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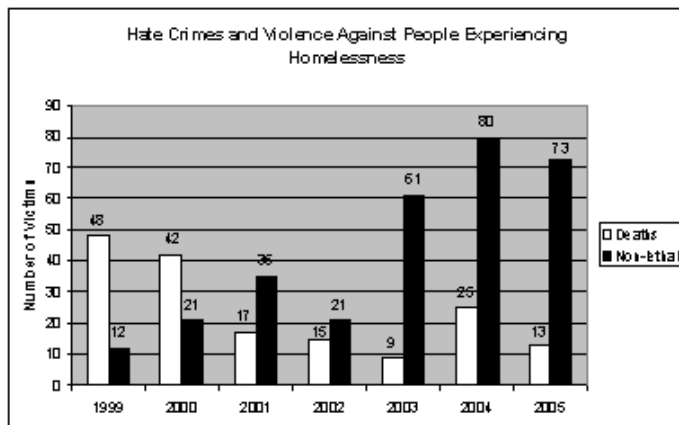
Hello,

This is the March edition of NCH News.

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Widespread Epidemic of Hate Crimes and Violence Against Homeless People

For seven years, the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has tracked a widespread epidemic in crimes targeting homeless people. These are well-documented violent attacks on homeless people that result in injury and in many cases the death of members of this vulnerable population.

The prevalence of homelessness on our city streets allows us to see not only a crisis in housing, but also an increasing pattern of civil rights abuses suffered by our nation's most vulnerable inhabitants. Ending homelessness continues to be the goal at NCH; however, the continued shortfalls in federal funding and political will prolong the problem of homelessness. And now, the dangers of living without a home are more acute, due to the overwhelming numbers of hate crimes and violence against homeless people each year. The new report *Hate, Violence and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness 2005* documents these violent acts.

On January 12, 2006, three homeless men, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida were brutally beaten with baseball bats and sticks in the cover of darkness. The victims include Jacques Pierre, 58, and Raymond Perez, 49, who were both listed in serious condition for several days and are recovering not only from the visible broken bones, lacerations, and deep bruises, but also from the internal damage to both their mind and body. Less fortunate was Norris Gaynor, 45, who suffered similar injuries but died of head trauma and internal bleeding within hours of arriving at the hospital. A video surveillance camera captured the inhumane pummeling of Pierre, which led to the arrest of William Ammons, 18, Brian Hooks, 18 and Tom Daugherty, 17. The chilling footage shows a defenseless Pierre, struggling unsuccessfully to escape, while enduring unmerciful blow after blow to his head and body from two of the teens wielding baseball bats and smiling, taking apparent pleasure in this act of absolute hatred.

On May 28th, 2005, 53 year-old Michael Roberts, of Holly Hill, Florida was beaten and punched to death with sticks and logs by a group of five teenagers who admitted to doing it for fun. The teens included Christopher Scamahorn, 14, Warren Messer, 15, Phi Huynh, 15, Jeffery

Spurgeon, 18, and Justin Stearns, 18. The autopsy report indicates that Roberts died of blunt-force trauma to the head and body, his ribs were broken, skull fractured, and his legs were badly injured. Defensive wounds were found on his hands. The boys returned several times to make sure the job was done. Sentencing for this case is scheduled for February 21, 2006. Four of the boys face possible life sentences, while the fifth, Huynh, is charged with aggravated battery.

Homelessness is an issue that continues to exist on our city streets. Homeless people lack the protection of a locked door accorded to homeowners, leaving them in an unprotected position, where they are subjected to hate crimes and violence. Sadly, the prevalence of hate crimes and violence against homeless people arises due to the negative stereotypes reinforced by the media and intolerant people.

The report's aims are twofold. NCH hopes to educate lawmakers, advocates and the public about the problem of hate crimes and violence against homeless people; the report also calls for a U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) study addressing this issue.

According to a point-in-time nationwide count of homeless people done by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development in early 2005, 40% of the nation's homeless are living on the streets or otherwise unsheltered. The U.S. Conference of Mayors report released in December 2005 revealed that 71% of the 24 cities surveyed reported a 6% increase in requests for emergency shelter, with 14% of overall emergency shelter requests unmet and 32% of emergency shelter requests by homeless families unmet.

"What happened in both Ft. Lauderdale and Holly Hill can occur in any city. As long as homeless individuals are forced to live outside they are vulnerable to these attacks," said Michael Stoops, Acting Executive Director of NCH.

The ever present goal is to increase both federal funding and the political will that is absolutely essential for ending homelessness in America by making available affordable and permanent housing to America's poor who live on the street.

The latest hate crimes report, *Hate, Violence and Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness 2005*, has collected data from news reports and homeless shelters on the number of homeless victimizations that have occurred in the past seven years. To read both the 2005 report and the previous ones, please go to: (www.nationalhomeless.org).

Summary of Data for 2005

- Grand total number of violent acts (deaths and non-lethal attacks): **86**
- Total number of deaths: **13**
- Total number of non-lethal attacks: **73**
- These crimes occurred: in **38** cities
- These crimes occurred: in **22** states plus Puerto Rico
- Age ranges of the accused/convicted: from **13 to 75 years of age**
- Age ranges of the victims: from **22 to 70 years of age**
- Gender of victims: male: **62** female: **4**

Summary of Data for Past Seven Years:

- Grand total number of violent acts (deaths and non-lethal attacks) over 7 years: **472**
- Total number of deaths: **169**
- Total number of non-lethal attacks: **303**
- These crimes occurred: **165** cities
- These crimes occurred: in **42** states, plus Puerto Rico
- Age ranges of the accused/convicted: from **11 to 75 years of age**
- Age ranges of the victims: from **4 months old to 74 years of age**
- Gender of victims: male: **358** female: **48**

Request for U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Study

U.S. Representative John Conyers (D-MI), along with the bipartisan support of over 20 members of Congress, is calling for a GAO study to assist Congress and the public in obtaining much-needed information on the extent and scope of violent acts and crimes against people experiencing homelessness. This request has been endorsed by over 400 local and national organizations (for a complete listing, please see the full report at www.nationalhomeless.org)

“A GAO study is urgently needed to shed light on this frightening trend of hate crimes and violence against homeless people. These horrific acts threaten the lives of over 3.5 million women, men and children experiencing homelessness each year,” Stoops said.

Homeless Empowerment Project

By: Mike O’Neill

We are grateful for the Catholic Campaign For Human Development, Archdiocese of Washington which gave the National Coalition for the Homeless a grant to assist us with our Homeless Empowerment Project mission of empowering those who have or are experiencing homelessness through trainings and skill-building workshops on various issues surrounding homelessness and poverty.

The first workshop, “Know Your Legal Rights on the Streets of DC” was led by Tulin Ozdeger, Civil Rights Attorney, National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. Twenty-five homeless and formerly homeless individuals attended this workshop. At this workshop Ms. Ozdeger discussed the D.C. anti-panhandling, anti-sleeping and other ordinances targeting the homeless population. Street rights cards were given to each of those attending the workshop-the street rights cards talk about how “vagrancy” or loitering is not a crime-one can’t be stopped or arrested by the police for simply being on the street, a sidewalk or in a public park and police do not have the right to tell you to move from a particular area if you are doing nothing illegal. You also have a right to panhandle in D.C. as long as you are not within 10 feet of an ATM or 15 feet of Metro property and as long as you aren’t aggressively panhandling.”

The second workshop had 10 participants and was led by Michael Stoops, Acting Executive Director, National Coalition for the Homeless and Tulin Ozdeger, Civil Rights Attorney, National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. The workshop was titled, “Criminalization of Homelessness” and was aimed at discussing the various laws that target the homeless population not only in the District of Columbia, but across the country. NCH and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty surveyed 224 cities across the country and ranked the “Twenty Meanest Cities” based solely on the laws targeting the homeless such as curfew laws, restrictions on feedings, sweeps and raids of homeless encampments, anti-sleeping and anti-panhandling laws. The various laws were discussed, as well as verdicts that have been reached in various court cases on these issues.

The most recent workshop was led by Richard Troxell, National Chairman, Universal Living Wage and Board Member of the National Coalition for the Homeless. Nine participants attended Mr. Troxell’s workshop where they learned about the Living Wage formula and how if put into effect, it could end homelessness for over 1 million homeless citizens and prevents economic hardship for all 11.8 million minimum wage workers. The goal of the Universal Living wage campaign is to fix the Federal Minimum wage so that someone working forty hours a week can afford a place to live in their community. Statistics were given on the average amount one would need to make to afford a one bedroom apartment in the United States.

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one bedroom apartment in the United States.

Our upcoming workshops include “Stop Hate” A discussion on Hate Crimes committed towards people experiencing homelessness on Saturday, February 18th, 2006, a Homeless Issues Forum on Saturday, March 11th, 2006 and a “Lobbying 101: Bringing America Home Act” workshop on Saturday, March 25th. All of the workshops are held at the offices of the National Coalition for the Homeless at 2201 P Street, NW in Washington, D.C. from 11:00a.m.-1:00p.m..

The goal of these workshops and the Homeless Empowerment project is to provide the opportunity for people who have or are experiencing homelessness to use their voices and faces to dispel stereotypes, personalize homelessness and inspire involvement through volunteerism and advocacy. The project also aims to serve as a training, skill-building and empowerment tool for those who have experienced homelessness. The Homeless Empowerment Project works in conjunctions with the Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau which recruits currently and formerly homeless individuals to share their personal stories dealing with homelessness to groups throughout the country.

Please check our website at www.nationalhomeless.org for more information on the Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau and the Homeless Empowerment Project. Information on future workshops and activities, as well as pictures and recaps from our events will be posted on our website. Stay tuned for information on Hill lobbying visits and other projects .

The Homeless Empowerment Project is led by an advisory team which includes: Michael Stoops, Acting Executive Director, National Coalition for the Homeless, and five members of the Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau, Cheryl Barnes, George Siletti, Francine Triplett, Willie Woods and Dana Woolfolk.

Affordable Housing Fund Update

By Kirsten Peterson

S. 190, the Federal Housing Enterprise Regulatory Reform Act of 2005, which seeks to impose tougher regulations on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, appears now to have potential for movement in the Senate this year, after being seemingly stuck in the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee.

Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL) who serves as chair for the committee said he expected the Senate GSE bill to move to the floor this year. He was quoted by Reuters News Service on January 31 as saying, “We believe before the year is out that we’ve got a good chance to pass a meaningful piece of legislation.”

Right now the Senate’s GSE legislation does not include an Affordable Housing Fund, and though the Affordable Housing Fund seems to have widespread support by members of both parties in the Senate, issues such as portfolio limits will need to be resolved before the Affordable Housing Fund is included. Advocates are working tirelessly to ensure the Fund is included in the bill.

On October 26, 2005, H.R. 1461, the House’s version of the GSE legislation, passed the House. This version did have an amendment authorizing the Affordable Housing Fund; however, the amendment also contained provisions that discriminate against non-profits. It would have prevented non-profits that engage in non-partisan voting activities, such as voter registration, or are affiliated with an organization that engages in these activities, from being eligible to receive the funds. For-profits were exempt from these restrictions. Advocates and Democrats put up a valiant fight to...bethesdahosting.com/.../397_2006...

profits were exempt from these restrictions. Advocates and Democrats put up a valiant fight to have these provisions stricken, but in the end the bill passed with the undemocratic provisions included.

In addition to working to have the Fund added to the Senate's bill, advocates are also trying to ensure that the undemocratic provisions do not also become a part of the legislation.

For more information please go to the National Housing Trust Fund Campaign website at:

<http://www.nhtf.org/>.

Bush Robs Peter to Pay Paul

by: Kirsten Peterson

President Bush's proposed budget for FY 2007 was released on Monday, February 6, and while some programs are slated to see increases in funding, though none of it new money, many others are to receive serious cuts. Robbing Peter to pay Paul is not going to bring an end homelessness in the United States.

Programs that are to receive increases in funding include HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants which will see an extra \$184 million in funding, the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) is to receive \$14 million in additional funding and the HOME program will receive a 9% increase. The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) is to see an increase in funding that would allow HUD to maintain the number of vouchers it currently has but not add additional vouchers; however, the Administration continues to support policies that would eliminate targeting people with incomes that are less than 30% of the area median income, the population needing the most assistance to avoid homelessness.

While these housing programs are to receive funding increases, the HOPE VI program is set to be purged from the budget, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) will take a huge hit and lose over \$736 million in funding, almost 1/3 of its budget. Section 202, housing for the elderly, and Section 811, housing for people with disabilities, are being drastically cut, with Section 202 losing \$190 million in funding, or 26% of its budget and Section 811, losing \$118 million, half of its budget! Cutting funding that provides assistance to populations most vulnerable to homelessness is an abomination, especially in the wake of the hurricanes in the Gulf Coast.

And the robbery doesn't stop with HUD; programs under the Department of Health and Human Services will also see changes. On a more positive note, Health Care for the Homeless will see an increase in funding by \$16 million dollars, or 10% of its budget. However, Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals (GBHI) will lose \$5 million in funding, and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is being cut completely.

Other programs, such as those for rural housing, run through the Department of Agriculture will face cuts, as will Medicare, Medicaid, TANF and Food Stamps.

While it is wonderful that certain programs will see increases in funding, it is doubtful that increases in these few programs will lead to decreases in the number of people experiencing homelessness. Taking money from one program and redistributing it to another does not increase the amount of assistance available for people. All of these programs, those seeing budget increases and cuts, work together to provide people with the support necessary to break the cycle of homelessness, and when one type of assistance is crippled, all of the programs will suffer. The end result of cutting program funding and not adding new money for services is that fewer people will be able to

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pull themselves out of homelessness and poverty.

Homewood Suites By Hilton® Reaches Out To The National Coalition For The Homeless To Help Bring America Home

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – Homewood Suites by Hilton, an upscale extended-stay hotel brand, announced today it has forged a partnership with the National Coalition for the Homeless to aid the charity's mission to end homelessness. The National Coalition for the Homeless is a non-profit organization, headquartered in Washington, D.C., that works to end homelessness by focusing on the areas of housing, economic and health-care justice, as well as civil and voting rights.

According to a 2005 survey by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, there are over 700,000 Americans homeless on any given night. The survey also found that approximately one in 400 Americans are without a home. Homewood Suites is doing its part to help fight homelessness through a multi-faceted partnership that will include a monetary donation, volunteer programs, awareness-building campaigns and outreach to local shelters by its more than 160 hotels.

“Our hotels have witnessed first hand – through the nation's recent natural disasters – that homelessness can truly affect anyone,” said Jim Holthouser, senior vice president, Brand Management, Homewood Suites by Hilton. “Our brand's core attributes are based on creating a home-like feel. We have chosen to support the National Coalition for the Homeless because we feel everyone in America should have the opportunity to have a home.”

Michael Stoops, acting executive director of the National Coalition for the Homeless, said he is excited about the partnership's possibilities. “We look forward to working with Homewood Suites by Hilton in forming partnerships to end homelessness in the nearly 170 communities where they are located, together our two organizations and its employees can work together to address both the emergency and long-term needs of homeless people. This is a true private/public partnership for addressing one of the pressing issues of our time. We believe that it is indeed possible to end homelessness in any city in America.”

For more information about Homewood Suites by Hilton, visit homewoodsuites.com or call 1-800-CALL-HOME®. For more information about the National Coalition for the Homeless, please visit www.nationalhomeless.org or call (202) 462.4822.

National Sleep-Out

On Friday, March 31st-Saturday, April 1st, 2006 take part in the first annual National Sleep-Out to raise awareness about the issues surrounding hunger and homelessness in America. The sleep-out is sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless, National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, Sojourners and Call to Renewal.

The lead organizer is Tim King, senior at North Park University in Chicago, Illinois who on February 18th, 2005 organized an extremely successful sleep-out in Chicago, Illinois at which 300 students from 5 states and 13 colleges slept in front of the Water Tower on Michigan Avenue. ABC, NBC, FOX news and the Chicago Tribune covered the event. Students held signs with statistics on hunger and homelessness and collected over 5,000 signatures for supporting a local bill. Over 100 students spent the night on the streets in the snow, sleet and freezing rain. Students then met with Governor Rod Blagojevich and Senators Barack Obama and Dick Durbin to present
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then met with Governor Rod Blagojevich and Senators Barack Obama and Dick Durbin to present them with the signatures.

To get more information on how to organize a sleep-out in your city please check out www.tothestreets.org. You can find an action guide, sleep-out planning sample including how to organize a Neighborhood sleep-out, campus sleep-out, vigil or a virtual sleep-out. Your participation in this sleep-out is strongly encouraged and appreciated!

Washington, DC will be holding a sleep-out at Dupont Circle (tentatively) beginning at 2:00p.m. on March 31st and ending Saturday, April 1st 2:00p.m. For more information on DC's sleep-out please contact Michael O'Neill at 202-462-4822 x20 or by email at moneill@nationalhomeless.org

NCH on the Road

Michael O'Neill and the Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau will be in the following locations:

Feb 24th-26 NSCAHH SUMMIT at UMASS BOSTON

March 3rd-5th COOL CONFERENCE at Vanderbilt University

March 11th East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania

March 22nd Guilford College in North Carolina

In March there are several colleges who will be participating in Urban Plunge's here in DC.

Vanderbilt University March 7th-9th

Appalachian State University March 12th-14th

University of Florida March 14th-16th

University of Illinois March 20th-22nd

University of Kansas March 22nd-24th

CALL FOR PAPERS: THE JOURNAL OF PRIMARY PREVENTION

Special Issue: Homelessness and Mental Illness

Dawn Jahn Moses, M.P.A., Marilyn Kresky-Wolff, M.P.H., Paul Brounstein, Ph.D., Ellen Bassuk, M.D., Guest Editors

Homelessness is a growing social problem; approximately 2.1 million adults and 1.3 million children experience homelessness in a given year (Burt, M.R., Aron, L.Y., Lee, E., & Valente, J. [2001]. *Helping America's homeless: Emergency shelter or affordable housing?* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press). Individuals with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders are at particularly higher risk experiencing homelessness more often and for longer periods than other...
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particularly higher risk, experiencing homelessness more often and for longer periods than other subgroups. The individual and societal costs of homelessness are profound and demand targeted and informed strategies for preventing and ending homelessness.

The Journal of Primary Prevention, in partnership with the National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness (funded by the Center for Mental Health Services/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), is preparing a special issue on homelessness prevention. We are interested in soliciting papers that provide new knowledge and insight into services, programs, and policies that help individuals, youth, and families with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders avoid becoming homeless and exit homelessness quickly. Paper topics might include:

- Housing and treatment/service models that effectively prevent and end homelessness
- Trauma-informed and trauma-specific services
- Supported employment
- Consumer involvement and peer-run services
- Discharge planning
- Disaster preparedness and relief efforts
- Prevention strategies for unique sub-populations (e.g., individuals with cognitive impairment and developmental disabilities, individuals with co-occurring disorders, families and children)
- Community partnerships, policy, and financing strategies
- Workforce development issues

JPP encourages various types of papers: original research, practice-oriented reports from the field, and literature reviews. Prospective authors should contact Dawn Jahn Moses of the National Resource and Training Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness at 617-964-3834 ext. 36 or dawn.moses@familyhomelessness.org in order to indicate interest, receive more detailed submission guidelines, and/or ask questions about the issue.

The deadline for submission is June 1, 2006.

Use Your Will to End Homelessness

A simple way to help the National Coalition for the Homeless in our mission to end homelessness for all people is to consider a bequest to the Coalition.

Bequests can take a variety of forms. You can leave NCH a percentage of your estate, a specific sum of money, or you can make NCH the residual beneficiary of your estate after other bequests. Alternatively, you can make NCH a contingent beneficiary in the event other beneficiaries die before you. If you would like to add a bequest to NCH to your will but do not want to rewrite your current will, you can add a codicil to your existing will. Your attorney can advise you on this process.

Your support will help us bring about the end of homelessness for all people

2006 Calender

March 31- National Sleep Out

Sept. 24--30--National Homeless & Low Income Voter Registration Week.

Nov. 12--18--National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week--Co-sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger & ...bethesdahosting.com/.../397_2006...

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National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger & Homelessness

Dec. 21--National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day--Co-sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council.

Four easy ways to help:

1. Send your gift to the National Coalition for the Homeless

2201 P. St, NW Washington, DC 20037-1033

2. Call 202-462-4822 ext 16 and speak with Angie Mescall

3. Donate online at www.nationalhomeless.org

4. Host a Bringing It Home Dinner Party. To host a dinner party/event or for more information, please contact Anna Bremner at abremner@blueskycollaborative.com or 617-731-1821

Thank you for your generosity.

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