

My name is Richard Baraglia and I am the Executive Director of St. Philip House located in Plainville.

St. Philip House is member of the Connecticut AIDS Resource Coalition. We are a supportive housing program for individuals and families living with HIV/AIDS. Our program began in 1989 with a \$5000 start-up grant from the Department of Social Services.

Today, we have 51 men, women and children in 27 units of housing in the communities of Plainville, Bristol, New Britain and Hartford.

In 1993, we received a grant from DSS bond funds that allowed us to construct our present facility. This facility contains 8 one-bedroom units for an individual or a couple, our administrative offices and a sunroom for activities. The sunroom is not only used for St. Philip House residents but is used to serve members of the HIV community in our area. The sunroom is used for an HIV support group that meets monthly and alternative therapies, funded in part through donations from the United Way. These therapies include: massage, reflexology, and yoga all of which help enhance and strengthen the immune systems of HIV+ individuals. By maintaining one's health, an individual is less likely to become ill and then need hospitalization. This hospitalization would add to the already out of control health care costs.

This building is now 17 years old. With our limited funds we do our best to maintain it. At times the best we can do is put a "band aid" on to prevent serious problems. The facility will soon need a new roof, heating system, energy efficient windows. The windows that need replacing are in the residential units. Since our residents are below the 300% poverty level, any assistance we can provide to help lower heating costs is greatly appreciated.

The appliances in the units are approaching the end of their life cycle and will also soon need replacing.

I understand the difficult economic situation that faces the State of Connecticut. However, I remind you that this facility was constructed with funds from the State of Connecticut and bonding funds would protect the investment the state has made in our program so that we can continue to provide critically needed housing and support in a safe, responsible and cost-effective manner to serve our residents and those members of the HIV community who depend on us.

I encourage you to include the proposed bonding funds in the DSS budget so that we can continue providing the services we provide to the less fortunate citizens of Connecticut.

Thank you for considering my request.

Richard Baraglia