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Project Renewal's MedVan Destroyed in Fire Mobile Clinic Served Poor and Homeless in New York City

NEW YORK, May 12, 2008 – **Project Renewal**, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing everything New York's homeless need to move from the street to healthy independent living, suffered the loss of its mobile medical clinic, MedVan, today in a sudden fire. Flames rapidly destroyed the vehicle while it was parked and preparing to see patients at The Doe Fund site in Manhattan at 155th Street and 8th Avenue.

Fortunately, no one was injured, thanks to a very rapid response by the staff in spotting the smoke condition and exiting the vehicle safely. The fire department responded within minutes but was unable to save the vehicle. The vehicle had been in service for more than 10 years, but the cause of the engine fire was not known.

The staff of the Medvan provide a valuable service to homeless men and women in New York City and are currently developing plans to avoid disruptions in service. "While we are thankful that no one was hurt in the fire," says Edward Geffner, President & CEO of Project Renewal, "this is a huge blow to our healthcare program. Men and women depend on us and have built trusting relationships with the doctors and nurses on the MedVan." Project Renewal will try to cover part of the schedule with its second mobile clinic until the MedVan can be replaced. Estimates run close to \$350,000 for a new vehicle and medical equipment.

MedVan visits 15 locations in Manhattan, Harlem and Brooklyn six days a week including shelters, soup kitchens and drop-in centers. The 37-foot MedVan is equipped with two exam rooms and staffed by a team including a physician, a physician assistant, psychiatrist, social worker, nurse practitioner, and driver/aide who is also an EMT. MedVan offers preventive, urgent, and HIV/AIDS services in addition to primary care to approximately 2,000 men and women annually, regardless of insurance or legal status.

In 1986, the organization launched MedVan, the nation's first mobile primary care clinic for homeless people. Project Renewal also currently operates four other Primary Care Clinics, licensed by the State of New York, including the **StreetSmart** van, a mobile primary care clinic for homeless youth and **ScanVan**, a mobile radiology clinic providing breast health and tuberculosis screening. In 2004, they opened their **Dental Clinic**, the first such unit dedicated to serving homeless New Yorkers.

About Project Renewal

Project Renewal's mission is to end homelessness in New York City by providing homeless men and women all of the services they need to move from the streets and attain health, homes, and jobs. We focus our efforts on the neediest of the City's homeless - men and women who struggle with addiction and mental illness. Our

comprehensive outreach begins on the street where our mobile psychiatric and medical teams reach homeless people where they are struggling to survive. Once connected, we then help them move into treatment programs through which our clients recover their health and learn to manage their mental illness or achieve sobriety. From there, we help them prepare for, find, and keep jobs, providing both a means of support and renewed self-esteem. Housing is the last element in this progression, completing our clients' return to a self-sufficient life in the community.

Having helped thousands of indigent New Yorkers renew their lives, Project Renewal, celebrating its 40th anniversary, is proud to be regarded as one of the nation's most respected organizations working on behalf of homeless people. With a staff of nearly 600 and an annual budget of \$40 million, Project Renewal reaches out to more than 10,000 homeless men and women each year. For more information about Project Renewal and MedVan, please visit www.projectrenewal.org.

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The MedVan, Pre and Post Fire