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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SWFAS TO OPEN HOUSING
FOR THE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS**

Chronically homeless individuals will have a place to call home beginning July 7, when Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS) opens its newest long-term housing for persons recovering from substance abuse and mental health disorders.

A ribbon-cutting is set for Mon., July 7, at 10 a.m. at the SWFAS Transitional Living Center (TLC) at 2542 Grand Avenue in central Fort Myers. Among those expected to attend are Lee County Human Services representatives and other officials.

The newest housing for the chronic homeless provides individual bedrooms for nine individuals in a series of duplexes on Grand Avenue in central Fort Myers. Residents, many of whom come through SWFAS' Detoxification Center, may remain in the housing as long as they live a drug-free lifestyle, obtain work, and pay monthly rent that is based on their income.

Individuals are considered to be chronically homeless if they have had four episodes of homelessness in the past three years or if they have been continuously homeless for at least one year.

While the Transitional Living Center campus is expanding, SWFAS' Detoxification Center is turning away more than 150 people per month because there is no room at the 25-bed facility. SWFAS is in the middle of a \$9.5 million capital campaign to build a new Detoxification Center on Evans Avenue in Fort Myers.

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“The Transitional Living Center is a vivid example of the success residents in recovery can have with treatment and support. The residents who live here become a cohesive unit, supporting each other, and instituting their own social structure, like pot luck suppers and a neighborhood watch,” said Transitional Living Center Director Rosemary Boisvert. “It’s a way to teach them to be responsible for their own community.”

Boisvert said demand for the new housing is high and she expects the beds to be filled within the month.

The new housing for the chronic homeless was built with \$860,000 in grants from the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP), in partnership with the Lee County Board of County Commissioners, the Community Development Block Grant program, and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

The TLC provides residential treatment for 35 men and women with drug and/or alcohol problems in either a short-term residential program (one month) or in a four to six-month transitional living program. Permanent supportive housing also is offered for an additional 34 individuals and up to two families in a variety of duplexes on the TLC campus that stretches from Dixie Parkway to Grand Avenue in central Fort Myers.

SWFAS is the most comprehensive substance abuse treatment and prevention program in Southwest Florida, serving 6,000 people per year from ages 9 to 90. SWFAS offers outpatient and residential programs for both adults and youngsters from seven locations in Lee County and two in Hendry County. In addition, SWFAS provides detoxification services for adults, prevention programming, and an Employee Assistance Program for about 60 Southwest Florida businesses.

Fees are charged on a sliding scale, based on family income. In many cases, private insurance is accepted. SWFAS is a United Way agency.

For more information, contact Boisvert at 338-2977 or visit www.swfas.org.