

NCH . NEWS . . .

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NCH News - November 2008

This is the November issue of *NCH News*.

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Change Your Socks, Change the World

The Sierra Club invites you to purchase your next pair of socks at www.sierrasocks.com, on November 1, 2008. Our goal is to raise one million dollars for the Sierra Club - And for each pair of socks that you purchase, we will donate another pair to the National Coalition for the Homeless.

Every year, Americans purchase socks made from virgin polyester and nylon. Lots of money goes into promoting these brands without a single thought to how the product impacts our planet. Sierra Club socks are made from organic cotton, bamboo, soy and other earth friendly yarns. They're comfortable and they support Sierra Club programs. So let's do something about the five billion pairs of socks, give or take a billion, that wind up in landfills. While we're at it, let's help the homeless.

For more information or to purchase socks, please go to www.sierrasocks.com.

Speaker Spotlight: Jesse Smith



Jesse Smith, 58, has been a speaker with NCH since 2006. A native of Washington, DC, Jesse first learned about NCH during a campaign to save Franklin Shelter, in the course of which he met NCH Speakers Bureau Director Mike O'Neill. Jesse learned more about NCH from a friend involved with Street Sense (the city's street newspaper), who put him once again in touch with Mike.

"I get a real pleasure out of enlightening folks," says Jesse. He especially likes speaking to youth and college-aged audiences.

Jesse's most memorable experience as a speaker was that of speaking to the Jewish youth group PANIM. He says the experience helped him to transcend his own preconceptions, finding common ground in familiarity with experiences of poverty and depression.

In his spare time, Jesse strives to stay involved with his community. He also enjoys watching movies and playing pool with friends.

Film Recommendations from NCH



Have your own recommendations? Email swaite@nationalhomeless.org.

“8 Mile” 2002

Synopsis: In Eminem's first movie, the white rap star plays a barely disguised version of his pre-celebrity self: Jimmy Smith, Jr., a wounded young man who lives in a trailer in inner-city Detroit with his slatternly mother (Kim Basinger). During jousts at a local club, Jimmy goes up against the best black rappers and fights for the respect of the black audience. These improvised raps are his only release, a spasmodic assertion of self. Curtis Hanson, working from a script by Scott Silver, lays out the narrative and the character relationships methodically, even slowly. The movie may be a shrewdly engineered piece of proletarian pop in the tradition of "Rocky" and "Saturday Night Fever," but Eminem's vile candor gives it a convincingly gritty tone, and the great Mexican cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto ("Amores Perros") keeps the visual palette ugly and raw. With Mekhi Phifer as a local rap impresario and Brittany Murphy as a bright-eyed little mover who takes to Jimmy. (The New Yorker)

“Chop Shop” 2007

Synopsis: Alejandro, a tough and ambitious Latino street orphan on the verge of adolescence, lives and works in an auto-body repair shop in a sprawling junkyard on the outskirts of Queens, New York. In this chaotic world of adults, young Alejandro struggles to make a better life for himself and his 16-year-old sister, Isamar. (IMDB)

“Easy Street” 2006

Synopsis: Easy Street is a feature-length film that documents one year in the lives of homeless people in St. Petersburg, Florida. The viewer sees and hears first hand, how people scratch out an existence on the streets of America's urban centers. We learn how they got there and what keeps them there. This is a must see film for sociology and psychology students, advocates and service agency personnel, churches whose parishioners want to help, and anyone who feels compelled to learn more about an underclass of American society whose ranks continue to grow every year. (wideyedfilms.com)

“Have You Seen Clem?” 2005

Synopsis: Jaymo, an aspiring filmmaker, suddenly finds himself homeless and living out of his car. Desperate to find a way out, he begins shooting a documentary about the overlooked homeless people in this sharply divided society. When he meets a mysterious bum named Clem, Jaymo realizes that every homeless person has a cart full of secrets and a unique story of personal collapse to tell. Together they embark on a road trip to different cities to meet and understand more about the forgotten homeless people that struggle to live on and find contentment on the streets of America. Their eye-opening journey culminates in Nashville, where Clem seeks his ultimate revenge against the unscrupulous banker who caused his fall from grace. The soundtrack is a riveting mix of original songs performed entirely by the street musicians that the filmmakers meet as they travel across America. (IMDB)

“Homeless to Harvard: The Liz Murray Story” 2003

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Synopsis: At 15, Liz Murray finds herself living on the streets after her mentally ill, drug-addicted parents falter in their attempts to keep their family together. Instead of crumbling, the troubled teen clings to hope and determination, and works her way up and out of homelessness - all the way to Harvard University. This three-time Emmy-nominated film is based on an incredible true story. (MyLifetime.com)

“The Gleaners and I” 2000

Synopsis: The French filmmaker Agnès Varda, digital camera in hand, roams around her native country recording the movements of gleaners. Traditionally, as in the archetypal Millet painting, gleaners were women who gathered the remains of the harvest; their modern counterparts are mostly scavengers, searching in dumpsters and other likely places. The French, of course, give the practice a wonderfully perverse twist – many gleaners do so by choice, disdainful of wastefulness and rampant consumerism. (The New Yorker)

“Kicking It” 2008

Synopsis: In the summer of 2006, while the football world's attention was focused on Germany, thousands of players around the globe were training hard and competing to be part of another World Cup ... The Homeless World Cup. It had been a wild idea by a Scot and an Austrian -- to give homeless people a chance to change their lives through an international street soccer competition. Five years later, the annual Homeless World Cup had become an internationally recognized sports competition. 500 homeless players from 48 nations would ultimately be selected to represent their country in Cape Town, South Africa - coming from such disparate parts of the world as war torn Afghanistan, the slums of Kenya, the drug rehab clinics of Dublin, Ireland, the streets of Charlotte, North Carolina, the overflowing public shelters of Madrid, Spain, and the unforgiving city of St. Petersburg, Russia, where the homeless have no rights or identity. Win or lose, for these players it would be the journey of a lifetime. (AOL)

“Man Push Cart” 2005

Synopsis: It's 3:00 a.m. in Manhattan, the hour of rumbling garbage trucks, glaring headlights, and the bluish florescent glow of the all-night delis. Trudging alongside the honking traffic, Ahmad drags a coffee and bagel cart to a busy midtown corner. Hours later, he is swiftly and efficiently selling steaming cups of "coffee regular" to rushing New Yorkers. In the afternoons, he battles traffic to return the cart to a warehouse, occasionally peddling bootleg DVDs for extra cash along the way. A solitary, quiet loner, Ahmad strikes up slightly awkward friendships with Noemi, a young Spanish woman who works at a newsstand, and wealthy, jovial Mohammad, who is shocked when he realizes Ahmad was a famous singer in Pakistan. Through Ahmad's relationships with both his new friends, and his estranged family, we come to understand that he is haunted by a tragedy in his past. A beautifully crafted character study that captures the textures of a very specific New York experience, Ramin Bahrani's Man Push Cart is a subtle, insightful portrait of a man struggling with issues of identity, self-worth, and the harsh realities of finding a place to belong in a vast, often-unfriendly American metropolis. (Sundance Film Festival)

“My Own Four Walls” 2008

Synopsis: Melissa is one of over 1.5 million homeless children and youth struggling to survive in America. These courageous young people, with parents and without; staying in shelters, motels, abandoned buildings, doubled-up, living in vans, substandard trailers, or as "couch surfers" hopping from one fragile living arrangement to another have one important thing in common: They all have hopes and dreams just like children who have their own four walls. Melissa said, “It's better to have your own four walls.” She's right. Hear her poignant story and stories of the rest of these kids from non-urban communities across the country. (HearUs.com)

“Our House” 2006

Synopsis: After taking an overdose of pills in an attempt to commit suicide after the recent death of her husband and the rejection of her family, Ruth, an elderly socialite is saved by Billy, a homeless woman. Although Billy is initially resistant to Ruth's attempts to befriend her, she eventually relents and accepts a place to stay in the lonely old socialite's mansion. To the dismay of Ruth's family and neighbors, several other homeless people also move in with them. (Wikipedia)

“Outriders” 1999

Synopsis: In the heady boom times people at the bottom of the economic ladder are becoming invisible, but a handful of desperately poor Americans refuse to disappear. Fifty of them; infants, teens, mothers, and grandmothers, crowd into a “freedom bus” and criss-cross the United States documenting the effects of “welfare reform” on other poor people. Their mission: to place evidence of growing American poverty before the United Nations. (Skylight Pictures)

“Pursuit of Happyness” 2006

Synopsis: A heartwarming film that demonstrates how good, hard-working people can become homeless almost overnight, *Pursuit of Happyness* is a tour-de-force showcase for Will Smith, who convincingly portrays a down-and-out dad trying to better his family's life. A chain of circumstances left Gardner jobless and homeless at age 30, and he found himself and his baby son living in a bathroom at a San Francisco train station. Despite the negative situation Gardner continued to fight toward his goal of becoming a broker eventually landing a job as a trainee and rising through the ranks at such companies as Dean Witter and Bear Stearns to his current standing -- partner and owner of the Chicago-based minority brokerage firm Gardner Rich & Co. and self-made millionaire. (Amazon)

“Sweet Sixteen” 2002

Synopsis: Liam is a young, restless teen struggling to realize his dream in the gritty and dismal streets of Greenock, Scotland, where unemployment is rampant and little hope is available to the city's youth. He is waiting for the release of his mother, Jean, from prison where she is completing a prison term for a crime that her boyfriend actually committed. Her boyfriend, Stan, is a crude and obnoxious drug pusher partnered by Liam's equally rough and foul-mouthed, mean-spirited grandfather. Liam is determined to rescue his mother from both of them, which means creating a safe haven beyond their reach. But first he's got to raise the cash--no small feat for a young man. It's not long before Liam and his pals' crazy schemes lead them into all sorts of trouble.

“Takeover” 1990

Synopsis: In "Takeover," Pamela Yates and Peter Kinoy follow people who are nothing less than homeless guerrillas, bound to take back what they feel is theirs. As the film moves back and forth from Philadelphia to New York to Minneapolis and other cities, it becomes a deftly edited collage. The camera lets the homeless tell their stories, then goes along as they break padlocks, move into boarded-up houses and are sometimes arrested. These people turn out to be an articulate group, well mixed to prove that homelessness can happen to anyone: a white husband and wife, a middle-class black widow and her son, an uneducated American Indian who is the single mother of several small children. (The New York Times)

**Number of U.S. Tent Cities Growing
By Evelyn Nieves, Associated Press Writer**

RENO, Nev. – A few tents cropped up hard by the railroad tracks, pitched by men left with nowhere to go once the emergency winter shelter closed for the summer.

Then others appeared — people who had lost their jobs to the ailing economy, or newcomers who had moved to Reno for work and discovered no one was hiring.

Within weeks, more than 150 people were living in tents big and small, barely a foot apart in a patch of dirt slated to be a parking lot for a campus of shelters Reno is building for its homeless population. Like many other cities, Reno has found itself with a "tent city" — an encampment of people who had nowhere else to go.

From Seattle to Athens, Ga., homeless advocacy groups and city agencies are reporting the most visible rise in homeless encampments in a generation.

Read more [here](#).

NCH on the Road Upcoming Speaking Engagements

Oct 21st Bucknell University-Lewisburg, PA
 Oct 22nd Sligo Adventist School
 Oct 22nd NYLC
 Oct 23rd Sligo Middle School
 Oct 23rd UNC Chapel Hill-at UNC
 Oct 24th Sligo Middle School
 Oct 24th Georgetown University
 Oct 25th West Virginia Wesleyan Social Just Leadership Conference “Engaging Our World”
 Oct 27th Hope Community Charter School 29917 8th St, NE
 Oct 28th Hope Community Charter School 29917 8th St, NE
 Oct 29th Hope Community Charter School 29917 8th St, NE
 Oct 29th Iona College-New Rochelle, NY
 Oct 30th Tulare County Health and Human Services in Visalia, CA
 Oct 30th Hope Community Charter School 29917 8th St, NE
 Oct 31st Hope Community Charter School 29917 8th St, NE
 Nov 3rd Horace Mann Elementary School
 Nov 3rd Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church-Christopher Dock Mennonite High School
 Nov 5th NYLC
 Nov 6th Kimball Elementary School
 Nov 7th St Bernadette School
 Nov 9th Sligo Dennis Community Facility
 Nov 9th St Stephens Episcopal Church-Oak Ridge, TN
 Nov 11th Pilgrimage
 Nov 12th Takoma Academy
 Nov 12th NYLC
 Nov 13th Pilgrimage
 Nov 13th Messiah College in Grantham, PA
 Nov 14th Thurmont Middle School in Thurmont, MD
 Nov 15th Pilgrimage

5/15/2009

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Contributors for October 2008

NCH would like to thank the following contributors for the month of October 2008:

Linda Lera-Randle El

Paul Kohler

Sheref Mansy

Morris Walsh

United Way California Capital Region

Envision EMI, LLC

Download Music and More

Homewood Suites

Ed Bell, NCH Board Member

Anthony Timm

Phillip Martin

Google Matching Gifts Program

Datamark Graphics Inc.

Jonina Duker

Help Out Homeless Partners Christmas Wish List



Homeless Partners Christmas Wish List connects givers with people experiencing homelessness in order to provide things they gravely need, whether warm clothes for winter or tools for work.

Donations are distributed to individuals of your choice by way of shelters in Chicago, Columbia, SC, Las Vegas, New York, and several Canadian cities. To learn how you can take part in this innovative program, visit the Homeless Partners Christmas Wish List [Website](#).

NCH Board Member Shines Light for Change

Bob Erlenbusch, former Executive Director of the Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness, and current board chair of NCH, has recently relocated to Sacramento, California.

Bob has started his own consulting business, Light for Change, Inc., on social justice issues with a focus on homelessness, affordable housing, income and civil rights issues. He has more than 25 years of experience at the local, state and national levels on these issues. Bob's expertise is in systemic change via advocacy, public policy analysis, organizing and applied research. He also has extensive experience in grant writing and program development.

Bob is seeking to do consulting at the local, state and national levels. He can be reached at bob-erlenbusch@sbcglobal.net and 916-889-4367.

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