A LETTER FROM BOB

From the personal connections we build through our services, to our talented clinicians and staff, and our compassionate supporters, people have always been at the heart of what we do. As I reflect on 2019, I am especially reminded of how important this is.

Mile High Behavioral Healthcare (MHBHC) elevates the communities we serve by offering a continuum of shelter services to the most vulnerable in our community with integrated healthcare and case management programs to address life challenges.

In 2019, we flourished with the generosity of our donors and the participation from those in the communities that we serve. Volunteerism was at an all-time high in 2019 and our halls are constantly blessed with friends and supporters. It’s an eye-opening reminder looking at this year’s accomplishments, how many services we offer and how the paths we have charted are only possible because we all believe in the mission to provide a caring, seamless continuum of services to those in need.

In 2019 our shelter services continued to expand and evolve. We introduced a 30-day housing model to our Comitis Crisis Center and opened the Aurora Day Resource Center more than 50 times for 24-hour periods during cold-weather days and nights including the notorious bomb cyclone in March, local Coloradoans who experienced it, will never forget.

We prepared 160,000 thousand meals and provided more than 50,000 bed nights in 2019 and those numbers will only increase in 2020.

I look forward to our future knowing that MHBHC is backed by supportive community members who recognize the value of what we do along with our staff and supporters committed to advancing our shared mission. But first, I’m pleased to share a look back at 2019 and some of what we have accomplished.

Onward,

Robert “Bob” Dorshimer
CEO of Mile High Behavioral Healthcare
BOMB CYCLONE OF 2019

The Bomb Cyclone of 2019 is a storm that’ll be etched into locals’ memories for decades to come. For several days the storm devastated Colorado. The storm’s winds and snow all but shut down road travel for a 24-hour period, including the area where the Aurora Day Resource Center (ADRC) is located.

At the ADRC, power and natural gas were lost and our heating system was down. Yet, we persevered. With a building full of people looking for relief from the storm, the team from Mile High Behavioral Healthcare (MHBHC) buckled down and made it work.

“We scrambled to find a power source and after making numerous calls we were able to secure a generator, and that became our sole source of power for days,” said Bob Dorshimer, CEO of MHBHC. “I-70 was closed and the prospect of Xcel Energy, or anyone else for that matter, coming to our rescue was simply not an option.”

With help from individuals in the shelter with technical experience and from our staff, we were able to hook up power and survive the most difficult few days we’ve ever experienced at the ADRC.

Our chef, with no ovens and no stove, fired up outdoor grills and began the process of preparing meals. With three grills going, along with a few runs to the local supermarket, the team was able to keep stomachs full and hundreds of bodies warm.

This is when the spirit of our work is rewarded. It would have been easier to simply close and wait for the storm to blow over and the roads to clear, but the severity of the storm and the danger it presented to our clients, required us to make it work. We provided for the needs of the people who had no other option.

Sometimes we face difficulties as providers of these types of services and even when it seems dire, we have to persevere.
COMMUNITY GARDEN: PROMOTING LIFE

The garden at the Aurora Day Resource Center was a big hit in 2019, thanks to the hard work of staff and guests. One guest in particular, Mark, was extremely helpful in taking care of the garden. Mark took the time to answer some questions about why working in the garden was so important to him.

How do you help in the garden?

I have been watering, fertilizing, and just taking care of it. I help make sure that nothing gets into it to eat or destroy any of the plants. Right now, I am going to go put in some stakes to hold down the soaker hose in the garden.

What interests you in working in the garden?

Well I have thirty-five years of experience in landscaping, so when I was asked to help, I said sure. I am a veteran, and gardening is basically the opposite of being a solider. A soldier’s duty is to take life. Gardening helps to promote life.

How has working in the garden helped you?

Working in the garden has just really meant a lot to me. It has been fun to teach some of the other people about stuff that they don’t know about. For example, how the leaves on the plants follow the sun. It also keeps me calmer and allows me to have more patience. I am waiting to go in front of the military board, and I am waiting for an insurance policy to kick in. So this has really helped me with the waiting process.

160,000 meals were provided in 2019 to not only individuals at our shelters but throughout MHBHC’s nine locations.

That’s amazing, but what’s more amazing is that this was done by one person, Chef Robert Mosley.

“Just because people are homeless, doesn’t mean they can’t have good food. I don’t just throw anything out there,” says Mosley. “And I make it just as if I’m cooking at home. I’ve been a chef for 20 years and I’m happy to be here.”

Mosley’s dedication shows not only the quality food he provides on a daily basis but in the pride he takes even when working out of the very small kitchen at the Comitis Crisis Center.

“You have to have pride and enjoy what you are doing, especially when you are cooking for this many people,” Mosley goes on to say. “I think this is a blessing that God gave me to do this. There are always going to be people out there that are going to be in need. I’ll be here.”

Much of the food we provide is donated but we purchase most of it. Donations for the Comitis Crisis Center and the ADRC make providing for our locations possible.

Byron Shaw works out of the Aurora Day Resource Center and leads and coordinates the Street Outreach Team, which covers the City of Aurora and Arapahoe County.

Our Street Outreach program is an essential component within the homeless service continuum of care. They help individuals establish trusting relationships with the ADRC staff and with services to move them from long periods of living on the streets or in shelters toward stable housing.

“Through Street Outreach efforts, I think it’s safe to say we are responsible for a large percentage of the guests that utilize services at the ADRC. Street Outreach is able to connect with people that may not be aware of the Comitis Crisis Center or the Aurora Day Resource Center,” explains Shaw. “People experiencing homelessness camp in areas that you would never imagine or think possible. I think the public would also be surprised at how many individuals are camping and in the nooks and crannies of Aurora.”

The basic goals of street outreach programs are to address immediate needs of safety, provide crisis intervention, and ultimately to connect people to housing, medical and mental health care, public benefits, clothing, food, and to learn about available resources.

Our Street Outreach program engages people “where they are” in their own environment such as greenbelts, parks, doorways and alleys, vehicles, tents, temporary shelters or under bridges. People living in these settings are often isolated and highly vulnerable due to physical and mental illness—issues that make it difficult for them to seek out services on their own.

Through our tireless efforts the Street Outreach team made nearly 500 unique contacts in 2019 and handed out thousands of care packages, socks and other supplies. They are truly performing life changing work.


**COLFAX COMMUNITY NETWORK**

Colfax Community Network (CCN) is our drop-in center providing food pantry services as well as an afterschool program for children whose families are experiencing some form of transient living. CCN improves and strengthens family and community life of the individuals by providing afterschool care and other activities.

Additionally, we provide needed information, resources and services, we work alongside adults, children and parents to help them see their value. We offer many tangible resources to lighten emotional and financial burdens and to encourage stability.

Surrounded by staff and volunteers who believe in their power, the children learn they can succeed in the future, and also begin transforming their lives and communities today.

In 2019: we housed every family of the children in our program, we provided assistance to more than 800 people in the community (bus tickets, food, clothing, and more), we took the kids swimming, bowling along with other field trips, gave away hundreds of toys for the holidays, and we planted a community garden and gave the vegetables to the community food bank.
The Aurora Day Resource Center (ADRC) and Comitis Crisis Center are the shelter service hubs around the Colfax corridor in Aurora, located on the Anschutz Medical Campus. In 2019 we continued to grow in the number of people we worked with and extended services we offered.

In 2019 we provided an additional 5,000 beds nights during cold nights and assisted hundreds of people in obtaining permanent housing in 2019.

These programs provide the following services:

- Assist people off the streets and into treatment, housing and/or employment
- Provide hot meals 365 days a year
- Obtain documents including birth certificates, Colorado ID’s, and SS cards
- Mail services for residents of the program
- Help access shelter services
- Provide basic needs items such as socks, hats, gloves, and coats
- Case management for everyone

**Integrated and Behavioral Health Case Management**

The Integrated and Behavioral Health Program is designed to support people living on the street who suffer from significant and debilitating mental illness as well as general health needs. By clinically engaging individuals in their environment, we are able to provide case management, general health screenings and dental care.

**Comitis Shelter Services**

At the Comitis Crisis Center our focus is on shelter services with specific individuals in mind.

- **We provided more than 50,000 shelter beds in 2019.**
- **Connected 100’s of families to permanent housing**

We offer our **Transitional family shelter**, which is a three to six month short-term shelter for eligible families receiving Colorado Works, Temporary Assistance Needy Families (TANF) through Arapahoe County.

There is also an **Emergency family shelter** which is a nightly emergency shelter for individuals of families with children under 18 years old, as well as an **Individual Adult Shelter** where clients can stay at for a 30-day period.

We provide for our servicemen with our **Transitional VA shelter**, for veterans and their families as they gain self-sufficiency.

And lastly, our **Opportunity for Recovery Unit** (ORU) providing substance use disorder services along with shelter.

All of our Comitis Crisis Center clients receive case management to help to transition them to permanent housing, obtain work, as well as assist with behavioral and mental health issues.

**All of the programs offer:**
- Meals, hygiene items and seasonal clothing
- Showers
- Referral services and case management
- Financial literacy classes
OUR VISION
Empower individuals to shape healthy, viable, complete lives and communities.

OUR MISSION
Provide a caring, seamless continuum of behavioral healthcare to those in need.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES
These fundamental values are at the heart of Mile High Behavioral Healthcare—the organization, the board, the leadership and the staff. They articulate the ideals we aspire to, the convictions we hold ourselves accountable for, and offer guidance about how we carry out our mission.