

# NCH . NEWS . . .

NATIONAL COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS | 2201 P St NW | Washington, DC 20037  
Phone: 202.462.4822 | Fax: 202.462.4823 | INFO@NATIONALHOMELESS.ORG | WWW.NATIONALHOMELESS.ORG

NCH News -- May 2008

This is the May issue of NCH News.

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In this issue:

1. Speaker Spotlight: George Siletti
2. Upcoming Speaking Engagements
3. Students Comment on Faces of Homelessness
4. NYC's Plan to Reduce Homelessness Failing
5. Help Comfort Children in Need with Project SAFE
6. NCH Mourns Passing of Greg Horan
7. NCH Targets the "Real Bums" with New T-shirt

## Speaker Spotlight: George Siletti

Interviewed by Mike O'Neill



NCH News will now be featuring interviews with one of our speakers each month. This month, we focus on veteran speaker George Siletti.

Q: How old are you?

A: 51.

Q: Where are you from originally?

A: Long Island, NY.

Q: Where do you live now?

A: In Northwest DC, near the National Cathedral.

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

A: I like watching TV. Going to Starbucks! Going to Borders.

Q: How long have you been a speaker?

A: Since the speakers bureau started – 1996!

Q: What inspired you to become a speaker?

A: I wanted to educate people on homelessness through my personal story on living homeless.

Q: What has been your favorite or most memorable experience as a speaker?

A: When I went to Cornell in upstate New York and someone who was there knew me from when I was homeless in New York many years before.

### **Upcoming Speaking Engagements**

4/25: University of Northern Iowa

4/26: Church of the Pilgrims, DC

4/29: Youth Services Opportunities Project, DC

4/29: University of California – Santa Barbara

### **Students Comment on Faces of Homelessness**

‘Hey guys,

‘I just wanted to let you guys know that I just got back from a conference about hunger and homelessness in Storrs, CT... I think Mike's workshops that he ran were by far the best, most informational and very involving. He did a great job.

‘I also wanted to let you know that the speakers were very effective. I thought they made it easier to really understand what homelessness was all about. I went into the conference having a belief that homeless people are just lazy and that the problem doesn't really exist in the U.S. and I came out of it understanding how big of a problem it is...' – Asim Hafeez, University of Connecticut

‘I got the chance to see your Faces of Homelessness Panel and I was truly inspired by it! Their stories were amazing to listen to and they literally brought me to tears. Joanne showed to be an outstanding example of a person who really struggled to succeed in a lifestyle where she was constantly being brought down. Her story along with a mother daughter pair truly touched my heart and it made me want to find out what I can do to bring an end to homelessness.' – Melissa Salomoni, University of Connecticut

### **NYC's Plan to Reduce Homelessness Failing**

From [Picture the Homeless](#), New York

Mayor Bloomberg's five year plan to reduce homelessness and shelter population by two thirds is failing badly. In June of 2008, we'll be four years in, and by the city's own statistics they're way off track. It's still 34,457 individuals, 14,630 children in the shelter system.

In four years the city has come up with two rental subsidies to assist homeless New Yorkers move from shelter to housing. These programs - Housing Stability Plus and The Advantage Program - have caused people to lose housing, alienated landlords, and offered no clear transition from one failed program to another when they get jobs.

In October, Mayor Bloomberg committed to meet with Picture the Homeless and hear the solutions homeless people have put together in order to fix his failing five year plan. It's now nearly six months and he's still backing out of his commitment, foisting us off  
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on Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs.

Today, we met with Ms. Gibbs to get her to facilitate this meeting with the Mayor. After being kept waiting, we were told that as far as we're concerned, she is the Mayor—and when we stuck to our guns and demanded the meeting with the Mayor we were promised, she said we were disrespecting her because we weren't satisfied to meet with her. We responded that the Mayor was disrespecting homeless people by refusing to meet with them and work with them to develop solutions to his failed five-year-plan. Then we walked out.

Homeless people can't and won't be overlooked when it comes to fixing the system they're trapped in. On June 24th 2008, we'll be FOUR YEARS into his five year plan. Bloomberg has proved he doesn't care about fixing the problem. WE WILL BE MAKING NOISE.

Picture the Homeless is also planning a town hall meeting for homeless people to put forth their demands, and we'll invite the two New York City mayors (Gibbs and Bloomberg) to be guests of honor.

STAY TUNED FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

For more information contact: Nikita Price (646-314-6423). [nikita@picturethehomeless.org](mailto:nikita@picturethehomeless.org)

### **Help Comfort Children in Need with Project SAFE**

Project SAFE (Stuffed Animals for Emergencies) has just received a large number of gently used stuffed animals which are available to police, social services, hospitals and other emergency service providers by request.

Founded in 1997, Project SAFE aims to provide “a little bit of joy” to children in distressing situations. If you would like to take advantage of Project SAFE’s services, or to start your own chapter, contact Cheryl Famigletti at [cheryl@stuffedanimalsforemergencies.org](mailto:cheryl@stuffedanimalsforemergencies.org).

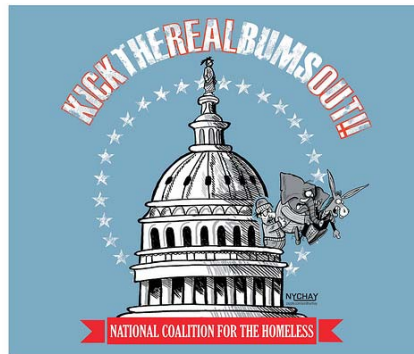
### **NCH Mourns Passing of Greg Horan**

Greg Horan, Board Member and former President of the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, passed away on Monday, March 24. He will be remembered as one of Minnesota’s most tireless advocates for people experiencing homelessness.

There is likely no organization serving the area’s homeless population that has not been influenced by Greg in some way. Over the last two decades, he founded Street Views, the state’s first street newspaper, and Twin Cities Community Voice Mail, a voicemail service for people experiencing homelessness. In addition, he participated in the St. Paul Area Coalition for the Homeless and Metro-Wide Engagement on Shelter and Housing.

To see part of the lasting impact of Greg’s work, visit the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless at <http://www.mnhomelesscoalition.org/>.

### **NCH Targets the “Real Bums” with New T-shirt**



NCH has released its latest t-shirt which demands: “Kick the Real Bums Out!!” The slogan – a brainchild of NCH’s student interns – labels as ‘bums’ members of Congress who constantly ignore or vote against programs to help people get out of homelessness and poverty. The t-shirt, which features a cartoon representation of the statement by award-winning cartoonist Scott Nychay (whose father, William, died on the streets homeless), is available for sale on NCH’s website ([www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)).

The cartoon features a drawing of the Capitol Building with a homeless man tossing an elephant and a donkey off the building’s balcony. All proceeds from the sale of the shirt will benefit two of NCH’s ongoing outreach programs: non-partisan voter registration/education/get-out-the vote efforts, which take place nationwide, and the Candidate Homeless Challenge Project, which encourages candidates/public officials at all levels of government to give up their everyday privileges for a day or more and experience what life is like homeless.

Historically, NCH has been involved with political processes from a non-partisan standpoint and aims to continue that stance. This t-shirt is not meant to target solely the Democratic and Republican parties, as representatives from all parties have been ignorant about or opposed to initiatives aimed at assisting those who are struggling through homelessness or poverty. NCH hopes that the statement this t-shirt makes will help to encourage people to contact their local representatives of Congress, urging them to pass legislation such as the ‘Bringing America Home Act’, which will help people get off the streets and provide safe, decent, affordable housing for the millions each year who find themselves homeless.

For more information about NCH and its programs, the ‘Bringing America Home’ Campaign, or how to order the t-shirt, please visit [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org).

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