



National Coalition for the Homeless Newsletter

NCH NEWS

December 16, 2009

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Your Donation Counts!

- [Any amount that you give to NCH this holiday season shows your dedication and concern for your neighbors experiencing homelessness. Keep an eye out for a Holiday Letter - with a special message from our Speakers' Bureau member Alan Banks - as we join together to Bring America Home this December!](#)
- [Donate Today!](#)

Letter from the Executive Director

America's Great Depression was greatly defined by the newly homeless and their creation of tent cities. As the homeless gathered in shanty towns they began calling them Hoovervilles, after the sitting president, Herbert Hoover. Unemployment grew, rural communities collapsed, industrial cities were economically shaken and both small and large businesses failed, as millions more Americans became homeless for the first time.

Currently, the United States is experiencing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and its associated social ills are surprisingly and shockingly similar. American families are once again experiencing a significant growth in poverty and double digit increases in newly homeless. Just as during the Great Depression, temporary housing has begun to dot the national landscape, from coast to coast. Tent cities can now be found in every state, ranging from large organized communities to makeshift encampments. And just as in the great depression, fair or not, the sitting president's name is now used to describe this symbol of homelessness and economic despair: Obamaville.

The federal government has begun focusing on the prevention of homelessness and the growing need to preserve and increase affordable and accessible housing. Congress created and President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which included 1.5 billion for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing. The omnibus spending package, for fiscal year 2010, includes new commitments of more than 4 billion in funds targeted for affordable housing and homelessness.

Increased funding for the existing homeless safety net of resources and services, rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention are necessary, welcome and address a vital and ongoing need. But, the scale and the scope of today's homelessness and the profound and lasting impact that the current economic crisis is having on homelessness simply dwarfs the current response.

The National Coalition for the Homeless believes that now is the time that we, as a country, must embark on a final campaign to Bring America Home. We must end homelessness once and for all, through a coordinated, comprehensive and scaled national response that addresses the housing, income, health care and civil rights and the causal factors and consequences of extreme poverty.

The National Coalition for the Homeless will soon be releasing a full report on Tent Cities. Keep an eye out at www.nationalhomeless.org

National Events

National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day

Each year since 1990, on or near the first day of winter and the longest night of the year, National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has sponsored National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and to remember our homeless friends who have paid the ultimate price for our nation's failure to end homelessness. This year, the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (NHCHC) has joined us in co-sponsoring this event.

In an effort to maximize the impact of the day, NCH and the NHCHC have encouraged local and statewide organizations to hold memorials of their own. Last year, over 100 cities across the nation, from Detroit to Seattle to Washington, DC, sponsored events to honor those who had died and to recommit to the task of ending homelessness.

This year, once again, NCH is encouraging groups to plan a special event on or around December 21, 2009. Some groups may decide to hold their event a day or so before the date. To find out more and to get involved, please visit:

<http://nationalhomeless.org/projects/memorial/index.html>

Volcom's Give Jeans a Chance Campaign in Full Swing

As a part of the Volcom Give Back Series, the Volcom clothing company and Xtreme sport promoter launched their *Give Jeans a Chance* campaign at the beginning of December. Customers can drop off any pair of old jeans in a wearable condition at your local store and be entered to win a year's supply of Volcom-brand jeans. All jeans will be donated and distributed locally through NCH's network of providers!

Already, Volcom is reporting great success, Southern California stores have been the biggest donors so far. Way to go California!!

Visit the [Volcom website](#) to find your local store or for more information about the campaign!

Upcoming Faces of Homelessness Presentations

Our Speakers' Bureau is busy as usual this Winter. To find out more information about when and where these presentations are happening, please visit: [The Speakers' Bureau Gig Schedule](#).

If you are interested in attending any of these events, please contact Michael O'Neill, moneill@nationalhomeless.org.

GreatNonprofits 2009 Food and Shelter Awards

GreatNonprofits has launched the 2009 Food and Shelter Awards (www.greatnonprofits.org/foodandshelter). In partnership with Care2, Feeding America, The National Alliance to End Homelessness, the National Coalition for the Homeless, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and GuideStar, the Awards will recognize the top-rated nonprofits making a difference in homeless and hunger in your communities.

Make sure your nonprofit takes this free opportunity to shine! Ask your volunteers, clients, supporters, and board members to post reviews about their experiences with you. Contest deadline: **December 22, 2009**.

It's quick and easy! Get started today at: www.greatnonprofits.org/foodandshelter

Policy Updates

Letter to Barbara Poppe

The National Coalition for the Homeless, in partnership with the Homeless Advocates Group, has been in contact with the new Executive Director of the Interagency Council on Homelessness, Barbara Poppe. The Homeless Advocates Group sent a letter to Barbara Poppe detailing six recommendations that will contribute to an effective plan to end homelessness:

1. Commit to End Homelessness Now, with Public Participation
2. Increase Access to Affordable Housing
3. Expand Access to Affordable Health Services
4. Ensure Adequate Incomes
5. Ensure Access to Childhood Education
6. Protect Against Discrimination

Barbara Poppe has agreed to meet with Advocates to discuss the ICH's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

NHTF Allocation Formula Released; State Estimates Available

The proposed regulations governing how National Housing Trust Fund funds will be allocated were published in the Federal Register on December 4. The regulations were developed by HUD. The proposed allocation formula is consistent with the intent of the National Housing Trust Fund to serve the lowest income households where the need for housing production is the greatest by giving a combined weight of 75% to the two factors in the formula that address the needs of ELI renter households.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition has released estimates as to how much money each state and territory will receive when the NHTF receives the initial \$1 billion in funding.

Murray-Franken Bills to Support the Education of Homeless Children

On Thursday, November 19, US Senators Patty Murray and Al Franken introduced the "Educational Success for Children and Youth Without Homes Act of 2009," S. 2800, and the "Fostering Success in Education Act of 2009," S. 2801.

For more information on the bill and action steps please visit: <http://naehcy.org/update.html#mv>

Federal Homelessness Appropriations

The President is expected to sign into law level funding or increases for homeless assistance programs, including a \$188 million increase for McKinney-Vento programs. A complete list of FY2010 spending levels for homeless assistance programs may be found at: <http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/policy/legislature/federalbudget>.

Other News

Georgetown Medical Program Brings Students and Homeless Face to Face

On Friday, December 4, 10 speakers led round table discussions with more than 200 medical students at Georgetown University. Their focus was on the health care system, treatment and medical issues that effect the homeless.

NPR was on hand to cover the event. Their article can be found at:
<http://wamu.org/news/09/12/04.php#30745>

Thank You Lands' End!

The Big Warm Up was a Great Success: Thank you to Land's End!

NCH extends a sincere thank you to all who donated and who helped distribute coats through the Big Warm Up in November! With over 33,000 coats donated at 270 stores nationwide, you helped to warm many hearts this winter.

NCH also wishes to thank Land's End for their caring partnership in the project. The Big Warm Up would not have been as successful without the dedication and hard work of the Land's End staff and management. Thank you for supporting the work of the National Coalition for the Homeless and for helping to Bring America Home.

For more info about this project and its success, please visit: www.BigWarmUp.com

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