

# Assessment of Human Service Needs & State of Greenwich Statistical Portrait



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Project of the



**Greenwich United Way  
Community Planning Council**

*With Gratitude for the Generous Support of the*



**TUDOR**  
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# Executive Summary

## Assessment of Human Service Needs & State of Greenwich Statistical Report, January 2011

### INTRODUCTION

The Greenwich United Way Community Planning Council conducts periodic assessments of human service needs for the benefit and use of the Greenwich community. The information contained in this report is gathered, assembled, and presented by the United Way, but it represents the input of countless individuals and organizations who generously agreed to share documentation, statistics, opinions, and perspectives with the United Way in order to make this report as complete, factual, and useful as possible. The United Way readily provides the report to municipal leaders, other organizations and all interested individuals with the sincere desire that it be used as a tool in developing necessary programs, making educated funding decisions, and gaining a better understanding of the challenges, strengths, limitations, and opportunities confronting the Greenwich community. Past reports have resulted in the development of some of the Greenwich community's most valued programs and institutions: from the Commission on Aging to Kids in Crisis, from Greenwich Adult Day Care to the YWCA Domestic Abuse Service. Though it is difficult to know in advance what will ultimately come from this year's effort, history has shown that Greenwich is an information-driven community that comes together and responds to unmet needs when provided with compelling, verifiable documentation.

### METHODOLOGY

The complete Needs Assessment was developed over the course of a year and involved the leadership and participation of dozens of volunteers and professionals, all contributing their time and expertise to the effort. Multiple steps included research, fact gathering and interviews, online surveys, focus groups, assembly and review of demographics and statistics, analysis, follow up and fact checking with experts. Each of these steps are summarized below, but described in greater detail in the Methodology section of the full report.

Approximately twenty-five United Way volunteers took on research assignments for each of the service categories covered in the Needs Assessment. They gathered and reviewed other existing reports, spoke with and sought the input of countless public and private organizations and professionals, and delved into online resources in order to assemble summaries of the key issues related to each service category. The goals of the research were to seek out and report on current issues and trends, existing programs and providers, barriers and gaps, available research and reports and any related demographic data. All these findings were written up and reviewed for accuracy by one or more professionals with expertise in each of the categories.

An online survey seeking the perceptions of community leaders, residents and service providers was developed and made available to all who wished to participate over the course of six months. The community was invited to take the survey through a series of press releases, e-mailed invitations, a

link from the Town of Greenwich website, and other public relations efforts. Ultimately, 361 people participated, representing an increase of 30% over the 278 people who participated in the mail survey done in 2006. Those who participated were asked to prioritize issues and needs divided into five areas: Strengthening Children and Families, Crisis Needs, Fostering Self-Sufficiency, Supporting Seniors, and Overarching Community Issues. A volunteer with years of professional experience provided invaluable guidance and support in the analysis and charting of survey responses.

United Way volunteers hosted twenty focus groups throughout the community with the goals of engaging communities unlikely to complete the online survey, putting the local human face on the statistics and data, checking the accuracy of any and all assumptions, and gaining more in depth knowledge about specific issues of concern. Focus groups included people representing the ethnic, economic and demographic diversity of the community, while others incorporated professionals working in specific human service areas. Some were done in languages other than English with the assistance of translators.

Finally, another group of United Way volunteers gathered the latest available statistics and demographic information from local, state and federal sources to document trends and other data related to human services in Greenwich. Only statistics and data that are verifiable and replicable were included. This work was done with the knowledge that the 2010 US Census was being compiled concurrently, and data was updated as it became available. There will be additional information from the Census released throughout the next two years, and relevant statistics will be continually reviewed and amended as addendums to this report, when appropriate.

The results of the surveys, research, focus groups and gathering of statistics were all folded together in order to produce the final comprehensive Assessment of Human Service Needs and State of Greenwich Statistical Portrait that is available in its entirety both online and in printed form from the Greenwich United Way. This Executive Summary is a presentation of the major themes and trends represented in the full report.

## **ECONOMICS**

When the work on the Needs Assessment began, it was clear that the nation was in the midst of a difficult economic recession, but it was not yet fully evident that this would ultimately become the longest and most dramatic economic downturn since the Great Depression. It is now apparent that none of the other issues covered in the full Needs Assessment can be discussed without recognizing the ways in which they have been impacted and exacerbated by the economic crisis.

## **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Over the past two years, almost every service provider, private or public, within every human service category, has been challenged by increasing demands for services and decreasing levels of financial support. As a result, it would be difficult to identify many non-profit agencies that did not end fiscal year 2009 with significant operating deficits. The situation did not improve dramatically in fiscal year 2010, but the majority of local organizations adjusted expectations and operating modes in order to cope with the challenges in a more fiscally prudent manner. Over the two years, organizations pulled back on professional staffs, either in head count or on salary and benefit levels for existing employees, and cut back on any expenses deemed discretionary. Very few actually reduced program

offerings or services, and contrary to what some expected during the height of the recession, Greenwich did not experience a major reduction in the number of non-profit organizations serving the community.

Some agencies are coping with the economic downturn far better than they were a year ago, but there are few, if any signs that their challenges are coming to an end. Fundraising was reported to be at least as difficult in 2010 as it was in 2009, and the surge in demand for services shows no sign of diminishing anytime soon. A study just completed by the nationally recognized Non-Profit Research Collaborative and released in late November 2010 indicated that 37% of non-profits saw fundraising decreases through the first nine months of 2010, while 78% of human service organizations reported that the demand for services was up from the already elevated levels of 2009. When one adds concerns about fundraising with losses on endowments, reduced foundation grants, and the impending reductions in federal and state government funding, non-profit human service providers have little reason for optimism. In addition to these continuing challenges, non-profits are also very aware of and concerned about the potential impact of ongoing debates in Washington about possible changes to federal tax laws with regard to the deductibility of charitable contributions. If there is a bright spot amid all of this uncertainty, it is that most non-profits have managed to keep providing essential services to the Greenwich community and few, if any, have had to turn people away. The concern is how much longer they can continue to do this without additional resources.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

The ethnic, cultural and economic diversity of the Greenwich community continues to increase, to the surprise of many, including long term residents. According to the latest (2008) US Census/American Community Survey, Greenwich is made up of approximately 60,200 residents in 22,400 households and 16,150 families. The median annual household income is \$126,550, but 20% or 4,535 Greenwich households (or 2,130+ families) have annual income under \$50,000, well under the \$58,800 State of Connecticut Self-Sufficiency Standard for a family of three in lower Fairfield County. Between 3.6% and 4.6% of the community, 2,200 to 2,800 local residents, are living in poverty based on the federal guideline, which is \$18,310 for a family of three. The poverty rate is significantly higher, close to 18%, for female headed households with children under the age of eighteen. Over 900 children in the Greenwich Public Schools, or 10.4% of the total enrolled, are eligible for free or reduced price meals, an increase of almost 300 children from the numbers reported in 2005-2006, just prior to the recession. The latest available unemployment rate for Greenwich from the Bureau of Labor Statistics is 6.6% for September 2010. This compares to 9.1% for the State of Connecticut and 9.6% nationally. While Greenwich is tracking lower than many other areas in the country, the rate is an increase of 120% since December 2007 and represents over 2,000 families challenged by the nation's unemployment situation.

In terms of cultural diversity, the Census reports that 22% of current Greenwich residents were born outside of the United States. Of the 56,500 residents over the age of five years, 24.2% primarily speak a language other than English in their homes, with 6.6% reporting that they speak English "less than very well." Greenwich's ethnic diversity has grown over the years. The two largest groups represented are Latino/Hispanic who make up 8% of the community, and Asians, who now make up 7.1%. Both of these groups have almost doubled by percentage since 1990. Approximately 2.3% of Greenwich residents are Black or African American.

In terms of age, 26.7% or roughly 16,000 Greenwich residents are under the age of eighteen, while 16.9% or just over 10,000 residents are sixty-five years of age or older. Those people between the ages of twenty-one to sixty-one years of age represent the largest major group, 71% of the community or 44,000 residents. Within this major group, the largest two subgroups are those between forty-five and fifty-four years, at almost 18% or 10,650 people, and those between thirty-five to forty-four years, representing 15.5% or approximately 9,300 people. Finally, 51.6% of Greenwich residents are female, while 48.4% are male.

### **BASIC HUMAN NEEDS**

Existing services that help low income individuals and families meet their most basic needs are considered to be of high quality. The primary issue is that the number of people requiring assistance has increased dramatically as a result of the economic downturn. Service providers recognize that they are no longer operating to provide emergency assistance, but rather providing assistance to individuals and families on an ongoing basis. Usage of food pantries and distribution services is up, as are visits to clothing rooms. Neighbor to Neighbor, for example, distributed the equivalent of 53% more meals in 2009-2010 than just two years earlier. Though some have suggested that the worst of the economic downturn is behind us, the agency enrolled 32 new families in November 2010 bringing both its current client base and goods distributed to historic highs. On the positive side, Neighbor to Neighbor and others who are on the front lines of providing for basic human needs have been well supported by the community.

There are a growing number of people seeking assistance that have not been in these circumstances before and are less apt to know what type of help might be available and how to access it. There is also a portion of this group coping with very real financial needs, but that may not be eligible for all of the existing services due to the scope of their assets. The clergy and others tell us that some of these people are seeking assistance and receiving some informally, but there is a concern that the informal assistance may be reaching its limit and it is not clear what other assistance existing community resources will be able to provide.

### **SENIORS**

Greenwich continues to age and an increasing number of seniors are remaining in their homes in the community, living longer, healthier and more active lives. Those over the age of sixty-five years represent 16.9% of the population, as compared to 13% for the rest of Fairfield County. Residents over the age of eighty-five years represent 2.7% of the community. The median age in Greenwich is 43.2, up from 40.2 in the 2000 Census.

Though the growth in the total senior population and the fact that local seniors are aging in the community is a very positive sign, it is a concern to service providers who are witnessing changing needs and worry about the community's ability to meet them. The State of Connecticut has a plan dubbed "Money Follows the Person" intended to voluntarily move people out of nursing facilities and back into the community. This plan, coupled with the naturally occurring growth in the local senior population, will add considerably to the need for supportive residential alternatives and home care services. Assisted living and continuing care housing models are appropriate for those who cannot live on their own, but many of the existing facilities have waiting lists and most believe that growing demand is likely to far outpace the current or planned supply in the not too distant future. There has

been an expansion of services in Greenwich to meet the growing need for home support and management, but these services are expensive to provide and local providers have a difficult time attracting and retaining skilled employees. Additionally, non-custodial in-home services are not required to be licensed or bonded in Connecticut, just to be registered with the State like any other business, raising concerns about quality and safety.

Seniors themselves cite housing and transportation among their two biggest concerns. Though there has been an increase in transportation services available to seniors since the last Needs Assessment, many still feel that limited hours, limited distances and the related costs make it difficult for seniors to get around in the community without driving, particularly on evenings and weekends. With regard to housing, participants in senior focus groups repeatedly wondered where they would live when they need or wish to downsize, but still want to remain in the community. Some point to Edgehill, a continuing care community just over the border in Stamford, and suggest that Greenwich has lost and will continue to lose countless longtime citizens to its neighboring community based on its failure to provide local alternatives.

In terms of health care, most believe that the quality of local services is exceptional, but seniors are struggling with the shrinking number of local physicians participating in the Medicare program. The current trend is for many physicians to bill patients at the time of service, requiring patients to apply on their own to Medicare for reimbursement, a potential hardship for seniors on limited and/or fixed incomes.

For the greater community, one of the most alarming concerns with regard to the growing aging population is the potential for a significant number of isolated and anonymous seniors in the community with increasing needs. As seniors age in their own homes, it is quite possible for their needs to grow to the point at which they need assistance, but for friends, neighbors, relatives and emergency responders to be completely unaware of the situation. This issue was illustrated in March 2010, when Greenwich was hit by a major storm, resulting in widespread power outages, blocked roads, loss of phone service, etc. Though the concern for isolated seniors centers on meeting ongoing needs, this situation made it evident that Greenwich is challenged to meet the emergency needs of this population, as well. The community does not currently have the ability to identify people who might not be able to manage without help and, as a result, critically needed assistance may not be provided. There have been some efforts to identify people who might be in this type of situation, but both privacy issues and pride complicate the efforts.

There are two additional issues that will come to the fore over the next few years with regard to the growth and changes in the senior population, both related to likely major capital projects. The Nathaniel Witherell Rehabilitation and Nursing Center is viewed by most as a valued local resource that is greatly in need of major renovation. Plans have been developed, but there is not a current agreement on the part of the State of Connecticut to approve and/or contribute to the costs. Many residents and community leaders, including the Commission on Aging, also agree that the current Senior Center does not and cannot accommodate the broad range of activities necessary to serve the widening spread of ages and diverse desires of today's and tomorrow's seniors. Non-profit organizations have been formed to raise funds and move forward on both of these capital needs.

## **YOUTH**

There have been many positive developments in youth services since the last Needs Assessment, not the least of which is the creation of a Youth Services Coordinator partnership between the United Way, the Town of Greenwich and the State of Connecticut. This new position has resulted in multiple new collaborative initiatives including a Juvenile Review Board, a rapidly growing tutoring program (Reading Champions), several well subscribed parent training programs, and a revitalized effort to improve early childhood education.

The biggest concern with regard to youth is the continued and growing involvement with increasingly dangerous and inappropriate behaviors. These behaviors come in many forms, from the abuse of illegal substances and the inappropriate use of technology, to the ways in which young people treat and interact with each other.

Though it is not clear if overall substance abuse is actually increasing, those who work with youth and young people themselves cite the growing number of teens who are using and abusing both marijuana and alcohol as recreational activities. If there is a positive side to this, it is a sense from reports and the few available statistics that the increase in marijuana use coincides with a slight decrease in the use of harder drugs including cocaine and heroin. Most adults will express concern about the use of alcohol and marijuana, but there is not broad consensus within the community about whether this is truly a problem, or simply an example of kids being kids. It seems that many are unaware of the fact that today's marijuana is stronger and much more dangerous than the drug that some parents might have experienced a few years ago. In terms of alcohol use, many do not realize the risks to parents in terms of liability, when drinking is permitted either in their homes, or at the very least, with their tacit approval. It is not unusual for significant numbers of young people to arrive at social activities having already had enough alcohol to be considered impaired, yet many organizations and individuals quietly deal with each situation in order to minimize the embarrassment or resulting problems for those involved. As a result, the greater community has a hard time knowing how often this occurs or fully grasping the extent of the problem. And, of course, this doesn't even touch on the dangers of an impaired person getting behind the wheel of a car.

There is a sense among both service providers and the youth themselves that sexual activity among youth is happening more frequently and at ever younger ages, with all groups noting that today's youth seem to be much more open and casual about relationships, sexuality and non-sexual, physical displays of affection. Both teens and adults note that they are continuously sent conflicting messages about these activities with authority figures telling them to abstain while almost every media outlet represents the activities as the desirable norm. In spite of this, as well as the comprehensive health education which most teens receive, the youth themselves do not see teen pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases as a significant problem or concern. Local statistics do not show an increase in teen births, but these statistics can be deceiving, as they won't reveal pregnancies ended or carried to full term outside of the community. There has been a noted increase in births to twenty and twenty one year old women, and there is an effort underway to identify and provide for the unmet needs of this group.

Technology has emerged as a new vehicle for inappropriate and potentially dangerous activity. Young people are so comfortable with the newer technologies that they are seemingly unaware of

the ways in which they might be endangering their own safety and jeopardizing their future by posting personal information and photos online, sending inappropriate messages and or potentially damaging photos through cell phones, communicating openly and exposing themselves to strangers, etc. Technology has created a new world of instant communication and gratification which has quickly become the norm for today's young people. In spite of many warnings, they don't seem to understand that what is posted today as a lark may remain on the Internet forever - potentially creating problems, causing unintended harm to others, bringing legal ramifications, and having detrimental and possibly permanent effects on their future.

An issue that is certainly not new, but that has received much more attention, both locally and nationally, is bullying. Though it is not clear if incidences are increasing in number, it seems evident that technology has created new ways for bullying to occur in a much more public and potentially damaging fashion than in the past. Schools and other youth organizations are developing policies to deal with bullying and programs intended to discourage dangerous behaviors. Many of the high profile cases have centered on the issue of sexual orientation. Local professionals feel that the community is not doing enough to help or protect those who may be mistreated because of their perceived or stated sexual identity.

As the Greenwich Board of Education continues to address a sizable achievement gap between students representing different sectors of the community, a renewed emphasis has been placed on early childhood education. Though almost 95% of Greenwich kindergarten students begin school having attended some type of pre-school, some of those who might be considered most in need remain unable to locate available and affordable spaces. Additionally, there is a concern about the varied and uneven learning experiences happening at so many independent programs, resulting in vastly different levels of "school readiness" within each kindergarten class. There is currently an effort underway to encourage all local providers to adopt the pre-school curriculum "Framework" developed by the State of Connecticut Board of Education. The Greenwich Board of Education has also been working with the pre-school directors to offer enhanced staff development opportunities to those who work with the community's youngest learners.

A growing unmet need in the community is for additional after-school and vacation childcare programs for children of all ages. With more parents out in the workforce, families are becoming increasingly dependent on programs that fill the childcare gap between the end of the school day and the end of the parents' workday. Hundreds of children are well served everyday by the Boys & Girls Club, which is the largest after-school childcare provider. The Club picks up children at local schools and serves those over the age of six years. In the past, several other agencies also operated programs, many of them onsite in the public schools, but a number of those programs have closed over the past few years. This has left a sizable portion of the community with few or inadequate choices for a critical service needed on a daily basis.

Finally, another issue that has been cited in this report is the loss of educational options and support for those who do not necessarily see higher education as the next step after completing high school. Though it is understood that the vast majority of high school students in the community strive for higher education and are determined to be accepted into high quality schools, those who are not in this group are provided with little academic or emotional support and training. Over the past few

years we have seen the disappearance of Wright Tech and several other options that were once available to those seeking education or training in the more technical trades. We have experienced the discontinuation of most technical and vocational classes at Greenwich High School, as well. Of the High School class of 2010 (672 students), 91% went on to a two or four year college, while 8.3%, not an insignificant number, ended high school with the intention of going directly into some type of employment. Some participants in this study feel that the community has an obligation to do more to help send these students into the world with an increased chance of future success.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The insufficient supply of diverse affordable and/or moderate income residential options for seniors, members of the workforce, young families, those with special needs and others continues to be an issue regarded by those who participated in the Needs Assessment surveys as one of the highest priorities for the community and the issue that is most often cited as being insufficiently addressed. It was also regularly brought up as a major concern in focus groups. It is worth noting that the issue continues to be cited as a major concern, in spite of the fact that the nation remains in the midst of an historic housing downturn that has significantly reduced real estate values, even in the most expensive markets. What is noted most often is that Greenwich offers some, albeit limited, support to those at the lower end of the economic spectrum, great opportunity to those at the higher end, but little and rapidly disappearing options for those in the middle.

Since the last Needs Assessment, there has been a great deal of activity on the housing issue. In October 2008, the United Way Community Planning Council produced and disseminated the results of a study on moderate income/workforce housing. Concurrently, the Greenwich Housing Authority put forth a plan to increase subsidized senior housing, which was met with considerable community resistance and was ultimately withdrawn. In June 2009, the Representative Town Meeting approved Greenwich's Ten Year Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) which, among many subjects, highlighted the need for affordable housing and cited many of the recommendations of the United Way study, yet recognized the challenges of addressing the issue due to a lack of community consensus. The POCD recommended the creation of a Housing Task Force to delve more deeply into all sides of the issue. This Task Force, which includes broad representation and a diversity of perspectives on the issue, has been assembled by the First Selectman and began working in February 2010 on the recommendations included in the POCD. It has not come forward yet with any specific proposals.

In addition to the above activities, there was some controversy in the community about the development of the property that was formerly the Cos Cob Power Plant. This property was turned over to the Town of Greenwich many years ago by the State of Connecticut with the stipulation that some of it be devoted to affordable housing. The Town of Greenwich asked the State to change this requirement, enabling the Town to develop twenty-four units of affordable housing elsewhere in the community, while developing the Cos Cob property for other use. The issue in 2010, as Greenwich prepared to approve a plan for the development of the site as a recreational property, was whether Greenwich had met its obligation through the development of affordable housing scattered throughout the community, much of it done by private agencies. Ultimately, the State ruled that Greenwich had met its obligation, though there are those in the community who continue to feel otherwise.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Though thousands of Greenwich residents love their cell phones and laptops and derive great convenience and enjoyment from the use of these items, the increasing use and reliance on technology by all sectors of the community has had an impact on many issues covered in the Needs Assessment. Texting and other electronic communications have been cited by service providers as a concern with regard to their detrimental impact on personal communications within families. Twenty-four hour a day cell phone communications and access to the Internet has been cited by youth service providers as a development resulting in additional stresses on local teens' already over-programmed lives. The increasing use of public online sites as vehicles for deriding, bullying, threatening and abusing others has been well publicized in the media, yet continues to be a concern for law enforcement personnel, and those who combat domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and other abusive and dangerous behaviors. The public is also growing increasingly aware of the potential dangers, both personal and financial, from exposure on the Internet, secure sites being compromised, stealing of identities, credit card numbers, etc. These dangers and unintended consequences are not likely to curb the community's affection and growing use of technology and the irrepressible desire for the latest gadget, but they point to a growing need for more information and education so that those who choose to partake can do so in a manner that is as safe as possible.

An interesting and unusual complication is the fact that children and young people who have grown up with this technology are increasingly serving as teachers to their parents and other adults. In almost every other circumstance, adults are the ones warning young people about the dangers inherent in risky behaviors and monitoring their actions to ensure their safety. The new reality is that many adults simply don't know as much as their children do about these technologies, and therefore are unsure when and how to monitor their children's use of technology or when to be truly concerned about their actions.

The technology gap has been cited for many years as an educational problem – those without access to the latest technology are believed to be handicapped in terms of accessing the unlimited array of information available and using the latest tools to keep up academically. This is a continuing concern which can and should be addressed. However, the technology gap is also creating other issues for those who lack access to the latest tools and connections. These people, particularly the younger ones, are now virtually disconnected and isolated from their peers. Today's teens use cell phones, texting and social media sites for all of their communications. When an event or something of interest happens in the community, the technological network spreads the word instantaneously. It would be unusual, in the midst of this type of immediate communication, for young people to think about those who might need or wish to know about these events or happenings, but lack the access to the same communications vehicles used by everyone else. There are those who believe that the impact of being disconnected from peers may, in some ways, be more difficult and detrimental to young people than even the academic issues.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

Virtually every service provider in the field of mental health has cited significant increases in demand for services, exacerbated by the increasing complexity of each case. Some of this has been attributed to the economy, with one provider noting that the economy was implicated in 62% of the new cases in 2010. Additional issues cited include family dysfunction, higher levels of stress, and a growing

propensity to reach out for professional assistance and seek formal diagnoses. It has also been noted that the number of people suffering from serious chronic mental illnesses that are remaining and aging in the community is growing, thus challenging a relatively small network of service providers.

Paperwork and bureaucracy associated with insurance coverage and state reporting requirements have increasingly become an indirect barrier to providing services to all who need them. Some service providers feel that they are spending more time negotiating for reimbursements, seeking service approvals, coordinating additional services, and documenting cases than they are providing direct services to clients. They believe that a coordinated advocacy effort is needed to make state policy makers realize the costs of these additional burdens on an already stretched and stressed service delivery system. Some providers believe that excessive processes keep them from doing the best they can for the people with the most serious needs. Additionally, clients are struggling to obtain funds for transportation to and from mental health appointments.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), serious mental illnesses, “medical conditions that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life,” affect one in seventeen people, or roughly 6% of the population. Adults with chronic mental illness are served by several local entities, with Pathways, the Greenwich Department of Social Services and the Greenwich Hospital Behavioral Health Clinic being among the largest. There is not one major provider that meets the full spectrum of needs for the entire affected population and each of the providers and services are limited in capacity. Among the available services are supported housing, case management, recreation and fellowship, vocational support, diagnostic services, psychiatric care and medication management, most of these available to those who lack insurance and/or other resources. Some professionals believe, in spite of the services provided, that those with chronic mental illness are being served by a patchwork of services that is neither efficient nor effective, that existing providers may not have the capacity to treat all of those who need services, and that it would be helpful to engage in a collaborative process to review the existing system of services and determine if this population can be more effectively served with one provider taking more of a leadership role. If NAMI’s estimate of 6% of the population is anywhere near accurate and one considers the fact that Greenwich’s adult population, spanning from twenty to sixty years of age, is just over 30,000 people, the affected population could be close to 1,800 adults, far exceeding the combined total served by the three major providers cited above.

## **CONCLUSION**

Greenwich continues to offer its 60,000+ residents a high quality of life and some of the most exceptional human service programs available anywhere. Though the impact of the economic downturn is perhaps not quite as visible here as it is in some other communities, the recession has, in fact, taken its toll on local families, businesses, and public and private agencies.

Within the human services arena, public and private agencies have been through and continue to operate in an extremely challenging period of increasing needs and significantly decreasing resources from all their traditional sources. It is a tribute to their sound management, strong boards, and dedication to their missions that most have weathered the storm without significantly reducing critical services and leaving thousands of people un-served. But with the increasing likelihood that the challenging times are not improving at a rate most would like to see, and, in fact, are likely to

become even more challenging in terms of future government support, the question of how long the network of local providers can sustain itself becomes a very real and reasonable concern.

Though Greenwich residents have often noted that the community is far more diverse economically, culturally and ethnically than people realize, even those who live here may be surprised to see the actual numbers cited in the full Needs Assessment report. There is reason to celebrate this increasing diversity and see it as one of the community's great assets, but there is equally strong reason, particularly in these difficult times, to share these numbers with others throughout the region who like to erroneously view Greenwich as a homogenous suburb in which all residents have all the resources they need to care for themselves.

Greenwich has a reputation for taking care of its own, leading many to believe that we either have no needs, or that the few needs that do exist can be addressed by the local community without any external support. The community has managed to deal with this for many years, and is, perhaps, a victim of its own success. It is certainly true that there are fewer hungry people in Greenwich than there are in many big cities. But it is also true that the hungry person living in Greenwich is no less hungry, nor less deserving of assistance, than the hungry person living somewhere else. In good times, the Greenwich community has been able to care for those who needed assistance and there is little reason to believe that the community will be any less caring moving forward. But should this relentlessly slow recovery continue to tax local organizations and already stressed sources of support, one would hope that this report can be useful in educating others on the extent of local needs and the compelling arguments for others to step up and be part of the solutions.

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