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From: National Coalition for the Homeless
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Bridge the Economic Gap Today



The Universal Living Wage Campaign, in conjunction with the National Coalition for the Homeless and more than 1,600 national, state, and

local



organizations, is hosting its annual Bridge the Economic Gap Day in communities across the country.

The aim of Bridge the Economic Gap Day is to not just increase the federal minimum wage, but to fix it once and for all. To tell President Obama that the Federal Government is the single greatest manufacturer of homelessness today as a result of its federal minimum wage that creates impoverished homeless people out of decent workers.

When: Today during morning and/or afternoon rush hours: 7:30-9:00am and 4:30- 6:00pm

Where: Bridges in every state in America. See www.universallivingwage.org for City/State Bridge Locations and contact information.

Why: According to the last several US Conference of Mayors reports, the federal minimum wage fails to afford anyone rental housing in any major city in America. The 2000 Conference of Mayors' Report described the federal minimum wage as "the most significant contributing factor of homelessness" (3.5 million people will experience homelessness again this year.)

We have found that American business has grown to rely on government subsidies to pick up that portion of the basic wage that they have failed to provide. Workers have been forced, in ever increasing numbers, to depend on food stamps, general assistance, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Congress intended these to be emergency, stop gap measures. Instead, many businesses use these government supports to meet basic payroll. A national shift is occurring away from the business responsibility of paying a "fair wage for a fair day's work" to creating an ever increasing burden on the taxpayer.

The Universal Living Wage is an initiative to fix the federal minimum wage with a single national formula based on existing government guidelines. It indexes the wage to the local cost of housing and ensures that anyone working 40 hours a week through a full time or multiple part time jobs can afford basic rental housing wherever that work is done throughout the entire U.S.

After eight years of local and national grassroots organizing, we have asked our supporting organizations to get on the bridges of America and fly the banner "Bridge the Economic Gap with a www.UniversalLivingWage.org." We are now in all 50 states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico, with separate actions across America.

National Chairman, Richard R. Troxell, has stated that "We, the everyday citizens of America, declare

that as a country we must 'Bridge the Economic Gap' that separates the working poor from everyone else and that we can do this with a Universal Living Wage. Conservatively, enactment will end homelessness for over one million minimum wage workers."

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A future issue of *National Coalition for the Homeless News* will feature a full report on today's events.

National Coalition for the Homeless...

On the Road

The Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau is a program of the National Coalition for the Homeless that is comprised of people who are or have been homeless and works to educate the public about homelessness and what can be done to end it. This approach is a unique and necessary tool because it establishes a significant platform for those whom homelessness affects directly to talk personally about their experiences. Additionally, the Speakers' Bureau creates opportunities for members to advocate for themselves and others, as well as build the necessary bridges with the rest of society so that we may work cooperatively to end this disgrace called homelessness.

Members of the Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau will be speaking to the following groups this month:

September 23: National Young Leaders Conference in Chevy Chase, MD
September 28: International Honors Program in Washington, DC
September 30: George Mason University in Fairfax, VA
September 30: National Young Leaders Conference in Chevy Chase, MD
October 6: Beth Tfiloh Dahan High School in Baltimore, MD
October 6: Washington Hebrew Congregation in Potomac, MD
October 7: National Young Leaders Conference in Chevy Chase, MD
October 7: Penn State-Harrisburg in Middletown, PA
October 11: Gettysburg College at the NCH office
October 11: University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA
October 14: National Young Leaders Conference in Chevy Chase, MD

Movie Review: *Wendy and Lucy*

A member of our Speakers' Bureau often relates how, in her struggles with homelessness, she found comfort in the company of her dog. *Wendy and Lucy*, directed by Kelly Reichardt, tells a similar story – and much more.

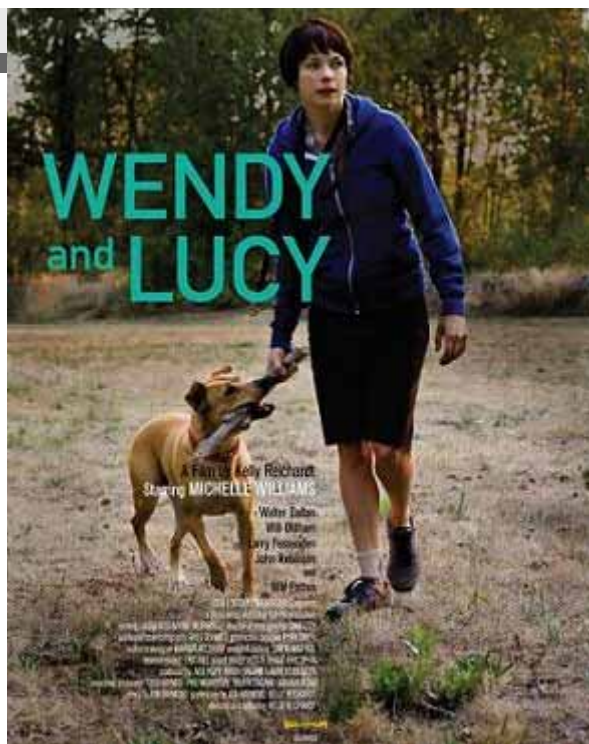
The film follows Wendy (Michelle Williams), who leaves her



Indiana town with only her car, some basic necessities, and her dog, Lucy. She wants to get to Alaska to look for work, but her car breaks down in Oregon. What follows is a gripping portrayal of the labors she undergoes to provide for Lucy and herself – an effort complicated when Lucy goes missing.

Hugely relevant in these times, *Wendy and Lucy* expertly conveys what it means to experience poverty, homelessness and alienation in the U.S. today. The remark of one character, a security guard who Wendy befriends (played fantastically by Walter Dalton), captures the feelings of many: “You can't get an address without an address. You can't get a job without a job. It's all fixed.”

Above all, Reichardt's is a painstakingly realistic film. And this is what makes it of particular interest to NCH News readers. In it, we can recognize familiar situations. And because of that familiarity, we can be further inspired to *act*.



Reichardt's debut feature, *Old Joy*, deals with similar themes, and is also recommended.

Homeless World Cup September 6-13, 2009

The seventh annual Homeless World Cup will be held September 6-13 in Milan, Italy. The Cup is a soccer tournament that brings together people experiencing homelessness from across the globe.

For live updates of the fast-paced, four-on-four action, check out homelessworldcup.org. And be sure to visit streetsoccerusa.org to meet the U.S. team, selected after the Street Soccer USA Tournament held earlier this summer.



Thank You from the National Coalition for the Homeless

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