

# NCH . NEWS . . .

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Hello,

This is the January issue of NCH News.

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## **New E-Book: Beating Poverty**

The e-book Beating Poverty by Lori Covington, in the author's words a "how-to for have-nots", is now [available online](#).

The book provides practical tips on procuring essentials such as housing and work, as well as building self-esteem and trust in others.

The book can be read in it entirety on [Lori's weblog](#), and is free to distribute. To receive it in PDF or Word format, contact the author at [lorecovi@yahoo.com](mailto:lorecovi@yahoo.com).

## **Rehoboth Congregational Youth Take on Homelessness**

NCH received the following from Kim Silvia, Youth Group Director for Rehoboth Congregational Church:

"Hi, this is Kim Silvia up here in Rehoboth, Massachusetts....you may say where the heck is REHOBOTH! We came down to work for YSOP in Washington, D.C. in July and your organization was nice enough to spend time with our group of 30 discussing homelessness and how our high school kids and adults could help! Well they did just that thanks to YOU! They came back and did two things:

"They created a club to protest hate crimes 'bum fights' and encouraged people to call their representatives. AND they held a Homelessness Awareness Weekend on the weekend of Nov. 9th in the center of Town where 50 kids camped out in cardboard boxes two nights where the temp was in the low 30's! They received pledges for the weekend and panhandled by day at stores and traffic lights. They also prepared 300 meals at the Church and delivered to Crossroads of RI to serve. The whole town was aware and donating! They raised over \$10,000.00 and money is still coming in. People are still collecting from employers etc....It is incredible. Keep doing the great work that you are doing! We are giving the money raised to Crossroads of Rhode Island and soup kitchens."

...bethesdahosting.com/.../397\_2007...

## **NCH on the Road**

### **Upcoming Faces of Homelessness Speaking Engagements**

- January 2nd United Methodist Church (UNC Chapel Hill)
- January 7th United Methodist Church (College of St. Rose)
- January 7th Pilgrimage (Iona College)
- January 9th Lynchburg College at Hotel Harrington-downtown DC
- January 10th Fairland Library in Burtonsville, MD
- January 11th Religious Action Center at Marriott Crystal Gateway
- January 12th Pilgrimage (Elon University)
- January 14th St Norbert College at NCH
- January 19th Pilgrimage (Chestertown Presbyterian)
- January 20th PANIM at Holiday Inn Central
- January 20th PANIM at Washington Marriott
- January 25th Religious Action Center at Marriott Crystal Gateway
- January 29th Brentsville District High School in Nokesville, VA

## **Seattle Passes Law Against Homeless Harrassment**

Seattle City Council has passed an ordinance extending its law against malicious harassment to protect people experiencing homelessness.

Previously, the law treated as misdemeanors threats or attacks against individuals or their property specifically due to criteria such as age and gender. It excluded homelessness, however.

According to Brenda Anibarro, Policy Analyst for the Seattle Office for Civil Rights, NCH reports were "extremely helpful to the Seattle Human Rights Commission to illustrate the depth and severity of the issue to councilmembers."

"Seattle is saying loudly and clearly that we want to be a city of love, not of hate, and of tolerance, not of intolerance," *The Seattle Times* quoted Council President Nick Licata.

## **Jethro Tull's Special Guests**

**By Jony Bell**

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On Monday, December 3, Development Director Megan Hustings and Development Associate Jonathan Bell attended "An Evening with Jethro Tull" at Strathmore in Bethesda, MD.

NCH was contacted by front-man Ian Anderson about a possible donation of proceeds from Jethro Tull's release of *Aqualung Live*. He was eager to meet with us, generously providing two tickets and backstage passes. While the concert was fantastic, we were most excited about "shaking elbows" with Ian Anderson!

## **It's Just a Game!**

**By Jony Bell**

In recent months, NCH has become very involved with the online network called Facebook. This "social utility" – as it calls itself – is meant to connect people who live, work and study close to each other as well as provide a means by which to keep in touch with friends, share photos, music and videos and learn more about the people they meet.

Facebook is so popular in fact, that a recent investment from the technological giant Microsoft, valued the social site at over \$15 billion!

NCH has benefited from this networking 'hangout spot' by spreading our message to young people around the world, as well as connecting with other like-minded organizations. Even NCH's own Speaker's Bureau has a popular Facebook page!

Unfortunately, however, there are those who choose to use their digital soap box to insult and degrade the image of others. A recent perusal of the latest Facebook applications uncovered a game called 'Hobowars'. It is in fact its own site with two versions of the 'hobo' role-playing game. More than 270,000 people are members of this application which encourages users to train and fight their hobos against others to gain strength, items and rank. Hobos can join gangs, sell cans they find on the street and even prostitute themselves.

While these things only help to strengthen stereotypes often associated with those living on the streets, the game itself was not what shocked me the most. In response to the game being played by so many people on Facebook and all across the internet, I posted a comment on the networking site. My comment was mostly aimed at educating people about the facts related to homelessness. I pointed them towards our website, reminding them of the millions of people that are homeless each year, including many, many youth.

The responses my post received were astounding. I was flabbergasted by people's perceptions of the homeless. . .

"Get a life, loser. Homeless people suck."

"[Homeless people] need to get off their asses and get to work . . . people are the source of their own redemption."

"I work my ass off to be able to play this game in my house on my computer. Nobody but themselves made them homeless and it's up to them to get through it."

"There is a thing called insurance; if people were too stupid to have insurance on their house then they get what they deserve."

"So what if a third of the countries homeless people are this or that. Bottom line, they are homeless and need to get a f\*\*\*in' job."

"We should round them all up and lock them away somewhere."

Since coming to work with NCH just a couple of months ago, my ideas of what a "homeless person" is have been completely destroyed. Mainly through speaking one-on-one with many of our Speaker's Bureau members, I have come to appreciate more and more their circumstances while becoming more and more disappointed and angry with comments such as these.

While I do not believe that a game like this can solely be the cause for misunderstandings of the homeless or hate crimes against them, I do think that one comment in response to my post sums up my anguish over this application.

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“Representing the homeless as sloppy, drunk, violent, subhuman creatures who are pawns in a game will never open a forum of awareness. It is infinitely more likely that these images will rather ingrain a dehumanizing image in the player's mind.”

## Support NCH with SunTrust's MyCause

SunTrust customers can have the bank donate \$100 to a cause of their choice through its new YourCause program.

YourCause is available to customers who open a new business or personal checking account by the end of the year. It is also available to customers who accept and make a purchase with a new SunTrust Visa Check Card by February 15, 2008, or who complete and submit a redemption form by February 15, 2008.

For more information on YourCause, visit: <https://promotion.suntrust.com/mycause/>

## STREATS DVD Available

A DVD featuring the first three episodes of STREATS (Striving To Reach Educate And Transform Society) is now available from Ragidy Entertainment. The program, which appears on public access television in DC, Maryland and Virginia, takes a "satirical yet serious" look at the everyday experiences of people experiencing homelessness. Homeless individuals are involved in producing and marketing the program and the DVD.

The DVD includes the episodes "Gotta Go", "Eat This", and "Open Wide". The episodes focus on the difficulties people experiencing homelessness face in satisfying their needs for hygiene, food and healthcare.

To order the DVD, or for more information, go to: <http://www.streats.tv/index1024.html>

## NCH Mourns Two Heroes of Homelessness

NCH was saddened to learn of the passing of two outstanding contributors to the struggle to end homelessness.

James “Jimmy” Heath, who died December 13th at 53, the editor of Cincinnati's *Streetvibes* newspaper and a former NCH Congressional Fellow. Formerly homeless himself, Jimmy received numerous honors for his social justice work, among them the Jimmy Render Award for Homeless Activism and the Maurice McCracken Peace and Justice Award.

Jimmy was also an accomplished photographer. Some of his work can be viewed at <http://www.jimmyheath.org/>.

Julia Carson, who died on December 15th, had been the member of the House of Representatives for Indiana's 7th district since 1997. Prior to serving in this office, Carson had been elected trustee for Center Township, Indiana; member of the Indiana Senate; and member of the Indiana House of Representatives.

A tired advocate for civil and human rights, Representative Carson introduced, with Representative Geoff Davis, Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2007, which reauthorized the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. She also introduced, with Representative John Conyers, the [Bringing America Home Act](#), the most comprehensive legislation yet introduced addressing the problem of homelessness.

They will be missed.

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