



New York Nightly News with Chuck Scarborough January 22, 2008

Chuck Scarborough: New York Governor Eliot Spitzer unveiled a State budget plan today that would increase spending about 5%, which is smaller than recent increases. It includes affordable housing credits for New York City and the area around New York City. Long Island reporter, Carolyn Gusoff shows us one innovative program that's already using credits to help homeless people settle in the suburbs.

Carolyn Gusoff: It's lunch time at the Rhodes' home.

Emma Rhodes: Macaroni!

Carolyn Gusoff: Seems routine, but it's actually quite remarkable because just a year ago, Juanique Rhodes did not seem like she'd ever have a home.

Juanique Rhodes: I lived in this abandoned shack for a while. You know, going in and out of there to get high.

Carolyn Gusoff: Prostituting to support a drug habit, Juanique gave birth to one child addicted to heroin and another that she abandoned at the hospital.

Juanique Rhodes: I was smoking crack cocaine, while I was in labor and the next thing you know, my water broke and I left her in the hospital. I left her because I still wanted to go get high.

Alexander Roberts: Juanique, as you know, was an addict for almost 20 years. What made the difference? We believe it was supportive housing.

Carolyn Gusoff: Supportive housing is a different approach to the homeless problem. Instead of herding homeless people into temporary shelters, supportive housing finds permanent homes in residential neighborhoods and then follows up with support services, like job placement and drug rehab. It sounds expensive, but proponents say it actually saves money. Community Housing Innovations buys the homes with government aid and then rents them to homeless people. One hundred so far on Long Island.

Alexander Roberts: It's much less expensive than the old way, in which the homeless were put in shelters where they require 24 hour security; they have social workers on

staff; they have to provide food, which is very expensive. Here, she lives in an apartment. She does her own shopping. She cooks for herself.

Carolyn Gusoff: Neighbors have no idea that once homeless people are living among them, and the organization wants to keep it that way. In Juanique's neighborhood, there's been acceptance.

Neighbor: I don't mind as long as they're, you know, trying to better themselves and they are working. Everybody deserves a chance and I don't think you should discriminate against them for that.

Carolyn Gusoff: It's been a second chance for Juanique. She pays about \$500/ month for this one bedroom – about 30% of what she earns. She has a job, has been reunited with her daughter and wakes up in a bed.

Juanique Rhodes: As opposed to waking up in a car or a shack. It's a big difference. I love it.

Carolyn Gusoff: Governor Spitzer's proposed budget includes a \$400 million infusion into housing initiatives like this one. Juanique says, "It works."

Juanique Rhodes: When I was out there using, I used to say to myself: "This can't be my fate. This can't be my fate." And, it wasn't.

Carolyn Gusoff: Carolyn Gusoff for News Channel 4.