



KANE COUNTY  
MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL  
*making a difference ...together*

## *Message of the Month...*

*For November 2008*

### Kane County Mental Health Council

- The Association for Individual Development  
630-966-4000
- Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center  
630-859-6562
- Delnor Community Hospital  
630-208-3000
- Ecker Center for Mental Health Services  
847-695-0484
- Family Counseling Service of Aurora  
630-844-2662
- Family Service Association of Greater Elgin Area  
847-695-3680
- Gateway Foundation/Aurora  
630-966-7400
- Greater Elgin Family Care Center 847-608-1344
- Kane County Health Department 630-208-3801
- Larkin Center 847-695-5656
- League of Women Voters  
630-365-2138
- Mental Health & Mental Retardation Services, Inc.  
630-892-5456
- National Alliance on Mental Illness, DeKalb, Kane-South, Kendall Counties, Inc. 630-896-6264
- Provena Mercy Medical Center  
630-801-2657
- Provena St. Joseph Hospital  
847-931-5521
- Senior Services Association  
847-741-0404
- Suicide Prevention Services 630-482-9696
- TriCity Family Services  
630-232-1070
- Visiting Nurse Association of Fox Valley 630-978-9835

## Remembering homeless veterans

This Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, we should remember that about one-third of the adult homeless population have served in the Armed Services, and almost half of those suffer from some kind of mental illness. Current population estimates suggest that about 154,000 veterans (male and female) are homeless on any given night and perhaps twice as many experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year. Many other veterans are considered near homeless or at risk because of their poverty, lack of support from family and friends, and dismal living conditions in cheap hotels or in overcrowded or substandard housing.

Right now, the number of homeless male and female Vietnam era veterans is greater than the number of service persons who died during that war -- and a small number of Desert Storm veterans are also appearing in the homeless population. Although many homeless veterans served in combat in Vietnam and suffer from PTSD, at this time, epidemiologic studies do not suggest that there is a causal connection between military service, service in Vietnam, or exposure to combat and homelessness among veterans. Family background, access to support from family and friends, and various personal characteristics (rather than military service) seem to be the stronger indicators of risk of homelessness.

Almost all homeless veterans are male (about three percent are women), the vast majority are single, and most come from poor, disadvantaged backgrounds. Homeless veterans tend to be older and more educated than homeless non-veterans. But similar to the general population of homeless adult males, about 45% of homeless veterans suffer from mental illness and (with considerable overlap) slightly more than 70% suffer from alcohol or other drug abuse problems. Roughly 56% are African American or Hispanic.

**Info corner:** VA offers a wide array of special programs and initiatives specifically designed to help homeless veterans live as self-sufficiently and independently as possible. In fact, VA is the only Federal agency that provides substantial hands-on assistance directly to homeless persons. More information is available by visiting the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs Web site at <http://www1.va.gov/>