



August 25, 2008

**PUBLIC HEARING ON CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND
EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER) (June 1, 2007 to May 31, 2008)
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE KANE COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK
GRANT STAFF**

My name is Buzz Hays and I represent the Leagues of Women Voters in Kane County, Illinois. The League welcomes the opportunity to inform you about the housing needs of persons with mental illness and developmental disabilities. The League is a multi-issued organization committed to open, responsive government, brought about through informed, involved citizens.

In November, 2007, the Leagues of Women Voters of Kane County completed its two-year study on investigating community services for adults with serious mental illness (MI) and developmental disabilities (DD) in Kane County. One of the major conclusions of this study was that "There is a critical shortage of housing options for the mentally ill and developmentally disabled in our communities. An increase in community-based housing options...needs to be immediately addressed from 24 hour supervised group homes to supported independent living arrangements. An array of qualified agencies/organizations should partner in order to create and sustain housing." www.lwvgenstc.org/mhdd_study/

Persons with serious mental illnesses are warehoused in nursing homes and reside in prisons and jails. Both the MI and the DD population will have nowhere to live when older caregivers die. Many family members live outside of the county and lack a family support system. Besides creating new housing, many of the existing housing will need to be retained and improved by providing rehabilitation assistance. The League acknowledges that to correct this critical need government assistance, in this case (CDBG) is paramount.

I am here today to comment on the CAPER. We do know that past funding allocations are totally inadequate and do not meet the needs of housing for persons with serious mental illness and developmental disabilities.

We ask that future funding requests examine and address the housing (rehab, creation of new units, rental and supportive options) for persons with serious mental illness and developmental disabilities. The League continues to research whether this is an issue that should be addressed under the Fair Housing Laws, the Rehabilitation Act and ADA.

Sincerely,

Buzz Hays
Leagues of Women Voters in Kane County