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Contacts: Kate Seif, National Alliance to End Homelessness, 202-942-8281, kseif@naeh.org
Nicole Macri, DESC, 206-515-1514, nmacri@desc.org

DESC honored with 2012 national achievement award for addressing homelessness

Seattle, WA - DESC, serving the Puget Sound/Seattle community since 1979, will be recognized by the National Alliance to End Homelessness for their continued efforts in ending homelessness. The purpose of the Alliance awards ceremony, the preeminent national event focusing on homelessness, is to bring attention to the role that every sector of society has to play in finding and implementing the solutions to this national problem.

DESC was selected to receive the Alliance's **2012 Nonprofit Sector Achievement Award** for their ongoing efforts to end homelessness, particularly among those whose struggle with homelessness is compounded with mental illness and substance abuse. DESC is the Northwest's most comprehensive provider of services for chronically homeless adults, including three emergency shelters serving over 4,000 people annually, 900 units of permanent supportive housing, mental healthcare, addiction treatment, employment support and crisis diversion programs.

Stretching the bounds of accepted practices, DESC demonstrates that creative, assertive and holistic approaches work best for vulnerable homeless men and women living with mental illnesses, substance addictions, and developmental disabilities. All DESC services are predicated on the concept of Housing First and the simple premise that clinical and social stabilization occur faster and are more enduring when the chaos of homelessness is eliminated from someone's life. A safe and healthy place to live should be the first treatment goal. Through this model, DESC has helped thousands improve their housing stability and health status, and has demonstrated significant systems cost avoidance. DESC's innovative programs have earned recognition regionally and nationally including Washington's Friend of Housing Award, the Maxwell Award for Excellence, and the Home for Every American Award, among others. DESC's research article on 1811 Eastlake published in the Journal of American Medical Association was recognized as one of The Top Five Most Influential Research Articles of 2009 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Earlier this year, DESC co-hosted the nation's first ever Housing First Partners' Conference. DESC also provides technical assistance to homeless service providers throughout the United States and is the author of the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT).

The National Alliance to End Homelessness, the nation's leading voice on ending homelessness, presents annual achievement awards to organizations which have made significant contributions in the struggle to end homelessness from their positions in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. In addition to DESC's Nonprofit Sector Achievement Award, NAEH will present its Private Sector Achievement Award to Funders Together and its Public Sector Achievement Award to Douglas County (Nebraska) Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson. Past Nonprofit Sector Achievement Award recipients include The Road Home, Salt Lake City, UT; UNITY of Greater New Orleans; Anthony Love for his work in Houston, TX; Central City Concern, Portland, OR; Hamilton Family Center, San Francisco, CA; and HEARTH (Helping Elders At Risk Through Homes), Boston, MA.

In response to news of this award. DESC Executive Director Bill Hobson stated, "It is an immense honor to receive this recognition from the National Alliance to End Homelessness. The Alliance represents the largest network of homeless service providers, and is the single most influential policy advocacy organization in the country focused on addressing homelessness. We are grateful for this honor."

The awards ceremony will take place at the **Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC at 7:30 pm on July 17, 2012**. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.endhomelessness.org. For more information about DESC, visit www.desc.org.

