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Hello,



Thank you for signing up NCH's newsletter. If you are interested in becoming a member of NCH and receiving our monthly newsletter as well, please contact Molly Neck at mneck@nationalhomeless.org.

This is the Summer edition of Safety Network and the first edition of the e-newsletter format. we hope you enjoy the new format.

Information on how to unsubscribe is found at the bottom of this email. If you would like to receive a print version of this newsletter please contact mneck@nationalhomeless.org.

The photograph on the right is a portrait from the Images of Homelessness Exhibit.

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Philly Has the Answer to Homelessness? Believe it, or Not

by Roosevelt Darby, Jr. NCH Board Member & Deputy Director at The Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness.

There's an old saying – believe none of what you hear and only half of what you see. This may sound extremely pessimistic, but when it comes to Philadelphia promoting the reduction of street homelessness, I'm inclined to believe the statement has merit.

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Ever since Kevin Fagan, staff writer for the San Francisco Chronicle wrote about the reduction in street homelessness in Philadelphia, Success in the City of Brotherly Love. The city that knows how – Philly. Effort stems tide of homelessness – can S.F. learn from it? (June 13, 2004), Philadelphia has become the darling of many other cities seeking to learn how they can do the same.

But wait. Not so fast! Those of us close to the issue of homelessness in Philadelphia know that this is clearly a case of the emperor having no clothes.

In the article Mr. Fagan writes: "...you have to look long and hard to find a single panhandler or homeless person of any kind, anywhere along Market Street." His statement is clearly an exaggeration. One need only walk one block south to Chestnut Street, or another block south to Walnut Street, or better yet walk up Market Street to the Ben Franklin Parkway and you'll discover that the street homeless have not disappeared at all.

Granted; the number of homeless living on the street since the early 90s has been reduced. But to say "...the City of Brotherly Love ...has solved its problem with chronic homelessness" is a huge distortion of the facts.

When it comes to homelessness in Philadelphia, it's very easy to pull the wool over peoples' eyes about 'best practices' or 'model programs'; rarely does anyone take the time to check the facts. It is not a subject one debates at the dinner table or around that proverbial water cooler. We read about it and more often than not we believe it.

With the new sidewalk behavior ordinance in Philadelphia and an ongoing police presence most of the people I talked to were smart enough to know that sleeping downtown was becoming too much of a hassle, so they moved just outside of police patrols.

Unfortunately, some of the reduction in the street population was the result of death and plenty more due to incarceration. The old and frail street dwellers benefited the most from the city's new found generosity of housing the street dwelling population.

Many of the street dwelling population come to our Day Center regularly for a shower and a change of clothes. They are what the city refers to as the chronically homeless. They number far more than the 130 people quoted in Mr. Fagan's article; further evidence that the problem has not been solved.

The bottom line is that our street count numbers were goofy from the outset. Simply stating a reduction in the number of people sleeping on the street does not constitute Philadelphia having the problem well in hand. If you believe that the majority of those who once lived on the street were taken in by the homeless system and provided housing and support, think again. Where did they go and where are the facts to back those impressive street reduction numbers?

At the end of the day it's up to us to believe or not believe what is being told to us about homelessness and the city's response to the problem. Are they just simply trying to manage a growing problem, or trying to find solutions?

After all, the mayor's point person on homelessness just eliminated homelessness prevention from the city's homeless service budget this year. I believe as most people do, that action speaks louder than words.

Housing Rights are Human Rights

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) and the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) hosted the second forum on the Right to Housing on May 4th in Washington DC. The day-long event brought together local, state and national advocates for human rights education in an effort to empower participants to bring about social change, specifically housing rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948, states "Everyone has the right to a standard living adequate for the health and well-being of himself [or herself] and of his [or her] family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care, and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his [or her] control."

Activists stressed that while the UDHR is not a binding treaty there is an opportunity to organize grassroots campaigns around the message of human rights. Local activists from the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless discussed their success with implementing human rights language into local campaigns and city council resolutions focusing on housing. Incorporating a human rights framework into both homelessness and housing advocacy is often successful in framing the message as well as educating law-makers and the general public on the importance of housing for everyone.

If you would like more information on incorporating a human rights framework into your advocacy please contact the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty or the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions.

Help support the important work of NCH. Donate today!


 Three easy ways to help:

- 1.) Send your gift to
2201 P St. NW
Washington, DC 20037-1033
- 2.) Call 202-462-4822 ext 15 and speak with Molly Neck
- 3.) Donate online at www.nationalhomeless.org

Thank you for your generosity.

You can also become a member online at www.nationalhomeless.org/joinnch.html.

Images of Homelessness Exhibit

 Images of Homelessness is the largest-ever oil painting exhibit on homelessness. Artist Tammy deGruchy chose to do the exhibit for the National Coalition for the Homeless because of its dedication to educating the general public about homelessness. The portraits are of real people who were experiencing homelessness in all regions of America--urban, rural, suburban and on Native American reservations. They were photographed with permission, interviewed and painted by the artist.

The exhibit had been on display in Jeffersonville, Indiana for the past few years. Last month the exhibit returned to Washington, DC and is on permanent display at the new National Coalition for the Homeless' office near the Dupont Circle area of Downtown Washington.

About The Artist Behind the Images of Homelessness Exhibit:

The Images of Homelessness exhibit was created by Artist Tammy deGruchy, formerly of West Virginia, who signs her paintings, Pneuma, meaning spirit. Ms. deGruchy donated all twenty-two of the original oils to the National Coalition for the Homeless
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the original oils to the National Coalition for the Homeless.

DeGruchy started the exhibit in 1998 in response to what she was reading in the news. She wanted to find out who was becoming homeless in America, and what the stories were behind the contrasting images of homelessness. DeGruchy was shocked by how homelessness was happening to so many people.

The exhibit was unveiled at a national homelessness conference in Washington, DC in 1999. The exhibit has traveled nationwide. The painting series was supposed to originally be twelve images depicting the homeless population in this country. The number of paintings grew to twenty-two, and deGruchy states that is still not enough to show the many faces of homelessness.

Tipper Gore, former Second Lady and a strong advocate on both mental health and homelessness issues, wrote deGruchy stating, "The plight of homeless Americans is of great importance to me. I especially want to commend all of those involved with the Images of Homelessness oil painting exhibit for the outstanding work they have done in illustrating this important problem we face as a nation."

Tammy deGruchy now resides in Minnesota. You may reach her at: pneuma_art@yahoo.com.


Reproductions of four of the portraits are available for \$25 each from the National Coalition for the Homeless. You can view them at www.nationalhomeless.org/publist. Please contact Molly Neck at mneck@nationalhomeless.org or 202.462.4822 ext. 15 if you would like to purchase a print.

NCH Open House

 NCH held an open house in its new location at the end of April. Here are some photos.



Give Us Your Poor

Give Us Your Poor: Homelessness & the United States is a Boston-based project to address  the national issue of homelessness through a comprehensive approach. On April 5th Give Us Your Poor launched the Bringing It Home Dinner Series. Bringing It Home is a national dinner series in homes around the country to support Give Us Your Poor and partner organizations, while raising awareness and engaging people in ways to help end homelessness. This year NCH is proud and honored to be a partner with Give Us Your Poor for the Bringing It Home Dinner Series.

At the launch party on the 5th, local supporters, educators, partners, people experiencing homelessness and formerly homeless individuals gathered to support this great initiative. Cheryl Middleton spoke about her personal experience of becoming homeless with her three children. Cheryl reminded everyone

in attendance of the importance of raising awareness of the diversity of the homeless population. Her young daughter, Kyla, sang two beautiful songs about strength and determination. John McGah, director of Give Us Your Poor, spoke eloquently about the rising need for awareness and advocacy in the struggle to end homelessness. Give Us Your Poor is producing a documentary film that explores the many faces and experiences of people experiencing homelessness in America. A fifteen-minute trailer that documents the daily experiences of people experiencing homelessness or on the verge of becoming homeless in Santa Fe New Mexico was shown.


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Give Us Your Poor alongside of NCH invite you to host a House Party to raise funds for and awareness about the struggle to end homelessness. A house party can be as formal or as casual as you choose. Give Us Your Poor and NCH will help you every step of the way to make sure that your party is a success. You will be provided with talking points, a copy of the film trailer, and a checklist for your event. The most important aspect of the Bringing It Home Dinner Series is that you are opening your home to family and friends to share your belief that ending homelessness does not just have to be a dream, but will one day be a reality with your and their support.

You will be receiving more information concerning your participation in the Bringing It Home Dinner Series soon. Please contact Molly Neck if you have questions about Give Us Your Poor or the dinner series. www.giveusyourpoor.org.

NCH Board Meeting

 The Board of Directors for the National Coalition for the Homeless gathered from around the country for its spring board meeting. This two-day meeting focused on strategic planning, program direction, and policy positions. Board members also took the time to present local reports from their communities that focused on the struggles and successes they have had throughout the past few months.

The board also elected new officers:

President: Bob Erlenbusch, LA Coalition to End Homelessness and Hunger, Los Angeles, CA
Vice President: John Parvensky, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Denver, CO
Secretary: Barbara Anderson, Haven House Services, Jeffersonville, IN
Treasurer: Sue Watlov Phillips, ELIM Transitional Housing, Minneapolis, MN

Youthful Idealism/Energy/Activism Arrive at the National Coalition for the Homeless

Each summer NCH comes alive with youthful idealism, energy and activism from college students or recent graduates who intern with us.

This summer (mid-May through mid-Sept.). we are fortunate to have nine interns with us.

Please welcome:

Kelly Fawcett, Oregon State University (OR)
Anna Fogel, Harvard University (MA)
Mickey Hubbard, Davidson College (NC).
Emmett Keller, Muskingum College (OH)
Natalie Khorochev, University of California, Berkeley (CA)
Jordan Litt, Vanderbilt University (TN)
Hanh Nguyen, Allegheny College (PA)
Amy Warnick, Allegheny College (PA)
Hunter Williams, Davidson College (NC)

Dinner at Six

"Tell them we're not bad people"

-Josie

"Let them know we want to work"

-Ray



NCH is proud to offer the moving book, Dinner at Six by Helen Hudson. In the mid-nineties Helen Hudson chose to do what thousands of volunteers do every year, work in a soup kitchen. Her story...bethesdahosting.com/.../397_2005...

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Hudson chose to do what thousands of volunteers do every year, work in a soup kitchen. Her story is different because Helen Hudson chose to engage with the guests of the many programs she volunteered with. Dinner at Six is the product of her many conversations with countless number of homeless and hungry people that ate everyday in the soup kitchens of Hartford.

The publication of this amazing awareness tool is a labor of love. Thomas Lane, Helen's son decided that their family should self-publish the book and donate the books to organizations that worked with and on the behalf of people experiencing homelessness. Since the first publication in 2002 the book has helped raise funds for organizations across New England. NCH is honored to be able to bring you another great awareness tool. This book is yet another way to place a face on the issue of homelessness.

The price of the book is pay what you can, with a suggested donation of \$15.

100% of your donation will fund the critical work of the National Coalition for the Homeless. Please contact Molly Neck to place your order today.

Molly Neck

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Calendar of Events

June 1-4, 2005:

Washington, DC. National Health Care for the Homeless Council conference. This year's conference will feature workshops, including special policy sessions presented as part of the HCH Policy Symposium. It will also feature keynote speakers, poster presentations, a resource area, and tours of local programs For more information, go to www.nhchc.org.

June 4-7, 2005:

Washington, DC. One Table Many Voices: A Mobilization to Overcome Poverty and Hunger Conference, cosponsored by Call to Renewal and Bread for the World, at American University. For more information, go to www.onetableconference.org.

June 7, 2005:

Nationwide. National Hunger Awareness Day. National Hunger Awareness Day 2005, is the grassroots movement to raise awareness about the solvable problem of hunger in America. For more information, go to www.hungerday.org.

June 27 and June 28, 2005:

The Coordinators' Training for the Walk-A-Mile Program in Seattle, Washington. Walk a Mile is a national educational program that links policymakers with their low-income constituents. For more information, please go to www.walkamile.org or call 206-543-3027.

September 6, 2005:

Nationwide. Bridging the Economic Divide. On Tuesday, September 6th 2005, the day after Labor Day, people will gather at bridges during evening rush hour across the country to support the Universal Living Wage Campaign. For more information on this event, please visit www.universallivingwage.org.

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November 13–19, 2005:

Nationwide. Each year, one week before Thanksgiving, National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness co-sponsor National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. During this week, a number of schools, communities and cities take part in a nationwide effort to bring greater awareness to the problems of hunger and homelessness. For a manual including a variety of events that you can do, please go to www.nationalhomeless.org/awareness.

December 21, 2005:

Nationwide. National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. Since 1990, NCH has sponsored National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day on or near the first day of winter (Dec. 21) to remember our homeless friends who have paid the ultimate price for our nation's failure to address the issue. Learn how you can participate in this year's Homeless Persons' Memorial Day at www.nationalhomeless.org.

Click [here](#) if you would like to be removed from this list.

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