HUNTERS WOODS
NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION

TOOLKIT
AND
RESOURCE GUIDE
HUNTERS WOODS NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION --
TOOLKIT AND RESOURCE GUIDE

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SYNOPSIS OF COALITION EFFORT

Reston’s **Hunters Woods Neighborhood Coalition** is a working group of Fairfax County agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, a church and neighbors who collaborate to share resources, information, skills, and understanding toward the goal of sustaining a safe and welcoming neighborhood for all who live, work, worship, and enjoy themselves in the Hunters Woods neighborhood of Reston, Virginia.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Rising criminal activity in Hunters Woods Plaza caused alarm in the neighborhood in the summer of 2013. This activity was occurring simultaneously with an increase in loitering, harassment, overflowing trash cans and unkempt landscaping within the Plaza. There were growing concerns and fear among residents, businesses and users of the Plaza and surrounding neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS CALLED TO ACTION

To try to help the neighborhood understand the situation and with an aim to prevent further robberies, panhandling, public drunkenness and other substance abuse activities from occurring, Reston’s primary human services nonprofit, Cornerstones, began convening meetings of all concerned parties. The group called itself the Hunters Woods Neighborhood Coalition and its primary focus has been on activities within the Plaza itself. The Coalition included participants from Cornerstones, Reston Community Center, the Fairfax County Police Department, Christ The Servant Lutheran Church, Hunters Woods Fellowship House, the property management company Edens, the Community Services Board, the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services, Reston Association, and Hunter Mill District Supervisor Catherine Hudgins’ office. The Coalition continues to grow and has received support from additional partners and community members along the way.

GOALS AND RESULTS

From the outset, the Coalition discussed and debated ways to realize a vision that balanced safety concerns with respectful treatment of all individuals. To that end, two primary goals were identified:

1. Enhance the safety and well-being of all residents and users of the Plaza and
2. Improve the image of the Plaza through renewal of its appearance and ongoing outreach and communications.

Two years later, by the summer of 2015, the Coalition had created a holistic, community-minded, multi-pronged response that enhanced communication among businesses, customers, and its neighbors and provided necessary services to the homeless population. Results included:

- An overall reduction in crime by 63% (summer 2013 compared to summer 2014).
- An increase in services to those struggling with mental, physical or substance abuse problems, including housing for two chronically homeless community members.
- New landscaping and Plaza furnishings.
- Increased police presence on the Plaza and added patrols on nearby paths.
- Commitment among all of the participating entities to share information early and solve problems.
BACKGROUND

Hunters Woods Plaza, a village center in Reston, Virginia, serves an economically, ethnically and racially diverse neighborhood south of the Dulles Toll Road. It is one of the older neighborhoods of Reston and has seen several revitalization efforts over the course of Reston’s 50-year history. The Plaza’s anchor is the Reston Community Center, a county government entity serving residents from across greater Reston and beyond. On one side of the Community Center, Christ The Servant Lutheran Church serves a small congregation. On the other side of the community center is the Hunters Woods Fellowship House, a large, nonprofit, low-income senior housing complex where over 300 elderly residents live. In addition to the community center, the church, and the senior housing apartment building, numerous small businesses, restaurants, a ballet company, a laundromat and a bank operate adjacent to a large parking lot, with a Safeway on one end and a Rite-Aid Pharmacy on the other. There are also townhomes on the Plaza and numerous apartment buildings and residential homes in nearby neighborhoods accessible via paths and tunnels under nearby roads.

Throughout Reston’s history, the Hunters Woods Plaza has been and continues to be a viable, functioning destination for thousands of Reston residents who use it daily for work, worship, shopping and recreation.

In the summer of 2013, approximately a dozen homeless individuals were residing in or around the Plaza, sleeping in nearby woods or on the doorways of properties. During the day, they were congregating in the lobby of the community center; on the benches of the Plaza; or loitering at the Fellowship House, the church, or in front of the businesses. Bushes, shrubs and weeds had become overgrown, sidewalks were cracked and trashcans were often overflowing. Lighting was poor at night both on the Plaza and on the paths leading into the Plaza. Numerous incidents of public drunkenness, robberies, car break-ins, fighting, harassment and intimidation were reported to police or administration of the Reston Community Center, the Fellowship House, and Christ the Servant Lutheran church. Safeway reported many incidents of shoplifting. Residents and visitors to the Plaza often assumed the homeless were responsible for much of the criminal activity. The seniors living at the Fellowship House felt especially vulnerable.

At that time, there was little communication among the entities living and operating at the Plaza. There was no forum for discussion on how to deal with or solve the problems the Plaza was facing. The police had not been effective in reaching out to the Plaza residents to create partnerships and build confidence in reporting incidents. A platform was needed for engagement with the property management company. Community organizations, business and government had yet to coalesce around an action plan.

Two of the homeless had taken up residence in tents behind the church on its property during the summer of 2013. This very visible development triggered alarm and concern by residents of the Fellowship House, residents in nearby homes and others. Cornerstones, partnering initially with the community center and the church, called a neighborhood community meeting of all interested and concerned parties. The first meeting was on July 17, 2013. Thus, the Coalition was born.
VISION AND MISSION OF THE COALITION

VISION
The Hunters Woods Neighborhood Coalition works collaboratively to sustain a safe and welcoming neighborhood for people to live, work, worship, and enjoy visiting.

MISSION
The Hunters Woods Neighborhood Coalition brings together resources from the Hunters Woods neighborhood and beyond to create a safe and supportive environment in its village center, while encouraging people to work, play and worship at the Plaza and patronize local businesses and the Reston Community Center.
COALITION PARTNERS

BUSINESSES

- **Edens Property Management Company** As part of its contribution to the efforts of the Coalition, Edens redeveloped the Plaza in 2014 to include the following renovations: improved lighting; new benches for seating; repaving the parking lot; new trash cans; and ensure vegetation is lower and sparser. These renovations continued to support a safe and inviting environment for the community.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

- **Reston Citizens Association (RCA)** is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation, founded in 1967. RCA promotes and protects Reston's founding principles in the political arena by serving as a non-partisan forum for all residents and as an advocate for the community with County and State government. As part of its contribution to the efforts to the Coalition, RCA will contribute toward educating the community about the Hunters Woods Neighborhood Coalition and assist where possible in advancing the concept to other Reston neighborhoods.

FAITH ORGANIZATION

- **Christ The Servant Lutheran Church** is a church whose congregation has met at Hunters Woods Plaza for 40 years. Its mission is to celebrate, think and serve. In that vein, it has several outreach programs to serve those in need. As part of its contribution to the efforts of the Coalition, the pastor and its members engaged in active outreach to the homeless on the Plaza and those who are marginally housed nearby, providing access to a food pantry and a weekly lunch at which time homeless members of the community can meet with a representative from Cornerstones to learn about opportunities for housing, jobs and social services.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- **The Community Services Board** provides services for people of all ages who have mental illness, substance use disorders, and/or intellectual disability, and for infants and toddlers with developmental delays. As part of their contribution to the efforts of the Coalition, they continue to provide services and support to individuals with mental illness in the Hunters Woods area, including moving them out of homelessness. They coordinated and provided the Mental Health Training for Cornerstones and Reston Community Center employees. They also assisted in the development of protocols for staff regarding safety and support to vulnerable individuals.

- **County Police Officer** Katy Defoe, the crime prevention specialist for Fairfax County Police Department’s Reston District Station worked collaboratively with the team to create and educate Reston Community Center staff and Fellowship House residents on safety best practices and support to vulnerable individuals. For example, emergency reporting strategies, when and why to call non-Emergency or 911, who to call when they see criminal activity or when being bothered by someone, and multi-lingual services available for non-English speakers. The police have also increased their visible presence in the plaza and supported the National Night Out Against Crime event held at Hunters Woods Plaza. In
addition, they have educated and continued to emphasize the use of the “no trespass” letters to individuals who violate codes of conduct.

- **Fairfax County’s Office to Prevent and End Homelessness** mission is to prevent and end homelessness in partnership with the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, government agencies, nonprofits, faith communities and businesses by adopting the following four principles: 1) Prevention - Keep people from becoming homeless in the first place; 2) Preservation - Increase and preserve affordable housing; 3) Integration - Deliver integrated social services to those who need it; and 4) Implementation - Create a community partnership to ensure accountability and funding. As part of their contribution to the efforts to the Coalition, the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness has educated the group and community on the delineation between homelessness and mental illness. They have also worked with partnering organizations to continue to assist individuals identified as homeless in the Hunters Woods Plaza, connected them to services, and assisted in moving some into homes.

- **District Supervisor** Cathy Hudgins is the local elected official representing the residents and businesses at the Hunters Woods Village Center and surrounding neighborhoods. The Hunter Mill District office serves as a liaison to Fairfax County Government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and community organizations. As part of its contribution to the efforts of the Hunters Woods Coalition, the Hunter Mill District office provided coordination and support to the coalition activities within Hunters Woods Village Center neighborhood. In addition, Supervisor Hudgins’ office provided communication support through multiple mediums in the community.

- **Neighborhood and Community Services’** mission is to bring people and resources together to strengthen the well-being of individuals and communities. They provide services to youth, adults and the community and offer various ways for people to get involved. As part of their contribution to the efforts to the Coalition, **Southgate Community Center** and **Reston Teen Center** have continued to educate partnering organizations and community members about the programs focused on building positive community support, youth leadership, and family engagement. Both centers also assisted with the “National Night Out Against Crime” event at Hunters Woods Plaza.

- **Reston Community Center’s** mission is to create positive leisure, cultural and educational experiences which enhance the quality of life for all people living and working in Reston by providing a broad range of programs in arts, aquatics, recreation, enrichment and life-long learning; creating and sustaining community traditions through special events, outreach activities, and facility rentals; and building community through collaboration and celebration. As part of their contribution to the efforts to the Coalition, Reston Community Center advocated for better lighting in the Plaza and on pathways. Its executive director worked with the stakeholders around the table to communicate effectively across departments and organizations on incidents of crime, banning difficult individuals from the center, and providing education on upcoming center events. They held community forums and continue to invite all people, as long as they are following the code of conduct, into their center. They promoted and offered the Mental Health First Aid Trainings to community members as well as their employees. Reston Community Center also included material in its publications about the newly renovated features of the Plaza.

- **Reston Regional Library** representatives, as part of the contributions to the Coalition, continue to work collaboratively with the stakeholders around the table to share
They also shared information from across Reston on how to respond when in contact with disruptive individuals and crimes.

**NON-PROFITS**

- **Cornerstones** (formerly Reston Interfaith) is a nonprofit organization that promotes self-sufficiency by providing support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, quality childcare, and other human services in northwestern Fairfax County. As an organization firmly rooted in the Reston community, Cornerstones seeks to embrace the principle of inclusivity established by Reston’s founder, Robert E. Simon, and to contribute to making Reston a place where people can “live, work, play, and serve”. In this spirit, Cornerstones responded to the concerns voiced in the Hunters Woods community two years ago by facilitating a collaborative effort among all interested parties to see how the concerns and issues could be resolved. It has continued to take the lead or backbone role in the Coalition by calling and facilitating quarterly meetings of the entire Coalition.

- **Hunters Woods Fellowship House** is a government-assisted apartment community designed for individuals with limited income who are independent, over 62, or who are disabled. Located in the Hunters Woods Plaza, it opened in 1979 and has 222 one-bedroom apartments. As part of their contribution to the efforts to the Coalition, they have provided advocacy for their residents around safely navigating the Plaza at night and also provided opportunities for some of their residents who had previously been homeless to share their stories and ideas on what the needs are in the community.

- **Reston Association**’s mission is to preserve and enhance the Reston community through outstanding leadership, service and stewardship of our resources. As part of their contribution to the efforts to the Coalition, Reston Association has discussed funding for more lighting on paths and path marking improvements near the Hunters Woods Plaza.
COALITION STRUCTURE: COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

The Coalition comprises a “plenary” group of key partners that meets quarterly. Three sub-groups or committees have been formed to tackle issues around themes of interest to Coalition members, who then report back to the Coalition at the quarterly meetings.

COMMITTEES

- Physical Environment/Steering Committee

  Objectives:
  1. Call meetings of the Coalition, identify issues, create agendas, facilitate discussion and focus the group on inclusion and problem solving
  2. Host community meetings that educate interested parties on the situation within the Plaza and the efforts to foster safety and well-being.
  3. Be a liaison with the property management company to improve the appearance and safety of the Plaza

- Safety & Well-being Committee

  Objectives:
  1. Provide larger planning group with a clear understanding of the challenges and solutions addressing community safety and well-being.
  2. Create protocols to ensure the health and safety of all center users and residents.
  3. Offer training opportunities or seminars to support safety and well-being.

- Communications, Marketing, Resources Committee

  Objectives:
  1. Leverage the existing marketing resources of the Plaza’s entities to feature and talk about the work of the Coalition.
  2. Create resources to document our learnings and offer education and guidance to other neighborhoods undertaking a coalition effort.
  3. Showcase our efforts with local media.

MEETINGS

- Frequency

  Meetings of the full Coalition are convened on a quarterly basis. Committees of the Coalition can meet more frequently in order to achieve or work on certain objectives and/or to organize activities for the broader Hunters Woods community.

- Lead Facilitator

  To date, representatives from Cornerstones have taken the lead in facilitating all Coalition meetings. This includes working with Coalition members to set dates and venues for the quarterly meetings, chairing the proceedings of the meetings, taking minutes and distributing notes.
• **Agenda Creator/Notetaker**

  Cornerstones, as the current lead facilitator, has also taken on the responsibility of setting the agenda for Coalition convenings, based on input from members, and writing up and disseminating notes and action items following and preceding Coalition convenings. An example of an agenda is attached in the appendix to this toolkit.

• **Venue**

  To the great extent possible, the venue for quarterly convenings will rotate between key Coalition members who have appropriate meeting facilities. Committee meetings will convene as determined by those members and the availability of space, with Cornerstones meeting rooms being a fallback option if necessary.

• **Decision-making**

  The primary goal of the facilitator is to have decisions reached by consensus with no one party or parties feeling that their voice was not heard or leaving the table dissatisfied with a majority vote by the Coalition.
GOAL #1: ENHANCE THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF ALL RESIDENTS AND USERS OF THE PLAZA

Objective 1: Reduce criminal activity; increase confidence in police and citizen reporting capabilities

Results:
1. Officer Katy Defoe of the Fairfax County Police Department briefed Reston Community Center front line staff and Hunters Woods Fellowship House residents on reporting strategies, when and why to call non-emergency or 9-1-1, and how to ensure follow-up activities have been covered and communicated.
2. Incidents of disruptive behavior and behavior that violated the Reston Community Center's Code of Conduct have been significantly reduced.
3. Police increased the number of patrols throughout the year and during warmer months when criminal activity tended to rise stepped up bike patrols.
4. Edens property management company hired an onsite security guard.

Objective 2: Create protocols for staffs regarding safety of and support to vulnerable individuals

Results:
1. The Community Services Board provided Mental Health First Aid training to Reston Community Center staff, Christ the Servant Lutheran congregants, and Cornerstones employees.
2. Reston Community Center and Christ the Servant Lutheran representatives provided input to the Reston Association budget process to advocate for the lighting and path marking improvements for the trails behind the Hunters Woods Plaza.
3. A Cornerstones support worker meets weekly at the Church to assist homeless community members.
4. Cornerstones, Community Services Board and other County agencies collaborated to intervene to move two chronically homeless individuals into stable housing.
5. Multi-lingual services were offered to non-English speakers who reside at the Fellowship House so that they could understand and use safety protocols.

Objective 3: Increase community involvement of residential and retail neighbors

Results:
1. Residents who were alarmed by the tents were brought into the Coalition’s efforts through two open community meetings to discuss their concerns. The meetings served to reassure residents and to provide them with understanding of the conduct expectations of all who visit Hunters Woods.
2. Retailers in the Plaza joined the effort to share information about issuing “No Trespass” letters to individuals. This has led to reduction in the incidents of public drinking (where between 3-6 people a day would routinely sit and drink outside the Plaza businesses there are none now).
3. A "National Night Out" against crime event was held at the Hunters Woods Plaza for the first time in August of 2014 and again in August of 2015. The entire community was invited to the event.
Objective 4: Invite ALL stakeholders using the Plaza to participate in the Coalition

Results:
1. Participation in the Coalition was not only open to all, the Coalition members took intentional steps to identify and reach out to anyone concerned about safety and security in the Plaza to invite them to join.
2. A shared understanding of rights and responsibilities across all the different groups has been greatly enhanced by including all concerned community members.

Objective 5: Develop a model for addressing these issues that other neighborhoods/village centers can emulate

Results:
1. The Hunters Woods Neighborhood Coalition has committed to meet quarterly to ensure that new systems and procedures for tackling issues related to the Plaza and wider Hunters Woods community continue to bear fruit.
2. In response to the positive feedback from other neighborhoods in the Reston community that are looking for a model to address similar issues, a sub-committee of the Coalition developed this Toolkit.

GOAL #2: IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF THE HUNTERS WOODS PLAZA THROUGH RENEWAL OF ITS APPEARANCE AND ONGOING OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

Objective 1: Establish means to share planning and support for mutually beneficial activities

Results:
1. The Community Service Board staff provided Mental Health First Aid training to front-line Reston Community Center employees, Cornerstones staff and interested others who were members of the Coalition or the larger community.
2. Quarterly meetings were established to update stakeholders on activities (good and bad) and strategies to address concerns. A regular meeting schedule for the Coalition assures that gains won’t dissipate due to lack of attention.
3. An email distribution list of the stakeholders enables participants to communicate quickly and effectively across departments and organizations and then, if needed, take action.
4. Services available from participating organizations, such as the County or Cornerstones, can be used by neighbors, Hunters Woods Fellowship House residents, and visitors to Hunters Woods.

Objective 2: Develop shared messaging and use consistently to encourage the community to feel welcome and safe and to advocate for the mission of the Coalition

Results:
1. Reston Community Center has included material in its publications about the newly renovated features of the Plaza.
2. Community Services Mental Health First Aid Training is advertised in the Reston Community Center’s Program Guides, opening up that opportunity to the community.
3. The Fairfax Connection ran an article entitled “Connecting to End Homelessness” in September 2014.
4. The Coalition has reached out to local media and coverage of the initiative has been fair.

- **Objective 3: Work closely with the property management company and residents to improve the appearance of the Plaza and build pride in its maintenance**

  *Results:*
  1. Reston Community Center and Christ the Servant Church worked with Edens, the property management company, to improve landscaping and lighting.
  2. The Coalition asked for funding from Reston Association to improve lighting around the Plaza.

- **Objective 4: Document resources and make available to all communities concerned with similar issues and seeking models of community collaboration**

  *Results:*
  1. A toolkit offering “lessons learned” and “best practices” has been developed to share with other neighborhoods who want a model for intra-community collaboration.
LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

In the two years of its operation, the Hunters Woods Neighborhood Coalition has seen tangible and effective results of its multi-sector collaboration. Below are some Lessons Learned and Best Practices that the members have identified as areas for improvement and notable accomplishments.

LESSONS LEARNED / AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **Increase Resident Involvement**

  Coalition members feel they need to do a better job getting more Hunters Woods residents involved, that is, those who live in the surrounding apartments, townhomes and single-family residences. By attending at the Coalition meetings, they will have the opportunity to better understand the issues the Plaza faces and become engaged with finding solutions. The Coalition members believe that if more residents become involved, there is greater chance to dispel the public perception that the Plaza is unsafe and to get out the word about the improvements occurring.

- **Get Businesses Involved**

  While a number of businesses in the Plaza have supported key efforts by the Coalition, such as National Night Out, their absence from the regular meetings of the Coalition is a major gap in the collaboration and actions needed to effect change. Members have suggested making a more concerted outreach to the businesses to ask for their involvement and identify ways to make it easier for them to be more involved.

- **Communicate Regularly and Focus on Good News**

  Early on, the Coalition made a conscious decision not to communicate about its work until it had realized some successes. Once they were happening, however, there was little focus on getting the word about improvements at the Plaza. A noteworthy example relates to when the Coalition first formed following the lonely death of a homeless gentleman in a Plaza laundry room. Two years later, another homeless gentleman was helped by Coalition members and given urgent medical attention and eventually a home. He later died from his medical issues, but with dignity, surrounded by close friends and family. That might not have happened had the Coalition not come together to address issues such as homelessness in the Plaza. It is something the members want recognized as a great achievement. But few outside of the Coalition are aware of this, along with the many other examples of progress in the areas of social services for all those in need, in addition to public safety, security, landscaping, and lighting improvements.

BEST PRACTICES / NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Invite a Broad Spectrum of Interested Parties to be Involved**

  The HWNC is a great example of a good coalition, one which spans many sectors from public partners to nonprofits to the faith community to local police. Having the earnest commitment of members to the Coalition, not just in terms of showing up for meetings, but engaging in working groups and being flexible with their time and the issues at hand, has created a dynamic group that has produced tangible results for its efforts.
• **Elect a Long-term Convenor**

Having an established convenor / coalition facilitator, like Cornerstones, is critical for maintaining continuity and consistency. The convenor / facilitator takes ownership of the process of publishing agendas, taking notes and writing up minutes, scheduling meetings, keeping them on time, and disseminating information.

• **Offer Education and Training on Relevant Topics**

Coalition members pursued opportunities to educate members of the Hunters Woods community on matters such as homelessness and mental health awareness training. These have taken the form of community meetings and training workshops and go a long way to dispelling myths such as homeless individuals are the cause of the crime in the community, as opposed to in actuality, often being the victims of it.

• **Use the Coalition as a Springboard for Innovation**

Christ the Savior Lutheran Church, a member of the Coalition, early on began a conversation with Cornerstones about establishing a case management worker in their church for a set number of hours per week to help the church deal with the issues faced by the homeless and others in need who tended to loiter in the area around the church. Cornerstones assigned a case management worker to come in for a few hours one day per week. To attract those in need, the church decided to start a weekly lunch program. This in turn presented an opportunity for the Cornerstones’ outreach worker to connect regularly with these homeless community members and make sure they know the resources and services available in the community, including at the Embry Rucker Community Shelter.

• **Share Responsibility and Leverage Smaller Working Groups Through Delegation**

When issues are identified by the Coalition, having smaller working groups tackle them first and make suggestions for the broader Coalition can be helpful in keeping plenary Coalition meetings on track and on time, thereby respecting the other commitments and schedules of the volunteer members.
APPENDIX OF RESOURCES

- Sample Meeting Agenda
- “Simple Ways to Respond” Flyer
- Hunters Woods Community Meeting Notice
- Community Safety and Well-being Work Group Protocol
- Map of Hunters Woods Plaza and Neighborhood Clusters
- Media Coverage of Team Excellence
- Fairfax Connection Article: “Connecting to End Homelessness”
Hunters Woods Neighborhood Coalition Meeting. August 12th, 2015. 9:30-11:15 a.m.
Hunters Woods Fellowship House
2231 Colts Neck Road,
Reston VA 20191

Welcome and Purpose

Concerns about crime, loitering and issues in the shopping plaza and nearby neighborhoods led the convening organizations to bring stakeholders together to strengthen partnership with each other and look at ways to build better “community” in the Hunters Woods Plaza area.

Proposed Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Quick review of meeting notes (6/15 committee meetings and 5/13 coalition meeting)
3. Debrief National Night Out (thank you notes to the businesses/others)
4. Updates from Fairfax County Police
5. Work Group updates:
   - Safety and Well-being/Training and Education
   - Physical Environment/Steering Committee (including discussion of future farmers market at Plaza)
   - Communications, Marketing and Resources
6. Discussion of possible community garden plot at Fellowship House
7. Additional discussion/comments
8. Next Steps, Meeting Date/Time (including consideration of an alternative time more accommodating to neighborhood residents) and Action Items

*Also, if you have suggestions for others who you feel should be invited to participate, please add their contact information to the sign-in sheet.
## Simple Ways to Respond

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Who to contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An individual looks like they may need medical assistance or appears intoxicated but is not in immediate danger</td>
<td>Fairfax County Non-emergency Number 703-691-2131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An individual or group that are being disruptive, openly drinking, being aggressive or disturbing patrons of the property</td>
<td>Fairfax County Emergency Number 911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You encounter an unsheltered individual who needs non-emergency medical attention. They may have been recently discharged from a medical facility and be in need of follow-up care to change dressings or have an untreated wound</td>
<td>Embry Rucker Community Shelter Ken Hinkel <a href="mailto:ken.hinkel@cornerstonesva.org">ken.hinkel@cornerstonesva.org</a> 571-323-1395 Vincent Jenkins <a href="mailto:Vincent.jenkins@cornerstonesva.org">Vincent.jenkins@cornerstonesva.org</a> 571-323-1396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An individual or group are not breaking the law but are creating a public nuisance and disturbing center visitors or residents by panhandling or making inappropriate remarks</td>
<td>Fairfax County Non-emergency Number 703-691-2131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You observe an individual who appears to be under the influence, homeless, not able to take care of their hygiene and based on his actions appears to be mentally unstable</td>
<td>Community Services Board or Embry Rucker Community Shelter Elaine Gleason (CSB) <a href="mailto:elaine.gleason@fairfaxcounty.gov">elaine.gleason@fairfaxcounty.gov</a> 571-235-2751 Ken Hinkel <a href="mailto:ken.hinkel@cornerstonesva.org">ken.hinkel@cornerstonesva.org</a> 571-323-1395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reston interfaith has a new name. Our mission stays the same.

*Cornerstones*
*Hope for Tomorrow Today*

For more information about Cornerstones, visit [www.cornerstonesva.org](http://www.cornerstonesva.org)
Hunters Woods Community Meeting

Do you have safety concerns about the Hunters Woods Shopping Center? Would you like to hear what the community has been doing to address issues in the Hunters Woods area?

Please join us for a community meeting!

Come listen to what community partners have been doing in the area.

- Bring your questions and concerns about the area

May 7, 2014 6:30 p.m. Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods
May 10, 2014 2 p.m. Christ the Servant Lutheran Church
combined efforts toward a common cause that crossed boundaries and delivered better services as a result. It was the  

result in Fairfax County.  

responses to homelessness people were coordinated and better solutions provided as a result. It was the  

illness or homelessness. Frontline teams were trained to deal with difficult mental health situations.  

problems. New landscapes and plaza furnishings were provided. Services were rendered to help alleviate  

homelessness and issues of criminal activity. Residents were encouraged to share their stories and report  

residents’ meetings were hosted for the community to learn the distinction between issues of  

activity in Hunter Woods Plaza, which reduced crime by 63 percent. Police increased outreach to affected  

Excellence Award for creating a holistic, community-minded, multi-provided response to rising criminal  

The Hunter Woods Neighborhood Coalition, convened by Corretonoses, was presented with the Team  

Two Team Excellence Awards presented by Fairfax County: November 7, 2014
Editorial Letters to the Editor

By Kerrie Wilson and Sara Leonard

When the Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors declared a bold goal of ending homelessness, we knew the steepest hill to climb would be securing affordable housing in a high cost-of-living area with an inadequate supply. Beyond that, the need to identify and align a broad variety of services and supports to address the underlying cause of one’s homelessness and to prevent it in the future.

Equally important, and unique to the Fairfax plan, was the recognition that this could not be just another government-nonprofit initiative. To prevent and end homelessness in a “community” the size of Fairfax County would require us to engage that community in new ways, not just for immediate resources and support, but in a committed, sustainable campaign to reach that goal.

Connecting people to other members of the community and to the resources that enable them to achieve stability is the core of Cornerstones’ mission. Addressing homelessness requires building relationships of trust between community groups, often with disparate views about the other. In the early years of the founding of Reston and Reston Interfaith (now Cornerstones), it was Embry Rucker who brought people together around this cause and the eventual dedication of a homeless shelter in Reston’s town center. Cornerstones has continued in that role, with the vision that our community will join us in ending homelessness, not just managing it. Cornerstones has confronted challenges in building that understanding many times over the years. In 2013, we were alerted to issues of concern being voiced in the Hunters Woods Shopping Plaza about crime and safety and the perception that these issues were related to homeless individuals gathering there. We were aware of their presence, and that these men and women were made welcome to stay on the property of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church and to utilize facilities at the Reston Community Center—reflective of the community-minded missions of those institutions.

But other members of the community had reservations, citing public displays of drunkenness, vulgar behaviors, and occasional aggressiveness. That linkage is not altogether unfounded, but it is not the entire story either. According to Katie Defoe, the Crime Prevention Officer based in Reston, the number of reported incidences over the last year involving homeless individuals was very low; rather, they tended to involve disaffected young men under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

How could Cornerstones help in this situation and address the feelings of discontent and insecurity that exist within the community? By connecting people.

Working with the church and community center, we convened a meeting with area residents and homeless persons, business owners, plaza developers, community representatives, local police and the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness.

Over the course of the year, Cornerstones has facilitated broader community meetings, thereby creating opportunities for interest groups to meet face to face, voice their concerns, listen to different perspectives, and make suggestions for how to improve relations.
The momentum of the neighborhood meetings has encouraged members to think of new ways to engage, connect, and commit to playing a part in making Hunters Woods a stronger community. A code of conduct was developed with all stakeholders, laying out benefits and consequences for those visiting the plaza. The church is providing hot lunches for homeless neighbors, with Cornerstones’ outreach worker on site to discuss housing and service options.

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board offered volunteer caregiver training in how to approach and support people suffering from mental illness. The police emphasize crime prevention, increasing patrols and response to any call received. Reston Association is focused on improved lighting and trail markings, and the property management company has made significant improvements to the plaza through an extensive redevelopment. Supervisor Hudgins has been there as a committed partner and to identify additional policies and resources her office can bring. Much still needs to be done. Some people, including elderly residents of the Fellowship House, continue to feel fearful about sharing the plaza based on past experience and despite the development of the tools and procedures that will bring police or Hunters Woods task force members to assist.

Cornerstones hears those concerns and will continue to facilitate a meaningful and productive dialogue between all community members. Conversations, and the connections they bring, are important in our work. Case workers approach every discussion with a person who is homeless with questions designed to elicit cause and the way forward. Was it cost of housing? Poor credit or legal issues? Lack of housing near job, school or family? Was it crisis, abuse or illness? Is it your immigration status, age or ability? Was it lack of education or skills?

Imagine the potential if connected stakeholders—faith, business, civic, nonprofit and government—asked those questions a different way. What could we change together? We can end homelessness; will we?

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