



**MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact: David Parker, Director
USC, School of Medicine, Supportive Housing Services**

HOUSING FIRST NEEDS YOU!

Columbia, S.C. (June 16, 2008) – John is a single, older man with a lifetime history of mental health problems, seizures, substance use and other physical health issues. Living on the streets for the past 10 years, he started drinking when he was 9, and quit school at 13. At 15, he lived in a group home. After multiple sessions of electro-shock therapy, he has impaired memory which impacts his ability to take his seizure medication. He lives in shelters when he can; otherwise he is on the street. He visits the emergency room often, more than 20 times in the last year.

John is one person, but there are many like him. Housing First helps people break free from the web of homelessness by providing housing to chronically homeless persons not eligible for other programs. We connect people with employment, medical care, mental health and substance abuse treatment. We work with people interested in helping themselves end the cycle of homelessness by housing them first.

‘Imagine not having a place to live, what would you do? How would homelessness impact your health, income and family? Housing should be a right, not a luxury – especially for the disabled in our community. This is our philosophy.’ said David Parker, Director of Supportive Housing Services at USC, School of Medicine. David Kunz, Executive Director of The Cooperative Ministry on TCM’s role ‘The Cooperative Ministry has always counted it a privilege to help meet our community’s acute needs as they arise. We are once again honored to join forces with our partner agencies to meet the immediate needs of our community.’

We ask for your help to furnish 25 one bedroom apartments. If you have items to donate, please bring them Saturday, June 21 or Saturday, June 28 from 9.00A until 12.00p, to the Cooperative Ministry located at 3821 West Beltline Boulevard, Columbia, SC 29204.

Items needed: *Single beds with frames *Dinette sets *End tables& night stands
 *Chests of drawers *Sofa/love seat * Chairs

For questions or additional information, please contact David Parker at 803.343.3437 or David.Parker@uscmcd.sc.edu Housing First is a partnership between the USC, School of Medicine and Columbia Housing Authority, funded by the City of Columbia.

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