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DELAWARE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY NEWS RELEASE

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Delaware State Housing Authority and Friendship House Present “Snapshots from the Often Overlooked – A Photovoice Project”

Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) and Friendship House of Wilmington today celebrated the launch of “Snapshots from the Often Overlooked,” an exhibit for a Photovoice project created by residents of Andrew’s Place, a homeless shelter for men over age 55 located at Saints Andrew and Matthew Episcopal Church. Gallery space at The Crosby Hill Building at 605 Market Street was generously provided by the Buccini-Pollin Group. The participant’s from Andrew’s place spent two months taking pictures of subjects that are most pertinent to them. The exhibit of 35 photos focused on three themes: What is a home?, People, and Public Spaces. Several of the photographers were on hand to discuss their project and its impact.

Bill Perkins, Director of Friendship House, said, “If I were to state one accomplishment of this Photovoice project, it is the transformative effect it has already had on the lives of the men who participated. In communicating their observations and feelings through photographs, they have realized a new sense of purpose in their lives.”

Delaware State Housing Authority Director Sandy Johnson noted, “The Photovoice Project is a creative force that has stirred the hearts and minds of everyone involved. These photos, created by homeless individuals, send such a powerful message and have the ability to alter long-held beliefs about what it means to be homeless and what we can do to help. You cannot view them and not be deeply touched and moved to end homelessness.”

Photovoice is a grassroots approach to creating social and legislative change originally developed in 1994 by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris, who worked to improve the lives of women in the rural Yunnan province in China. Since that time, Photovoice has gained popularity among researchers. The Photovoice methodology has proven to be an effective mechanism for identifying problems unique to a particular marginalized population — in this case homeless men over age 55 — and then communicating these issues to policymakers. Photovoice focuses on a research strategy that enables people to record and reflect their community’s strengths and challenges, promote a dialogue about important issues through group discussion and photographs, and engage policymakers who have the ability to affect changes.

The Photovoice Project, “Snapshots of the Often Overlooked,” will be included in Wilmington’s Art Loop on February 6th and subsequently through a network of 100 Delaware churches and other public events. For more information about the Photovoice Project, please contact Valerie Miller, Delaware State Housing Authority, 18 The Green, Dover, Delaware 19901, (888) 363-8808, or send an email to Valerie@destatehousing.com

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