land that had never been zoned before. There was no water or sewer system that we could use. We had to put in a new water and sewer system. We had to pave roads. It was a much more complex proposition.

### **Tribute to Lynn Summers**

The acquisition of the land itself was very, very complicated, and I want to give Lynn Summers enormous credit for her leadership in getting that land transferred from the United States Air Force to Dade County on an expedited basis. The government was prepared to take four or five years to transfer this land. Nationally, South Dade was the last one of



forty parcels in the queue, and the first one to be transferred. Most of the rest of these parcels haven't been transferred yet. It took many trips to Washington by Lynn Summers, Sergio Gonzalez and Hilda Fernandez and myself and others. It took many, many phone calls. It took thousands of letters and a lot of paperwork. It took cooperation of the local Air Force Base conversion people, who could not have been more cooperative. It was an enormous effort on the part of Lynn Summers to get this done and we are very much in her debt for providing the leadership.

The opening in South Dade occurred in October of 1998, two years after the groundbreaking but not more than a year after the construction started. Phillips Adler Construction, (later Adler Construction) built it. They did a good job. It is a nice facility. It was built on 11.5 acres of land. It was designed by the same voluntary architectural team of Bob Chisholm and Mark Small (by this time David Blumberg had died). Jose Diaz came on as his replacement, but that group has always been very, very dedicated and very, very supportive. We would be nowhere without their help and their leadership.

### **Landscaping South Dade Center-Manny Diaz to Rescue**

One of the interesting stories is the landscaping of South Dade. When we needed landscaping for the 1550 project, we went to our friend, Manny Diaz, and he very graciously committed the trees to landscape the facility. On 3.5 acres of land it took a relatively small number of Royal Palms and other trees. Gulf Atlantic Communities supplied the plantings and the flowers that made it beautiful. Those two organizations led by Taft Bradshaw as the pro bono landscape architect produced beautiful landscaping for 1550.

We asked the same group to help us in South Dade. Taft Bradshaw signed on and Gulf Atlantic Communities signed on. Manny Diaz said he wanted to do it. Armando Codina and I had lunch with him one day and he was most cooperative. He offered to help. We said, "Manny, before you say that you want to do this, you had better go take a look at the property and look over the landscape plans that Taft Bradshaw has drawn." He saw the plans and saw the site and gulped several times, but stuck with his commitment to provide the trees. There were over 700 palm trees given to us pro bono by Manny Diaz Farms. So it was a very significant commitment!

### **Public Health Trust-Our New Healthcare Partner**

There is a story in the partnership of medical care at 1550. We have our partners, Health Foundation of South Florida, who made a commit-



ment to provide the medical care at their cost – the cost to their foundation at approximately \$3.3 million for five years. HFSF provides the doctor and the medical personnel on their payroll to provide this service. It has been a wonderful benefit to Community Partnership for Homeless. John O’Neil, chairman of Health Foundation of South Florida told us they could not undertake another project of that size for South Dade, so they helped us make some other contacts.

Lynn Summers and I discussed this at great length with Ira Clark of the Public Health Trust. He gave us an opportunity to go before the Public Health Trust Board. Lynn Summers and I went before the Board in the fall of ‘97 and the Board voted to authorize Ira Clark to provide the healthcare for us in South Miami-Dade. That was an enormous commitment -- \$3 million over five years – an in-kind commitment to help our program be successful. Our healthcare partner in South Dade is the Public Health Trust and we are very glad that they are there.

### **Opening of South Dade Center-Another Milestone!**

The opening of South Dade was another milestone event in our history. The dedication ceremony again was led by Ray Goode. Mayor Penelas was the lead speaker. Governor Chiles was not able to come because he had made a prior commitment out of the state. But we had a wonderful array of speakers from the School Board and the Public Health Trust and our other partners and some homeless residents spoke. There was wonderful music. It was a very important day in South Dade. The County Commissioners – Katy Sorenson and Dennis Moss – were both there and both spoke very favorably about our facility and their support of it. The dedication ceremony for the South Dade Center was a very moving experience!

### **Vignette-How Taft Bradshaw Became Involved**

The initial contact with landscape architect Taft Bradshaw is an interesting story that should be in the record. In the early stages of building the center at 1550 North Avenue, we knew we needed landscaping but we didn’t have a contact with a landscape architect.

In the spring of ‘95 my wife, Betty, and I were at a social event at the home of golfer Raymond Floyd. He is a personal friend. Raymond Floyd’s home in Indian Creek burned to the ground a year or so before. He and Maria built a new home and it was for the housewarming ceremony of his new home that we were invited to attend this dinner party. As my wife, Betty, and I and a friend of ours, Irma Lyons, were walking across the lawn with our plates in our hands from the buffet table looking for a



place to sit down, a couple was seated in a little nest of five chairs. The couple invited the three of us to sit down with them. So Betty and I sat down and introduced ourselves and Irma Lyons. The man was Mr. Taft Bradshaw and his wife.

In the early part of the conversation I asked Mr. Bradshaw what he did and he said he was a landscape architect. I said, tell me some of the work that you have done. He said, I did work for Cal Kovens at 9999 Bal Harbour. I did Deering Bay for Armando Codina. Then he said he did University of Miami for Tad Foote, and he did the Doral. I said, well everything that you have done I know the people involved and I know what you have done. It is beautiful work and you are certainly an outstanding landscape architect.

Then I said, "I am involved in a project in downtown Miami that has zero landscaping, has an enormous need for landscaping, but has no money." I told him that we were building a Homeless Assistance Center in downtown Miami and we had a need for landscaping on our property, but we didn't have any money. And without hesitation he said, "I am your man." He said, "I want to do it and I want to help you." His office actually is in Fort Lauderdale, but he was so taken by helping the homeless, by building the new facility, by the idea of it being landscaped and beautifully and attractively done architecturally, he wanted to be a part of it. In the course of the evening, after he had accepted the proposition, he said, "You know, God put me here for one reason." I asked what that was, and he said, "To accept your proposition."

***It was a vision of faith perspective.***

It really was. It was one of many, many miracles that we've had. So Taft Bradshaw had been a part of our team, and he was a part of the South Dade team. As I said, the South Dade project from a landscaping standpoint was enormous because it is 11.5 acres of land, plus we have an entry road that is lined with Royal Palms. That was not a part of the 11.5-acre project, so when you consider that whole area is about 15 or 16 acres of landscaping that had to be accomplished. It is beautifully done. It is a great, attractive facility.



## CONCLUDING STATEMENT

by

Alvah H. Chapman, Jr.

When Dennis Kendrick suggested interviewing me to record the story of Community Partnership for Homeless, Inc., I agreed to share my recollections of the years since 1992. This account is not a documented history of CPHI or the Governor's Commission on Homeless or the Miami-Dade Homeless Task Force. It is my best remembrance of the events that occurred, as recorded in conversations with Professor Kendrick.

And, although I refer to the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust – the public partner of CPHI – this is not intended to be a history of the "Trust," since I am not, and never have been, a member of the Trust Board. But the story of CPHI would not have had many of its successes without the wonderfully effective and successful partnership between CPHI and its "public" partner, the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust. My gratitude to the Trust and its leaders knows no bounds. Alex Penelas, Jack Peeples, Ron Book, Sergio Gonzalez, Hilda Fernandez, David Raymond and all the Trust members through the years, have worked with CPHI in a seamless and effective partnership to build a system of care for the homeless in Miami that is truly a national model.

Without the leaders of the 1993 Florida Legislature and the support of Governor Lawton Chiles, the "true miracle" of the Food & Beverage tax passage would not have occurred. On the House side, Rudy Garcia, Mike Abrams, and Speaker Bo Johnson -- and on the Senate side, Senators Mario Diaz-Balart, Daryl Jones, Ron Silver, and President Ander Crenshaw -- all played leadership roles.

And guiding our tax proposal to successful passage were the sure hands of Jack Peeples and Ron Book.

With the passage of the homeless tax came the requirement for private fundraising. My thanks goes to the business, foundation, and philanthropic leaders of this great city whose collective response was greater than that of any city in America – as we were told by a key executive of U.S. HUD in Washington.

After Betty and I made our initial financial commitment of \$500,000, we approached two couples, close friends, and asked them to join us in support. We had nothing to show but "a dream" and the confidence of the Florida Legislature. Had Ted and Lin Arison and Charlie and Mary Babcock not been supportive, this story might have been far different. The Knight Foundation, Burdines, Knight Ridder, Ryder System, Bank of



America, Carnival Cruise Lines, Northern Trust, and SunTrust took early leading roles in financial support, and Dwayne and Inez Andreas, and George Batchelor were close behind.

CPHI has been blessed with dedicated professional leadership. Pat Pepper, CPHI's first executive director, conceived the name "Community Partnership" and encouraged our early partners to join in the "one stop shopping" center for the homeless. Lynn Summers' drive and determination helped speed the acquisition of the land for the Homestead center. Kathy Harris helped our leadership to mature. Dan Vincent, after a sparkling 21-year career with the Salvation Army, in 2001 assumed the professional leadership role with the enthusiastic endorsement of the CPHI Board.

My role as a leader of homeless activities in Miami these past 12 years has been described by me as having a "spiritual" and "civic" inspiration. The spiritual component is described earlier. The "civic" inspiration to build a system of care was motivated by the wonderful people who joined in this effort.

The initial organization was the Governor's Commission on Homeless (GCH) appointed by Executive Order of Governor Lawton Chiles and charged with "developing and beginning implementation" of a Strategic Plan.

I shall forever be indebted to my fellow members of the GCH who did this job so well: Bill Allen, Tony Alonso, Joaquin Avino, Charlie Babcock, Cleveland Bell, Anita Bock, Mark Buchbinder, Steve Clark, Armando Codina, Judge Henry Ferro, State Representative Rudy Garcia, Dr. Pedro Greer, Dr. Douglas Harris, Sherrill Hudson, State Senator Daryl Jones, Rev. Luther Jones, David Lawrence, Archbishop Edward McCarthy, Harve Mogul, Cesar Odio, Sister Jeanne O' Laughlin, Dennis Pastrana, Jack Peeples, Pat Pepper, Otis Pitts, Rabbi Solomon Schiff, Charles Schuette, Roger Soman, Xavier Suarez, and James Towey.

The "interim" organization, the Dade County Homeless Task Force, was in life less than two months and yet developed a refined Strategic Plan (building on the conceptual plan of the GCH). This is the Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan – Dade County Ordinance # 93-75. This Miami Plan has come to be known as a national model.

There were 19 members of the Miami-Dade Homeless Task Force. They served this community well, and we all owe a debt of gratitude to: Alex Penelas (my fellow chair on the Task Force), Dr. Pedro Greer, Anita Bock, Jack Peeples, Judge Henry Ferro, Charles Schuette, David Pearlson, Ruth Campbell, Xavier Suarez, Cesar Odio, Rudy Garcia, Cleveland Bell,



Joaquin Avino, Dr. Evalina Bestman, Mark Buchbinder, Beth Lang, Jeb Bush (now Florida's governor), and Raul Pozo.

My pride has no bounds when I think of the wonderful team that comprises CPHI. They are wise, generous, and dedicated to the cause of the homeless. It has been a great honor in my life to serve as the Founding Chairman of this group of dedicated community leaders – CPHI Chairman Ray Goode; Co-Chairs Jim Armstrong, Dr. Evalina Bestman, and Bob Chisholm; Secretary Lynn Lewis; Treasurer Tom Huston; Executive Director Daniel Vincent and Board members Mike Abrams, Richard Adams, Tim Adams, Bill Allen, Sandy Batchelor, Jill Beach, Patricia Bell, Yolanda Berkowitz, Creed Black, Philip Blumberg, Paula Brockway, Edward Bullard, Nicholas Bustle, Susan Carr, Claudia Clunis, Armando Codina, Tom Cornish, Bonnie Crabtree, Deborah Davidson, Nancy Davis, Jose Diaz, Annette Eisenberg, Tomas Erban, Bill Fauerbach, Jerry Fernandez, Carlos Fernandez-Guzman, Dr. Dorothy Jenkins Fields, Father Roberto Garza, Mehdi Ghomeshi, Dr. Rosemary Hall, Nancy Hector, Adolfo Henriques, Robert Hilson, Osmond Howe, Dr. Frank Jacobs, Michael Joseph, William Kaynor, Joe Lacher, Kirk Landon, Rev. Richard Ledgister, Porter McClean, Carlos Migoya, Bill Morrison, Al Nahmad, Brenda Nestor, Amarilis Osorio, Allan Pekor, Aaron Podhurst, Jonah Pruitt, Rev. Dr. David Rees, Carol Renick, John Reynolds, Dr. Willie Robinson, Wayne Schuchts, Ken Sellers, Mark Small, Roger Soman, Sash Spencer, Michael Swerdlow, Stewart Thomas, Bill Tillett, Dr. John Uribe, Joanna Wragg, as well as numerous former Board members who contributed to the success of this organization.

And on a personal note, there are many people who have been supportive and given in very special ways, including:

- Bob Chisholm, whose architectural genius transformed operational concepts into two handsome campus-style centers that have provided a "homelike" atmosphere to more than 24,000 residents
- Al Brown, CPHI Deputy Director, who has joined me on more than 300 tours with development prospects
- Development Committee Chair Allan Pekor and Co-Chair Carlos Fernandez-Guzman along with Cindy Eisaman and Trev Flowers and the other members of the Development Leadership Team
- All the volunteers who have donated their time and talent to cook and serve meals; provide food, clothing, and toiletries; bring fun, toys and educational activities to the children at the centers; provide counseling and spiritual support to the residents; and serve on the numerous committees that work so hard behind the scenes to assist the residents of our centers in countless other ways.



- And especially Jane Moreau, my administrative assistant, whose own devotion to CPHI is very great, and Joan Matelis, my former secretary, whose contributions to CPHI include the transcription of these interviews.

As this article goes to press in 2004, we can reflect with great pride that CPHI – in its two centers – has served over 43,000 and successfully outplaced over 23,000 or 58.5 percent!

Truly this is a community success story!

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