



National Coalition for the Homeless Newsletter

NCH NEWS

November 9, 2009

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Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

- [In this issue we will be featuring National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.. This week is a nationwide effort – which takes place each year one week before Thanksgiving – by schools, communities and cities to bring greater awareness to the problems of hunger and homelessness.](#)
- [Find out how you can be involved here.](#)

National Events

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week will be held November 15-21, 2009. Each year, NCH cosponsors this week of action with the National Student Campaign Against Hunger & Homelessness. 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.

If your community has already joined this effort, the 2009 Event Manual can serve as an evaluator for past efforts and possibly offer fresh ideas for the future. If this is your first time participating, download the [2009 Event Manual](#) today and see how your community can get involved!

Here are some ways a few communities are involving themselves in this nationwide effort to raise awareness of the issues of hunger and homelessness:

Students from the **University of West Florida**, Social Action Campaign will be participating in a 'Pass the Can' event to raise money for the local shelters. Their food drive also aims to collect 1000 pounds of food per hour during a 24 hour period!

Texas State University students are doing several unique events, including: - 'Blanket Extravaganza': having students build fleece blankets to donate to local shelters;

- 'Donate a Swipe': student can donate part of their meal plan for money, which will be donated to local shelters;

- Will Run for Food and Shelter (5k and 1 mile Fun Run): a 5k to raise money for local shelters as well as raise awareness on hunger and homelessness in America.

Family Promise of Lycoming County (Williamsport, PA) will be marching in the holiday parade on November 20th and making the world's largest fleece blanket on November 21st.

These are just a few of the many unique events happening across the country to recognize Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. Let us know what your group is doing to raise awareness.

Upcoming Faces of Homelessness Presentations

Our Speakers' Bureau is especially popular during November. In fact, they are speaking at more than 50 events this month all across the country! To find out more information about these events please visit: [The Speakers' Bureau Gig Schedule](#).

If you are interested in attending any of these events, please contact Michael O'Neill, moneill@nationalhomeless.org.

Washington, DC Events

Ending Veterans' Homelessness in Five Years

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently hosted the *Homeless Veteran Summit: Ending Homelessness among Veterans within Five Years* for federal, state and community agencies responsible for the organization, management and treatment continuum for homeless veterans and their families. The secretary of Veterans Affairs unveiled the department's comprehensive plan to end homelessness among Veterans in five years by marshaling the resources of government, business and the private sector. National Advocates for the Homeless were invited to present before an audience of more than two thousand gathered in the capitol. Neil Donovan, Executive Director for the National Coalition for the Homeless spoke of the importance of fully and directly involving homeless veterans in the development and execution of any and all plans to end homelessness. He also expressed the demand for proposing and creating solutions to scale for both affordable housing and living wage jobs for homeless veterans and their non-veteran homeless brothers and sisters.

National Coalition for the Homeless Congratulates New United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Executive Director Barbara Poppe

"Barbara Poppe will provide important leadership at the Council, as it develops its plan to end homeless" said Neil Donovan, NCH Executive Director. "Her experience at the local level will surely support the Council's ongoing efforts to engage cities and states. Barbara is joining the Council at a critical time for the Council and America's homeless. President Obama's new management agenda will greatly support the work of the Council, directing agency leaders to set priorities, demonstrate progress in achieving defined goals and explain performance trends. In an attempt to break down intra and interagency silos, the president's performance model is giving cross-program and cross-agency goals as much attention as program-specific ones." To read more, visit: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/BarbaraPoppe.html>

Policy Updates

White House Again Urges Congress to Fund the National Housing Trust Fund

NCH congratulates and affirms the Administration for an October 29 announcement urging, among other things, that Congress provide an initial funding of \$1 billion to the National Housing Trust Fund. The announcement also called for the extension of the First Time Homebuyers Tax Credit and the extension of higher loan limits for home mortgages in an effort to improve housing and the housing market.

A version of the homebuyer tax credit is expected to be included in the bill that will extend Unemployment Insurance to be taken up by the Senate the first week in November. An extension of the loan limits was included in the Continuing Resolution passed by Congress in October 29.

No legislation vehicles were identified in the announcement for funding the Trust Fund, but for NCH and other national advocacy groups have been working with House Committee on Financial Services Chairman Barney Frank (D-MA) and Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) to seek cosponsors for their respective bills (H.R. 3766 and S. 1731) that would provide initial funds for the NHTF.

Another Continuing Resolution Passed by Congress

The House and Senate have passed an extension of the current continuing resolution which keeps federal programs funded in the absence of an enacted FY10 appropriations bill. In addition to keeping housing programs funded at FY09 levels, the latest CR includes language to allow public housing agencies facing shortfalls in their voucher programs to use up to \$200 million in FY10 funding to avoid having to terminate voucher holders from the program.

Hate Crimes Legislation Gains Momentum

The bill S. 1765 **To Amend the Hate Crimes Statistics Act to include crimes against homeless** sponsored by Sen. Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) in the Senate of the United States has picked up momentum and critical cosponsors: Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Susan Collins (R-ME), Roland Burris (D-IL), Robert Casey (D-PA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH). NCH urges readers to contact their Senators and Representatives and ask them to cosponsor these important pieces of legislation.

NCH Requests Advocates to Lead HEARTH Focus Groups

The National Coalition for the Homeless requests your assistance in assuring that the views and recommendations of people experiencing homelessness are brought to the forefront in our nation's policymaking on homelessness prevention and elimination.

NCH plans to comment on HUD proposed rules for implementing the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act and to ICH on the federal homelessness plan. We intend for our comments to be informed by the views and recommendations of people experiencing homelessness and formerly experiencing homelessness. With that in mind, we request your assistance in gathering such views on our behalf by convening focus groups of people experiencing homelessness in your geographic area.

Our goal is to gather views from at least 250 people experiencing homelessness from across the nation. We request that focus groups be concluded by November 30, 2009.

We have prepared an introductory message and discussion questions for your use with the focus groups which can be found on our website at: <http://nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/HEARTHFocusGroups.html>

Please contact Charles at: cbontrager@nationalhomeless.org or call him at 202.462.4822 to let NCH know that you intend to conduct a focus group, or if you have questions about this project.

NCH thanks you in advance for your assistance in ensuring that the views and recommendations of people experiencing homelessness are brought to the federal level of policymaking on homelessness.

Other News

Grassroots Community Organizing

Michael Stoops, Director of Community Organizing, did a 10 day road trip to Florida, Kansas and Ohio in late October.

In Florida, we did an in-service training for NCH AmeriCorps*VISTA Volunteers who have set up local Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureaus in a number of Florida cities. This was the first time that all of the VISTAs got to meet altogether and learn from each other.

We now have 21 VISTAs in Florida, 6 in Georgia, and 2 in South Carolina. An additional 6 will start in mid-November.

In addition to the training, the VISTAs attended the two day statewide homelessness conference of Florida

Coalition for the Homeless and the Florida Supportive Housing Coalition in Clearwater.

Stoops spoke at the 10th annual conference of the Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition which was held in Topeka. He spoke at the first conference in 1999.

During the weekend of Oct. 30/Nov. 1, a Tent City was held in Toledo. Attendees were able to take advantage of a wide variety of essential social services (e.g. dental exams, medical exams, flu shots, clothing, blankets, food, shelter). The two mayoral candidates spoke to the crowd of volunteers and homeless attendees.

NCH Supports Its Members through New Corporate Partnerships

The National Coalition for the Homeless is supporting state and local coalitions through its new partnerships with corporate partners LANDS' END and VOLCOM CLOTHING. Each partner is launching a national donation and awareness campaign: Lands' End's **The Big Warm Up** (www.BigWarmup.com) and VOLCOM Clothing's **Give Jeans a Chance**. Our corporate partners have retail outlets in communities across the country and will be making donations to many of our local membership coalitions and organizations.

"Clem" Have you seen the movie?

An aspiring filmmaker, Jammo, 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 stumbles across 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 cross-country road trip meeting a cross section of 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 met as they traveled across America. (IMDB)

Winner: Wine County FF – Marco Island FF – Key West FF – Telluride Indie-Fest

Official Selection: San Francisco Indie-Fest – The Nashville FF

Your Donation Counts!

Any amount that you give to NCH shows your dedication and concern for your neighbors experiencing homelessness. Even just \$5 will count you among the thousands working to Bring America Home this Fall! [Donate Today!](#)

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