

**Stacey Parker**

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**From:** Stacey Parker  
**Sent:** Friday, November 07, 2014 10:28 AM  
**Subject:** PRESS RELEASE 11/6/14 - Norman, OK, Selected to Join National Campaign to End Veteran and Chronic Homelessness

## **PRESS RELEASE**



**City of Norman**  
**201 West Gray**  
**Norman, Oklahoma 73069**

For Immediate Release: November 6, 2014

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### **NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, SELECTED TO JOIN NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO END VETERAN AND CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS**

The City of Norman and the Cleveland County Continuum of Care have been selected, along with 68 other U.S. communities, to participate in Zero: 2016, a national campaign to end veteran and chronic homelessness in the next two years. The Campaign is being spearheaded by Community Solutions, a national non-profit based in New York City. The organization will work intensively with homelessness providers in Norman and Cleveland County to meet the federal goals set by the President to end veteran homelessness by Dec. 2015 and chronic homelessness by Dec. 2016. The initiative is a rigorous follow-on to the group's successful 100,000 Homes Campaign, which announced in June that it had helped communities house 105,000 chronically homeless Americans in under four years. Communities will learn real-time performance improvement techniques drawn from healthcare, manufacturing and other sectors to reach these ambitious goals.

Norman was selected for Zero: 2016 through a competitive, national application process. The decision to apply was made by the Norman/Cleveland County Continuum of Care and spearheaded by One Vision One Voice, which includes the Norman Housing Authority, Veterans Affairs, and other non-profit and continuum of care leaders. The initiative will formally launch in January of 2015 in conjunction with the national 2015 Homeless Point-in-Time Count, during which volunteers will survey the local homeless population as they do every year. Norman's recent "I Count" Week, held October 20-22, was an attempt to identify all of our community's street homeless residents by name and determine the best available resources and housing options to end their homelessness.

Lisa Schmidt, Chair of One Vision One Voice further explains the philosophy behind the approach Norman/Cleveland County Continuum of Care is taking in addressing homelessness, "What we've discovered

about ending chronic and veteran homelessness is that it's much like getting people into storm shelters during a tornado, they are just going through a different kind of storm. Getting people to a safe place, out of the elements, as quickly as possible will help them recover more quickly and make it more likely that they will survive. The tools and practices we now have thanks to our involvement in the 100,000 Homes campaign were like being given the best building materials, the most effective protocols, and the best ways to garner the energy of an entire community, a compassionate community, to help. Only this isn't a tornado or wildfire or flood; homelessness is a problem that can be solved, and we can prove that this makes a difference, both in cost savings to Norman and Cleveland County but also as an effective investment in human potential and the possibilities for a better, more productive future."

Last week, the Department of Housing and Urban Development released the results of the 2014 Homeless Point-in-Time Count, which shows that homelessness continues to decline across virtually all major categories, including chronic homelessness. Veteran homelessness was singled out by the report for its particularly steep decline-- more than 30 percent in the last four years.

The report showed that on a single night in January, Norman had 42 chronically homeless people sleeping in shelters or on the streets. Those numbers represent a substantial reduction in homelessness since 2010 when a total of 70 sheltered and unsheltered chronically homeless persons were identified on a single night. Local officials said they are committed to reducing those numbers to zero.

The report also showed that communities selected to join Zero: 2016 account for a combined 31,669 chronically homeless Americans and 16,218 homeless veterans. Community Solutions said it estimates an overlap of 10,000-12,000 between these two populations.

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