

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) announced that Franklin County DIAL SELF, Inc. will receive \$285,000 annually in grant funds over the next 3 years from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The funding will be used to provide a comprehensive array of outreach, prevention, and safe shelter services for homeless and at-risk youth through the DIAL/SELF TeenLine and North Quabbin programs.

Olver said, "I applaud the great work being done by Franklin County DIAL SELF on behalf of vulnerable youth in western Massachusetts. DIAL SELF has a long and successful history in our community for running effective and innovative programs. This funding will allow DIAL SELF to continue to develop and expand their services to positively impact more area youth."

The funded TeenLine and North Quabbin programs will include: street and school-based outreach services; professional resource and referral services; case coordination for high-risk youth; individual and family counseling; and a wide variety of positive youth development programs for up to 1,000 youth, ages 13-21.

The programs will also incorporate a number of innovative components, including an expansion of the NightOwl Teen Warming Center, the development of Kinship/Host Homes for homeless youth, and the operation of the first Safe Places program in MA. The Safe Places program will work with local businesses and institutions to establish "safe places" (that will be identified by stickers on storefront windows) where youth may go to ask for help. The person on duty would then call DIAL SELF, which would send a staff person to assess needs and offer assistance.

In addition to these grants, the agency was recently awarded a \$1,343,239 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development to purchase and rehabilitate a building in Greenfield to create 10 units of affordable and supportive housing for homeless youth between the ages of 18-25. That project is scheduled to be completed and ready for occupancy by February 1st.

DIAL/SELF Youth & Community Services is an independent, community-based, non-profit organization whose mission is to create opportunities, services and programs that promote the health and positive development of youth and communities in Western Massachusetts. Other DIAL/SELF programs include the Step Program, YouthServe AmeriCorps, ACT Volunteer Center, the RISE Program, and TeenHousing. Since 1977, DIAL/SELF has assisted more than 17,000 local youth on their journey toward becoming healthy, productive, and independent adults. In addition to the HHS contracts, DIAL/SELF is funded through a contract with the Massachusetts Service Alliance, the Community Coalition for Teens, the Community Foundation of Western MA, other private foundations, and donations from individuals. For more information see <http://www.dialself.org> or contact David Voegelé at 413-774-7054 x107.

###