



### **Example: Site Visit Invitation**

August 8, 2003

Congressman Rob Simmons  
2 Courthouse Square  
Norwich, CT 06360

Dear Congressman Simmons:

We'd like to invite you to join us and several people from around your district for a visit to the Hooker Hotel and Brick Row Apartments in Willimantic. We are concerned about the need for more supportive housing in eastern Connecticut, and would like your help.

Once a grand hotel, the Hooker Hotel is now a dilapidated apartment building infamous for its drug activity. It drains the potential of downtown Willimantic. But Common Ground Community, an internationally recognized developer of supportive housing, has plans to acquire and renovate the Hooker. In many neighborhoods struggling with crime and poverty, in Connecticut and elsewhere, conversion of problem properties into supportive housing has led to phenomenal neighborhood transformations.

A success story is Brick Row Apartments, also in Willimantic. This development houses tenants who were formerly homeless or at-risk of homelessness, due to mental illness, chemical dependency or chronic health challenges. It combines affordable apartments with on-site access to support services. Supportive housing of this sort is a proven, cost-effective means of re-integrating families and individuals into the community. It is a less expensive and more effective alternative to institutional settings.

We hope you'll join us to visit the Hooker Hotel, to see how supportive housing could contribute to downtown revitalization, and to visit Brick Row, to see a successful supportive housing development that is a valuable asset to the community. In addition, we're assembling a variety of people with important perspectives on supportive housing. These people have expressed interest in meeting with you:

- Michael Skrebutenas – Common Ground Community
- Michael Paulhus – Windham First Selectman
- Rheo Brouillard – President, Savings Institute
- From Windham Regional Community Council:
  - Jeff Beadle, Executive Director
  - Jane Metzler-Potz, Associate Director
  - Cathy Cementina, Director of Project Home
  - Bill Woodbury, Veterans Administration
- Bev Goulet – Director of Social Services, City of Norwich
- Charlotte Schroeder – Assistant Development Director for the City of New London, and Chair of the Southeastern CT Partnership on Housing and Homelessness.
- Tom Hyland – Thames River Family Program in Norwich
- Mike Rosenkrantz – Alliance for Living in New London

- Karen Cummings – Southeastern CT Mental Health Authority
- Betsy Crum – Corporation for Supportive Housing
- Shelby Mertes – Partnership for Strong Communities

We would like to talk with you about the Ending Long-Term Homelessness Services Initiative (ELHSI). ELHSI would add an additional \$30 million to the Health and Human Services budget, to fund services in supportive housing. Building on the President's Samaritan Initiative, these additional funds would be an important down payment toward producing and sustaining 150,000 units of permanent supportive housing. Funding for services will be a critical component of Connecticut's efforts to end long-term homelessness through the creation of supportive housing.

We expect this visit would take about three hours. We understand you will be in Connecticut until the end of August, and hope you're able to find time to visit with us before returning to Washington.

If you have questions or thoughts on this, please feel free to call us at (860) 247-4322.

Sincerely,

Diane Randall  
Director

Shelby Mertes  
Outreach Director

Cc:

Michael Paulhus – Windham First Selectman

Rheo Brouillard – President, Savings Institute

Michael Skrebutenas – Common Ground Community

Diane Manning – Executive Director, United Services

From Windham Regional Community Council:

Jeff Beadle, Executive Director

Jane Metzler-Potz, Associate Director

Cathy Cementina, Director of Project Home

Bill Woodbury, Veterans Administration

Bev Goulet – Director of Social Services, City of Norwich

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