

Community Fund helps shelter

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To the Editor: Shelter for the Homeless is deeply appreciative of the \$30,000 grant awarded by the **Community Fund** of Darien and for the \$2,250 Youth Grant Award. In these tough economic times we are seeing a 20% increase in clients seeking emergency shelter. There has also been an increase in our clients average length of stay from three months to six months. Additionally, governmental and corporate funding has been decreasing.

Shelter for the Homeless in Stamford operates the only men's regional emergency shelter serving the **communities** of Stamford, Greenwich, Darien and New Canaan. In operation for more than 20 years, Shelter for the Homeless serves more than 500 clients annually at its Pacific House emergency shelter, providing an average of 37,000 meals and 29,000 "bed nights."

In addition to emergency shelter, Shelter for the Homeless provides a number of programs designed to help homeless men and women attain self-sufficiency. These programs include employment development services, an alcohol and drug addiction recovery program, and a host of case management and referral services.

Shelter for the Homeless also operates Berkeley House, a drug and alcohol free **community** that provides transitional housing for up to 12 men in a supervised setting, providing them with the life skills needed for independent living.

While Shelter for the Homeless has been able to maintain the same level of services for our clients, as the need increases and the funding decreases, the resources are being dangerously stretched.

This is why the grants from The **Community Fund** of Darien are so vitally important to help the Shelter for the Homeless continue to be a haven of hope for the homeless men in the area.

Many thanks to all the residents of Darien who contributed to the **Community Fund** of Darien. You are our partners in working towards a better **community** for everyone.

Rafael Pagan Jr.

Stamford The writer is executive director of Shelter for the Homeless.