

National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day



Photo by Ron Roberts, courtesy of the Florida Keys Outreach Coalition, Inc.

2013 Organizing Manual

Organizing Manual

Edited by Marcy Rudins, Hope College (MI) '14

National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day December 21, 2013

Homeless people will die in your community this year.
Plan to memorialize them on December 21,
the first day of winter,
the longest night of the year.

In 2012, over 150 communities representing 40 states and the District of Columbia participated in the 23rd Annual National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. As we enter the New Year, let's make 2013 a year of more awareness by organizing even more memorial events throughout the nation.



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An Overview

Each year since 1990, on or near December 21st, the first day of winter, the longest night of the year, the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has sponsored **National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day** to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and to remember our homeless friends who have paid the ultimate price for our nation's failure to end homelessness. Beginning in 2005, the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and the National Consumer Advisory Board joined NCH as co-sponsors of this meaningful event.

In an effort to maximize the impact of the day, we encourage local and statewide organizations to hold memorials for those who have died homeless in their communities. In 2012, over 150 cities, representing 40 states and the District of Columbia held memorial days on December 21st or around that date to honor the people who died homeless.

What You Can Do

1. Determine how many homeless persons have died during the previous year in your community. There is no official tracking of homeless deaths in most communities, so *start now* to collect the names of those who die. Work with people who are homeless, service providers, and public officials to compile as complete a list as possible.
2. Organize an event to commemorate this day and raise awareness about homelessness and its severity.

This Manual

This manual should serve as a resource to assist you in your efforts. If you have any questions, contact:

Michael Stoops, NCH, at (202) 462-4822 x234 or mstoops@nationalhomeless.org and/or
Brian Zralek, the Consumer Advocate at the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, at (615) 226-2292 or bzralek@nhchc.org.

Organizing an Event to Commemorate National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day

Your Event

Invite other organizations to participate in planning the event. Local and statewide coalitions for the homeless, health care for the homeless projects, shelters, housing programs, service providers and outreach programs may all wish to participate. People who have experienced homelessness or who still have no homes should be at the center of these events at every stage.

Decide what type of event you will sponsor. Past events have included:

- Candlelight marches
- Silent marches
- Vigils
- Graveside services
- Plays and performances
- Special religious services
- Public policy advocacy events

A few of the 2012 Memorial Day events are described in this manual. Please keep in mind that these are local events tailored to diverse communities. Local organizers are encouraged to think creatively about ways to honor the memory of those who have died in their own community, as together we work for a future devoid of homelessness.

Work with your local health department and/or health care clinic/program to identify the number of people who have died in your community without an address. Try also to obtain people's names and ages.

A name-reading ceremony is a powerful component of many **National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day** events.

Please contact Michael Stoops at NCH at (202) 462-4822 x234, mstoops@nationalhomeless.org and/or Brian Zralek at NHCHC at (615) 226-2292 or bzralek@nhchc.org with the following information:

- What type of event you are planning
- The number of homeless people who have died in your community

Working with the Media

Media coverage of homelessness usually reaches its peak just as winter begins and during the holidays. **National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day** offers a great opportunity to work with the media during this time in order to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness. Media coverage is a great tool to emphasize governmental policies, or lack thereof, which can be a part of the problem for those people experiencing homelessness. As governmental policies can also be part of the solution for homelessness, make sure to give credit where it is due. Materials regarding current policy issues are always available at www.nationalhomeless.org or www.nhchc.org.

Your group should:

Issue a news release (see enclosed sample on page 13) announcing your event, giving information on the details and the needs in your community.

Write a letter-to-the-editor of your local newspaper drawing attention to your event and to the issue of homelessness in general.

Invite local media to your event if you feel comfortable doing so. Some Memorial Day organizers prefer private gatherings to express their grief.

Working with your Local Government

In order to attract more attention to this year's **Memorial Day**, work with your local city council, mayor, state legislature, or governor. Encourage them to pass a proclamation/resolution that recognizes December 21st as **National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day** and describes homelessness as a continuing and serious issue that must be resolved (see sample proclamations on page 15).

For Additional Homeless Memorial Day Resources:

Please visit <http://www.nhchc.org/resources/consumer/homeless-persons-memorial-day/> to see resources and useful links from **National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day**.

2012 Memorial Day Event Locations

In 2012, over 150 communities across the United States held National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day events.

Arizona: Tucson

California: Concord, Glendale, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Merced, Milpitas, Modesto, Palm Springs, Pasadena, Redding, San Diego, San Jose, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, and Ventura.

Colorado: Boulder, Colorado Springs, Denver, Grand Junction, and Pueblo

Connecticut: Danielson, Hartford, Middletown, New Britain, New London, New Milford, Norwich, and Putnam

District of Columbia: Washington, DC

Florida: Charlotte Co., Citrus County, Crystal River, Fort Lauderdale, Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Leon Co., Melbourne, Monroe Co. (Key West), Naples, Pinellas Co. (St. Petersburg), Sarasota, St. Augustine, Suwannee Co. (Live Oaks), and Tampa.

Georgia: Atlanta, Decatur, Hinesville, and Marietta

Idaho: Boise

Illinois: Belleville, Chicago, and Rockford

Indiana: Evansville, Indianapolis, and Jeffersonville

Iowa: Davenport and Des Moines

Kentucky: Lexington, Louisville, and Paducah

Maine: Bangor and Portland

Maryland: Baltimore and Elkton

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Massachusetts: Boston, Hyannis, and Springfield

Michigan: Kalamazoo and Traverse City

Minnesota: Duluth and Minneapolis

Mississippi: Hattiesburg

Missouri: St. Louis

Montana: Helena, Kalispell, and Yellowstone Co. (Billings)

Nevada: Las Vegas

New Hampshire: Concord, Keene, Laconia, Manchester, Nashua, Newport, Peterborough, and Portsmouth

New Jersey: Camden, Jersey City, Mercer Co.(Trenton), Middlesex Co. (North Brunswick), and Newark

New Mexico: Albuquerque

New York: Bronx, Buffalo, Jamestown, New York City, Rochester, and Syracuse

North Carolina: Greensboro, High Point, and Raleigh

Ohio: Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo

Oklahoma: Tulsa

Oregon: Albany, Coos Bay, Grants Pass, Hood River, Newport, and Portland

Pennsylvania: Lancaster, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Pottstown, and Wilkes-Barre

Rhode Island: Providence

South Carolina: Sioux Falls

Tennessee: Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville

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Texas: Austin, Bryan-College Station, Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, Houston, and Lubbock

Utah: Salt Lake City

Vermont: Brattleboro, Burlington, Montpelier, Randolph, Rutland, and White River Junction

Virginia: Charlottesville, Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach

Washington: Bremerton, Seattle, Spokane, and Yakima

Wisconsin: Green Bay, Kenosha, and La Crosse

Wyoming: Casper and Cheyenne

Sample Flyer



Homeless Memorial Day

**Tuesday, December 21st
4 pm**

In front of the State House, Concord

PLEASE JOIN US

*TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO
HAVE DIED FROM HOMELESSNESS IN
NEW HAMPSHIRE*

*For more information, contact:
Maggie Fogarty, American Friends Service Committee
(603)224-2407
mfogarty@afsc.org*

Please bring a candle, for the vigil, and a food item for the Friendly Kitchen

THE FIRST DAY OF WINTER. THE LONGEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR.- 10

Sample Program

The Longest Night of the Year

Welcome to the Ninth Annual Homeless Persons' Memorial Day Service in Central Florida.

This service commemorates the lives of the homeless members of our community who died. Participants will join community groups, service providers and individuals in more than 175 cities across the United States who are holding their own services today.

This candlelight service is held on December 21st, the first day of winter and the longest night of the year. Our goal is to commemorate the lives of the mothers or fathers, sons or daughters who died on our streets or in our emergency shelters from illness or conditions directly related to their homelessness. In many cases, this service will be the only commemoration of their lives.

In Seminole, Orange and Osceola Counties, 33 people lost their lives while homeless. Advocates, friends, community leaders and service providers hope to bring attention to the need for more resources to provide affordable housing, emergency shelter and medical care for our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for attending this service. For more information about how you can help end homelessness, contact:

Homeless Persons' Memorial Day

December 21st
9:00 a.m.

*A ceremony to commemorate the
lives of the homeless
members of our community
who died this past year*

Sponsored by



Hosted by
First Presbyterian Church
106 E. Church Street
Orlando, FL 32801

Homeless Services Network of
Central Florida
(407) 893-0133 www.hsnconf.org

NATIONAL HOMELESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL MANUAL 2013

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Opening Prayer

Pastor Case Thorp
First Presbyterian Church of Orlando

Welcome

Cathy Jackson
Homeless Services Network of Central
Florida

**Proclamation from the City of
Orlando**

Alana Brenner
City Clerk

Eulogy

Robert Stuart
Commissioner, City of Orlando

Reading of the Names

Bakari Burns
Chairman of the Board, Homeless Services
Network

**Jackie Dowd Remembers
George Crossley**

**Co-workers Remember
Steve "Rocky" Cook**

Musical Selection/ Poetry

Closing Prayer (Candle Lighting)

Pastor Case Thorp
First Presbyterian Church

THOSE WE HONOR:

*Adrian Acevedo
Connie Asbury
Teri Lee Brookshire
Albert Capps
William Phillip Capps
Brenda Davis
David Dotterer
Jonathon Wayne Duck
James Evans
James Fisher
Arturo Miguel Garcia
Timothy Giedlin
Jay Girard
David Glenn
Lois Ann Gyermoti
Keith Hess (known as Stacey)
Heide Hewett
David Hills*

*"J.R."
Bernard King
Daniel Martin Jacobs
(known as Chief)
Alan Martin
Joe Mitchell
Gerald Ramsey
Susan Roa
John Robicheaux
Michael Self
Phillip Tanner
Jerry L. Thomas
Sherry Tyner
Bradley Watson
John Handzlik
(known as Mohawk)
Wendell Wright
Heather Young*

*Steve "Rocky" Cook
George Crossley*



HSN thanks the First Presbyterian Church of Orlando for hosting this memorial service.

Sample News Release

Contact Jennine Miller, Project H.O.M.E., 215-990-5668 or jenninemiller@projecthome.org
OR John Melis, Homeless Advocacy Project, 215-523-9583 or jmelis@philalegal.org

Philadelphians To Honor Homeless Persons Who Have Died, Call for An End to Homelessness

HOMELESS MEMORIAL DAY - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21ST

PHILADELPHIA, PA — Hundreds of Philadelphians will gather to remember those homeless and formerly homeless Philadelphians who died and call for an end to homelessness. Homeless Memorial Day, an annual event commemorated in over 150 cities and counties across the United States on the first day of winter, will also be a call to action to end homelessness in our city and our nation. Speakers will include well-known homeless advocate Sister Mary Scullion, Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, as well as local religious leaders and several formerly homeless persons. Building on the theme of “Remember, Hope, and Heal,” the event will feature a ceremonial reading of the names of more than 85 persons, homeless and formerly homeless, who died in the past year. The event is open to the public.

WHO: Homeless advocates, service providers, homeless and formerly homeless persons, religious leader, concerned citizens, city representatives, ... and YOU.

WHAT: Homeless Memorial Day candlelight vigil, performances, and call to action

WHERE: LOVE Park at the corner of 15th Street & JFK Boulevard

WHEN: Tuesday, December 21st, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Advocates, service providers, homeless and formerly homeless people, religious leaders, and concerned citizens will honor the lives and dreams of homeless men and women who died this year in Philadelphia and will renew their commitment to end homelessness. More than 85 homeless and formerly homeless persons who lost their lives this year will be remembered.

Since 1990, the National Coalition for the Homeless has sponsored National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day on the first day of winter to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and to remember our homeless citizens who have paid the ultimate price for our nation's failure to address the issue.

Organizers of this year's event are calling attention to this time of economic hardship for many Americans: “Unemployment and poverty are increasing, foreclosures continue at a record rate, and shelters and food pantries cannot meet the increased demand,” said Sister Mary Scullion, one of the speakers on Tuesday. “We use this occasion to call on all Philadelphians and all Americas to wake up and recommit ourselves to ending homelessness. While we seek economic solutions for our country, we cannot forget our most vulnerable citizens.”

After declining in the late 1990s, the number of homeless persons in Philadelphia has increased since 2000, though Philadelphia continues to make strides in creating permanent housing opportunities. The most recent street census – a quarterly overnight count of individuals

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sleeping on the streets – found 352 people in Center City. On that same November night, there were 2,600 people living in emergency shelter, approximately 1,000 of whom were children.

Participating organizations (As of Dec. 10, 2010): Arch Street United Methodist Church – Bethesda Project – Broad Street Ministry – Catholic Health East– Catholic Social Services/St. John’s Hospice – Covenant House – Depaul USA – Dignity Housing – Episcopal Community Services – Homeless Advocacy Project – Horizon House – Impact Services Corporation – Philadelphia NAACP – PRO-ACT – Project H.O.M.E – Public Health Management Corporation – Raise of Hope, Inc. – Ready, Willing & Able Philadelphia – Resources for Human Development/Ridge Center – The Salvation Army – Tenant Union Representative Network (TURN) – Universal Knowledge Unlimited – The Welcome Church – The Welcome Center – Youth Emergency Services

More information and background information on National Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day are available at <http://www.nhchc.org/memorialday.html> and www.projecthome.org.

Sample State Proclamation **The State of New Hampshire**

State of New Hampshire
By His Excellency
John Lynch, Governor

A Proclamation

HOMELESS MEMORIAL DAY DECEMBER 21, 2012

WHEREAS, Citizens across New Hampshire will gather together on December 21, 2012 to honor and remember homeless individuals who have died in New Hampshire; and

WHEREAS, The first day of winter, the longest night of the year, is an appropriate time to reflect on the difficulties faced by those without a home or shelter; and

WHEREAS, Adequate housing is essential for healthy families and communities; and

WHEREAS, Difficult economic times and a shortage of both rental and single-family housing stock makes housing inaccessible to increasing numbers of New Hampshire residents, many of whom are working full-time; and

WHEREAS, Last year 4,825 people received shelter in a state funded emergency shelter and more than 17.5 percent were children; and

WHEREAS, On a cold winter night in January 2011, 2,438 people were in shelters, and last year the average length of stay in an emergency shelter was approximately 61 days; and

WHEREAS, Untold numbers of homeless families are living with relatives or friends;

WHEREAS, December 21, 2012 is the 22nd annual National Homeless Memorial Day;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN H. LYNCH, GOVERNOR of the State of New Hampshire, do hereby proclaim **DECEMBER 21, 2012** as **HOMELESS MEMORIAL DAY** in New Hampshire, and urge all citizens to work together to provide those in need in our community with access to a safe, warm place to stay.

Given this 21st day of December, in the year of Our Lord two thousand and twelve, and the independence of the United States of America,

Sample City/County Resolution

The City of Des Moines Resolution

Des Moines City Council Resolution Designating December 21st as National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day.

WHEREAS, the winter poses extreme hardship for unsheltered and inadequately housed low-income men, women and children in Des Moines; and

WHEREAS, the spirit of the holiday season of giving provides an opportunity for affirmation and renewal regarding the commitment to end homelessness; and

WHEREAS, December 21st has been designated National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and is so recognized by cities nationwide: and

WHEREAS, in this season of generosity and sharing, citizens of Des Moines are encouraged to commit themselves to promoting compassion and concern for all brothers and sisters, especially those who are poor and homeless; and

WHEREAS, in remembering those who have died on the streets, the cause of ending homelessness is kept urgent as is the city's/county's collective commitment to preventing such deaths in the future; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, That we hereby declare December 21st as

NATIONAL HOMELESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL DAY

in recognition of the people who have died homeless in and around Des Moines, and we hereby ask all citizens to take a moment of silence in remembrance and encourage our citizens to support all local efforts to eliminate homelessness in our community.

“Bloggers Unite” on blogspot.com

Starting in 2008, blogspot.com launched a project called Bloggers Unite, where bloggers who participate in an online “event.” The purpose of the event is so that bloggers with similar interests and passions can unite and all write about a particular project on the same day.

An event to share stories about National Homeless Memorial Day has been set up for December 21, 2013. The page has already been created, stating the objective to be an event that “raises awareness about the high personal cost of homelessness with vigils in memory of those who have died while homeless.”

This is a great way for local organizers to share their ideas and experiences on a national level. This event provides a forum for organizers, advocates, and homeless or formerly homeless individuals throughout the nation to connect, and raise more awareness for the issue of homelessness and for National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. Join the event today!

<http://www.bloggersunite.org/event/national-homeless-persons-memorial-day-1>

Highlights of 2012 Memorial Day Events

2012 Memorial Day Events

Memorial Day Events were held in 150 communities in 2012. Details for some of this year's events are listed below. If you don't see your event, please let us know what you are planning at www.nationalhomeless.org/projects/memorial/memorial_eventsform.html

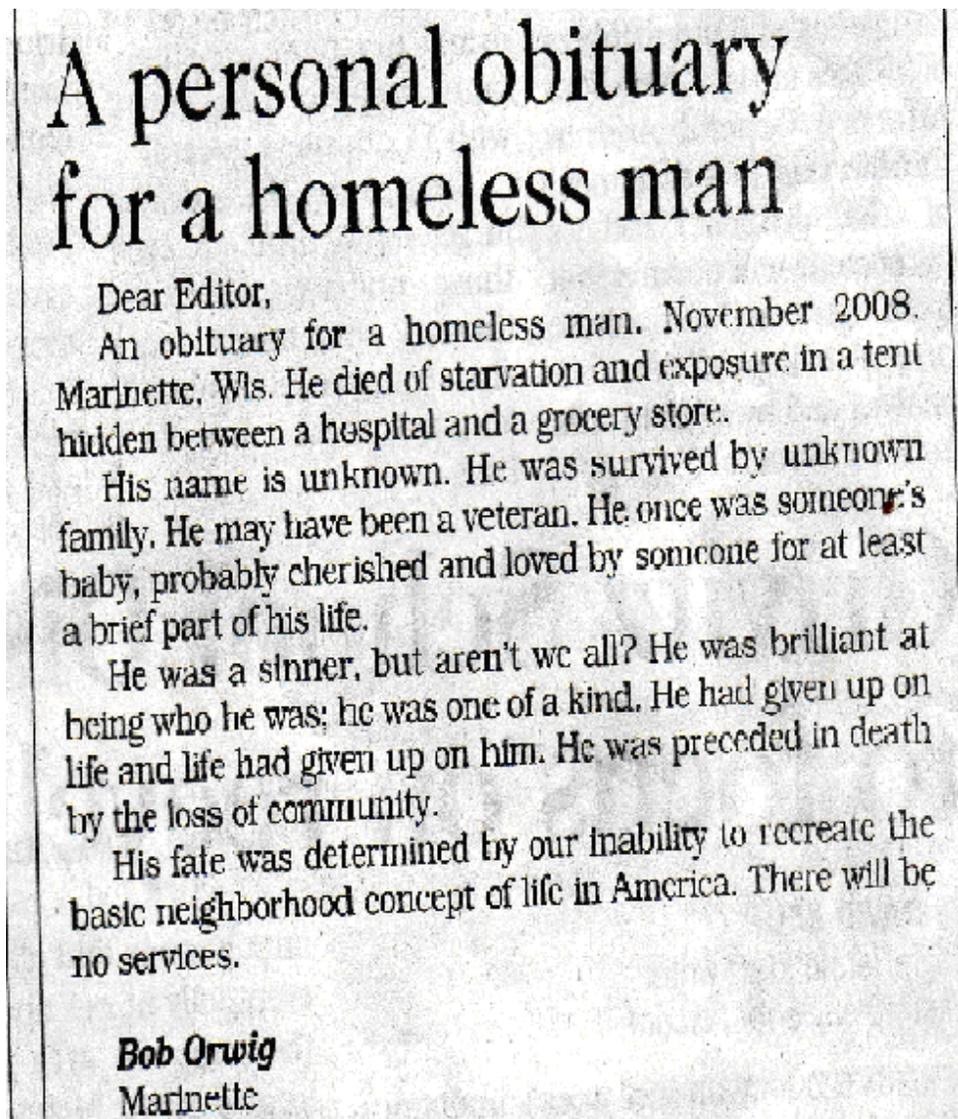


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Arizona

Tucson

Event: On December 19th, 2012 a special memorial was provided at the Evergreen Cemetery in midtown. There the victims of homelessness were honored and remembered through music, speeches, elected officials, and those who knew the victims. It was put on by the Primavera Foundation, a group that dedicates their time to help those suffering from poverty. The service was open to the public.

Sponsor: Primavera Foundation & Evergreen Mortuary Cemetery Crematory

Contact: jwilcox@primavera.org

California

Concord

Event: The 8th Annual Homeless Memorial was held on November 9th, 2012 at the Concord United Methodist Church. The memorial was organized and hosted by Project HOPE, a homeless outreach program run by the Concord-based Anka Behavioral Health Inc. The service recognized 35 men and women who died whilst living on the streets or encampments. The memorial included a color guard composed of veterans, prayer, guest speakers, County behavioral health and homeless services departments, and homeless and veteran affairs advocates. All were invited to attend.

Sponsor: Anka Behavioral Health, Inc. & Concord United Methodist Church

Contact: 925-435-3650 Shayne Kaleo Project Hope

Glendale

Event: Homeless service providers and the people they serve gathered outside the Glendale National Guard Armory on Friday, December 21st, 2012, to commemorate the lives of six who died, after living on the streets in Glendale.

Long Beach

Event: Long Beach Area Coalition for the Homeless hosted a Memorial at Noon on December 21st at City Hall plaza next to a park where many homeless find themselves during the day.

Los Angeles

Event: Sponsored by Skid Row's Weingart Center, in front of City Hall and Walt Disney Concert Hall, were open cardboard coffins lined up. Some volunteers stood inside the vertical signs, others with horizontal signs were lying down. Next to each coffin was the sign that read, "Every day in L.A., one person who sleeps on the street dies there," and then directed people to the Weingart Center's website. This movement was created in order for a younger audience to be aware through social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, in order for them to become more educated about homelessness in L.A.

Sponsor: Skid Row Housing Trust

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Merced

Event: On Friday, December 21st, 2012 a memorial at the Open Air Theatre at Applegate Park was held to honor those who have passed while living on the streets. Golden Valley Health Center organized the event with the D Street Shelter, where at the end of the event pastries, hot chocolate, care packages, and coats were given away.

Milpitas

Event: EHC LifeBuilders hosted a Memorial Service at Boccardo Reception Center on Thursday, December 13, 2012

Modesto

Event: People gathered at 6 P.M at The Salvation Army's Homeless Shelter for a candlelight vigil to remember the eleven men and women who died in the Modesto area in 2012. The vigil was part of National Homeless Person's Memorial Day, which since 1990 has called attention to homelessness on the first day of winter. The vigil is also a tribute to the homeless who are surviving despite the odds against them and those who volunteer to help them.

Sponsor: Salvation Army

Contact: Salvation Army Homeless and Transitional Center (209) 529-7507

Palm Springs

Event: Issued a City Proclamation and then presented to a local homeless service provider.

Pasadena

Event: At the All Saints Church in Pasadena, a homeless memorial was held. People lit candles in honor of the loved ones who have passed away. The service was provided to recognize "their lives and membership in the human family." The service was held on Thursday, December 11th, 2012.

Sponsor: All Saints Church

Contact: info@allsaints-pas.org

Redding

Event: At the Good News Rescue Mission's chapel on Thursday, December 20th, 2012, was a memorial in which the city of Redding and Shasta County Homeless Continuum of Care Council read the names of local homeless people who died in 2012 and then added their names to a plaque on the wall at chapel. The service was held to not only recognize the victims of homelessness but to raise awareness of homelessness in the area.

San Diego

Event: Sixty-one pairs of shoes were placed on the steps of the County Administration Center to represent the sixty-one people who have perished over the past year. The deceased were remembered with a memorial walk and a candlelight vigil as well.

San Jose

Event: There was a community memorial on Saturday, December 8th, 2012 after Joan Anne Hughes was murdered, at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. The \$2,700 that was collected on her behalf was donated to the Silicon Valley-based Inn Vision homeless shelter network.

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Santa Luis Obispo

Event: People gathered on December 20th outside of the SLO County Superior Courthouse to light candles and sing to commemorate the lives that have been lost from homelessness. The event was held to raise awareness to people who have lost their lives without homes and to sleeping out in the cold.

Santa Cruz

Event: The Homeless Services Center held the annual Homeless Memorial Ceremony to pay tribute to those who have passed away while being homeless. There were memorial flags for each of the deceased that were hung up on the walls.

Ventura

Event: Lift Up Your Voice to End Homelessness and Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura held Homeless Persons' Memorial on Sunday, December 16th, to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person and remember those who have died homeless this past year in Ventura County.

Contact: www.liftupyourvoice.org

Colorado

Boulder

Event: The Boulder community held a memorial to remember the members of the homeless community who passed away. The event was sponsored by Bridge House, the Boulder Human Relations Commission, Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, and Fiori Flowers.

Colorado Springs

Event: A group of people took a moment of silence around the Veterans Memorial in Memorial Park. They gathered, holding different types of memorabilia that commemorated their time in the military, and remembered the four homeless veterans that died this past year. A bagpiper was followed by a rifle salute from the Colorado National Guard Honor Guard Team.

Denver

Event: On December 19th, 2012 there was a candlelight vigil and name-reading ceremony that was held outside of the Denver City and Country Building in order to pay tribute to those who are homeless and for the homeless people who died in 2012.

Sponsor: Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

Contact: www.coloradocoalition.org

Grand Junction

Event: A dozen community members gather around a tree every year in Hawthorne Park to remember those who have died from being homeless. The candle lighting and prayer ceremony took place at this park where the Grand Valley Coalition for the Homeless planted this tree. Since 2008, the coalition and other various volunteer groups have partnered up to provide temporary shelter during the coldest months of the year.

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Pueblo

Event: The seventh annual Pueblo Homeless Memorial, hosted by Posada, was held at the Boettcher Outdoor Education Center, on the eastern edge of the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk of Pueblo. The lives of ten people, who were homeless, were remembered and recognized during the service.

Sponsor: Boettcher Outdoor Education Center

Contact: Phone: [\(719\) 545-8776](tel:7195458776)

Connecticut

Danielson

Event: Candle lighting ceremony was held at the Davis Park gazebo. Local faith communities and Generations Family Health Center remembered homeless friends, loved ones, patients, and community members that have died. At the end of the ceremony they accepted hygiene products and non-perishable foods for the Killingly/Brooklyn area.

Hartford

Event: At Center Church on Friday, December 21st, 2012 there was a memorial service. This event also marked the beginning draft process to create the "Homeless Bill of Rights" for Connecticut.

Sponsor: Charter Oak Cultural Center

Middletown

Event: St. Vincent DePaul and the Community Health Center held a memorial service and a candlelight vigil at the Church of Holy Trinity to remember the homeless individuals that have passed away this past year,

Sponsor: Church of the Holy Trinity

New Britain

Event: A service of remembrance was held for the homeless individuals that have passed away in New Britain. The names of those who were remembered was read and all were welcome at the South Congregational Church.

New London

Event: People gathered at All Souls Church to remember those who had passed. The service included a mix of prayer and response, performance of songs, candles, and a moment of silence. Along the Jay Street sidewalks, 38 winter hats adorned the candy-cane stakes, each with the name of the homeless person that had passed since 2008.

New Milford

Event: Homeless Memorial Vigil was held on Friday December 21st, 2012 at the New Milford Town Green, in which all of the homeless and formerly homeless that have died over the years were remembered. Also took this time to call to attention the economic hardship and struggle that many Americans face.

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Norwich

Event: A lasagna dinner and talent showcase was scheduled at the St. Vincent De Paul Place soup kitchen, in which all proceeds benefited the Norwich Hospitality Center, "No Freeze Shelter."

Sponsor: St. Vincent de Paul Place

Contact: St. Vincent de Paul Place (860) 889-7374 Executive Director - Jillian Corbin (jcsvdpp@gmail.com)

Putnam

Event: A Homeless memorial walk and vigil began at the Putnam farmers Market and ended at the Rotary Park. All attendees were asked to donate a non-perishable food item or an article of warm clothing.

Contact: Cindy (860) 963-7917

District of Columbia

Washington, DC

Event: At the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, participants gathered to remember those who had passed away due to homelessness through song, candles, and sharing memories. The vigil is held every year to provide a time and a place for friends and advocates, to recognize the passing of members of the community.

Sponsor: New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

For more information contact: National Coalition for the Homeless, info@nationalhomeless.org, 202-462-4822 ext. 234

Florida

Charlotte Co.

Event: At the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition center, community members came to remember the six homeless individuals who passed away through a candlelight vigil, a speaker, and music.

Sponsor: Charlotte Co. Homeless Coalition

Contact: Alicia Cunningham (941) 627-4313 EXT. 119

Citrus County

Event: The Citrus County community gathered at the Crystal River Mall in front of the Hospice of Citrus County's Tree of Remembrance to remember person's, without homes, who died in this past year, and previous years. After sharing passages from the Bible, those in attendance shared stories about the homeless who had passed away.

Contact: Barbara Wheeler (352) 860-2308

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Crystal River

Event: A Memorial Service was held in front of Hospice of Citrus County's Tree of Remembrance, December 21, 2012 at 6:00pm at the Crystal River Mall.

Fort Lauderdale

Event: There was a memorial service that was held that included a reading of names and candle lighting. The children's daycare center provided ornaments that looked like houses, which then had all the names of those who had passed away on them. Audience members were asked to place the ornaments on the tree in the Sanctuary, while the names were being called, and from there had music to commemorate the homeless who had passed away.

Fort Myers

Event: The Lee County Homeless Coalition's 16th Annual Candlelight Vigil was held on Friday, December 21, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. on the steps of the Old Lee County Courthouse located at 2120 Main Street in Fort Myers. The Candlelight Vigil mourned those who have died while living on the streets or in shelters, and it educated communities that the lack of affordable housing, shelter, living wages, and accessible health care is a problem that must be addressed.

Jacksonville

Event: Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition of Northeast Florida held a Memorial Service on Friday, December 21st, 12:00 Noon, at the Salvation Army Chapel in downtown Jacksonville (15 E Church Street). The Service included brief testimonies from service providers, reading of names, lighting of candles, and music.

Leon Co. (Tallahassee)

Event: On Friday December 21st, 2012 at The Shelter and Renaissance Community Center had a memorial service for those who passed away while being homeless, and also recognized the advocates and formerly homeless friends who passed away.

Contact: Jacob Reiter at (850) 224-9055 or The Shelter at (850) 224-8448

Melbourne

Event: The Daily Bread soup kitchen and service center had their annual memorial service for those who had passed away while being homeless. There were prayers and songs during the ceremony, with a concluding procession of a wreath and a white cross bearing all of the names of the deceased.

Sponsor: Daily Bread

Contact: (321) 723-1060 Daily Bread

Monroe Co. (Key West)

Event: On December 21, 2012 the residents of the Upper Keys in Monroe County, Florida gathered at noon in Settlers Park, mm 92 Oceanside, Tavernier, FL to remember their neighbors who died while homeless in the past year. The theme this year while remembering all of our homeless neighbors to focus especially on our homeless veterans.

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Naples

Event: At 2001 Airport Road S. in East Naples was a memorial service in order to remember those who had passed away this past year. The vigil was held at St. Matthew's House, and was open to the public to commemorate those who died while being homeless.

Pinellas Park

Event: Organized by Celebrate Outreach, Trinity Lutheran Church held a service to honor the homeless people who passed away in 2012. After the memorial service, the evening concluded with a dinner.

Sponsor: Trinity Lutheran Church

Contact: George Bolden, webmaster@celebrateoutreach.org

Sarasota

Event: The Salvation Army, Sarasota Ministerial Association and the Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness sponsored a memorial dedicated to the homeless who passed away, at The Salvation Army Shelter and Social Service Complex, 1400 10th St., Sarasota. The memorial had several speakers and an official name reading from each homeless person who had died the past year.

Saint Augustine

Event: Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition of St Johns County hosted our 14th Annual Homeless Candlelight Vigil and Memorial Service on December 20th at 5:30pm at First United Methodist Church.

Sponsor: First United Methodist

Contact: Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition 523 West King Street St. Augustine, FL 32084; 904-824-6623

Suwannee (Live Oak)

Event: Love In The Name of Christ (Love INC) hosted a candlelight vigil at Millennium Park in downtown Live Oak that recognized those who had passed away in 2012 while being homeless. Donations of pop-top canned goods, new/slightly used blankets, and new socks were accepted as well.

Sponsor: Love INC

Contact: (386) 364-4673 www.loveinc-suwanneecounty.org

Tampa

Event: At Joe Chillura Courthouse Square in downtown Tampa held a candlelight service in the park that honored the 67 homeless people who died in 2012. The ceremony featured a choir and an official name reading, with a candle that represented each person who had passed.

Sponsor: Tampa Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County

Contact: Synod House at 813-876-7660, info@fbsynod.org

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Georgia

Atlanta

Event: Hosted the Homeless Persons' Memorial, and before that had provided food two times a week in Hurt Park of Atlanta, Georgia. This group is incorporated under the name of DEPS, which stands for "Displaying Empathy for the Poor and the Shelterless."

Sponsor: Grady Health System

Decatur

Event: Observed the National Homeless Person's Memorial Day with community members coming together lighting candles and holding up signs with each of the names of those who passed away at the Oasis Day Center.

Hinesville

Event: The Liberty County Homeless Coalition held a Candle Light Vigil on Friday, December 21, 2012, 6 PM to 8 PM, at Bradwell Park, Downtown Hinesville.

Marietta

Event: A candlelight vigil was held on Friday December 21st, 2012 to honor those who lived and died in homelessness. It was held at the First United Methodist Church of Marietta and was sponsored by various homeless groups around the Metro area.

Idaho

Boise

Event: On December 21st, individuals came together to commemorate the lives of homeless members of our community who died on our streets or in our emergency shelters from illness or conditions directly related to their homelessness. Individuals who were formerly homeless, and homeless advocates, who died in 2012 were also remembered. From 7-8 pm, at Interfaith Sanctuary shelter, located at 1620 W. River Street, Boise Idaho. Hospitality was provided at Corpus Christi Day Shelter, 525 Americana Blvd (next to Sanctuary) immediately following the vigil.

Sponsor: Interfaith Sanctuary, Corpus Christi Day Shelter, & Mosaic Street Ministry

Contact: Interfaith Sanctuary (208) 343-2630 Interfaithsanctuary.org

Illinois

Belleville

Event: The St. Clair County Homeless Initiative and the Angels of St. Clair County sponsored a memorial service for the homeless people who have died this past year. The service was held at St. Paul United Church of Christ at 115 W. B St. in Belleville. Everyone in the community was invited to join the homeless initiative for this service of remembrance.

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Chicago

Event: The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless held a memorial service and candlelight vigil to remember those who died while homeless at Old St. Patrick's Church (700 W. Adams) on Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012.

Sponsor: Chicago Coalition for the Homeless & Ignition Spirituality Project

Contact: 312-641-4140 Anne Bowhay

Rockford

Event: At The Carpenter's Place there was a memorial which was open to the public that honored men and women ranging from the ages of 20 to 78, and may have had housing when they died or they cycled in and out of homelessness for years by having their names read aloud.

Indiana

Evansville

Event: At the Trinity United Methodist Church, the annual gathering for the Evansville Homeless Memorial Service, a group of community members came to remember those who have struggled and have passed away while being homeless. Eighty-one candles were lit to represent all of the individuals who have passed away since 1990, including an "unknown candle" that represent anyone who has passed that the community is not aware of.

Sponsor: Trinity United Methodist Church

Contact: Luzada Hayes 812.428.3246 or info@auroraevansville.org

Indianapolis

Event: The Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention held a Homeless Persons' Memorial Day event on December 21, 2012 at Christ Church Cathedral

Additional Cities Holding Events:

Jeffersonville (Look to page 42 on the manual)

Iowa

Davenport

Event: The Quad-Cities Shelter and Transitional Housing Council hosted the annual memorial service at the Community Health Care clinic parking lot at 500 W. River Drive. The service included music, poetry readings, prayers, and a moment of silence for those who have passed. During the vigil, donations of coats, hats, gloves, blankets, toiletries, and other cold weather necessities were accepted.

Des Moines

Event: Joppa Outreach held the Iowa Homeless Memorial - A candlelight vigil – on Friday, December 21st at the West Capitol Terrace at the State Capitol from 5:30-6:00pm.

Sponsor: Joppa Outreach

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Kentucky

Lexington

Event: On November 1, 2012, members of the Street Voice Council and the Community Inn placed twenty-two tombstones in high traffic areas around Lexington in order for the residents to remember and honor the victims of homelessness who have passed away. It coincided with the Day of the Dead and the start of Hunger and Homeless Awareness Month with the number "36,897" which is meant to represent the number of people who died homeless in 2011.

Louisville

Event: Recognized National Homeless Person's Day in order to give an opportunity for those who were, knew, or are homeless to be remembered. The point is to bring together the communities, around the area, to remember those who had passed in 2012.

Paducah

Event: Tent City Missions Community Resource Center in Paducah Kentucky, will be hosting a candle light vigil Friday, December 21, from 6-7pm on the stage at the Ohio Riverfront in honor of all who have lost their lives during or due to complications of experiencing homelessness.

Maine

Bangor

Event: The Bangor Area Homeless Shelter held a memorial services on Friday, December 21, 2012, at 5:45 pm, at Hammond Street Congregational Church. Guest speakers, music, and refreshments to honor those who passed in our area while homeless.

Portland

Event: There was a candlelight procession through Congress Street to Monument Square where people gathered to remember those who died in 2012 while being homeless. The group read through thirty different names, with different people coming up to light a candle for each individual with acoustical music.

Sponsor: Preble Street Resource Center

Contact: Preble Street Resource Center (207) 775-0026

Maryland

Baltimore

Event: Scheduled a memorial service at the Inner Harbor Amphitheater, and was organized by SHARP (Stop Hunger and Reduce Poverty) on December 21st, 2012. The name of the city's residents who died in the past year while homeless was read aloud.

Sponsor: Health Care for the Homeless

Contact: Health Care for the Homeless 421 Fallsway Baltimore, MD info@hchmd.org or aschneider@hchmd.org

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Elkton

Event: Meeting Ground held a service of remembrance on Thursday, December 20, 2012 at 5PM at the Mary Randall Center, 401 North Street. A short service and reception honored our friends who have died in the last year.

Massachusetts

Boston

Event: The Church on the Hill, hosted the 23rd National Homeless Memorial Service on December 21, 2012 at 12:00 Noon at Church on the Hill 140 Bowdoin Street Beacon Hill. We read the names of over 100 people who had passed and lit candles as we remembered those we lost in the last year. Members of the homeless community and the people who served them also provided music on this the "shortest day and longest night" to be homeless. Food and refreshments followed the event in the church function room. All were welcome.

Hyannis

Event: Duffy Health Center held a service at the Federated Church in Hyannis at 5:30pm on Friday, December 21, 2012. Included in the service were bag pipes, a choir made up of consumers and providers and candles lit for each member of the homeless community that passed away last year.

Springfield

Event: Christ Church Cathedral and Arise for Social Justice held a Memorial Service at Christ Church Cathedral on Friday, December 21, 2012, at 1 pm., 35 Chestnut St.

Michigan

Kalamazoo

Event: Candlelight vigil was held at Grace Episcopal Church on December 21st, 2012. The service included a blessing, a moment of silence, and a rolling list of names that have died homeless in the area, with seven names added this past year.

Traverse City

Event: On January 19th, 2013 The national planning group held a candlelight vigil for a homeless man who froze to death this past fall. The Occupy movement recognized those who passed while being homeless to bring a voice to those who are not being heard.

Contact: Ryan Hannon (231) 995-7721

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Minnesota

Duluth

Event: On the steps of Duluth City Hall, a group of people remembered the people who died homeless in their community. As each name was read a candle was lit in memory of each person.

Sponsor: Churches United in Ministry and the Human Development Center

Contact: CHUM 218-720-6570

Minneapolis

Event: On December 20th, friends, families, and advocates carried signs, in a silent march, bearing the first names of each person who had passed away while being homeless. The service included music, lighting of candles, and a reading of names with a reflection about each person. After the service, a dinner at the Simpson United Methodist Church was held for both the homeless and the housed to sit side by side.

Mississippi

Hattiesburg

Event: A memorial service was held on December 21, 2012 at the fountain located behind City Hall to remember and recognize those who passed away this year. Attendees gathered to light candles and also to show their support they were asked to support agencies that work to end homelessness in the area.

Sponsor: Pinebelt Coalition on Homelessness

Contact: 601-554-1005

Missouri

St. Louis

Event: Homeless advocates, clergy, and the homeless themselves gathered at Centenary to remember the twenty-two who passed away this past year. To remember each of the homeless who had passed, as each name was read a bell was rung in remembrance.

Montana

Helena

Event: At the Headwaters Covenant Church there was a service to bring honor to those who had passed in 2012 while homeless.

Contact: Headwaters Covenant Church: (406) 324-7273

Kalispell

Event: Samaritan House held a ceremony honoring all those who passed away this year in Montana, Friday, December 21, 2012, at Noon in Depot Park.

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Yellowstone County

Event: RiverStone Health's Healthcare for the Homeless held a candlelight vigil to remember the homeless who died in the past year. The ceremony was held at the Yellowstone County Courthouse, and the attendees were asked to bring a donation for the homeless people in the community. A camp of cloth tents bear the initials of each lost member of the community.

Sponsor: Yellowstone County, the Salvation Army, the Montana Rescue Mission, & RiverStone Health Healthcare for the Homeless

Nevada

Las Vegas

Event: At HELP of Southern Nevada campus at 1640 E. Flamingo Road at 4pm there was a service to memorialize each of the homeless people who died this past year.

Sponsor: HELP of Southern Nevada

New Hampshire

Concord

Event: On Friday December 21, 2012 there was a candlelight vigil to remember the homeless people who have died.

Sponsor: State House Plaza

Contact: infogarty@afsc.org 603-224-2407

Keene

Event: On Friday December 21, 2012 there was a candlelight vigil that included church bells ringing for five minutes at the start of the service, which was then followed by singing and a procession to the shelter to remember those who passed away while being homeless.

Laconia

Event: Catholic Charities held a Memorial Vigil on Friday, December 21, 2012, at 5:30pm at Veteran's Square.

Sponsor: New Hampshire Catholic Charities

Manchester

Event: From six to seven in Veterans Park on Friday December 21, 2012 there was a memorial service to honor those who passed while homeless.

Nashua

Event: In front of the Main Street Methodist Church, a group of people gathered for a prayer vigil to pay tribute to the homeless individuals who passed.

Sponsor: Church of the Good Shepherd

Contact: Eileen Brady Eileen@nks.org

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Newport

Event: 6pm Vigil on the Common, followed by a soup and bread supper at Epiphany Church to remember those who passed while homeless and be in community with one another.

Peterborough

Event: At 5:30 pm, outside of the Peterborough Town House, a group of people gathered to honor the individuals who had passed the past year while being homeless. The group sang together and closed with a blessing.

Portsmouth

Event: A group marched from Vaughan Mall to the park, where they held a memorial for those who lost their lives due to the hardships of homelessness. Participants read off names of people with whom they met through working with the homeless who died this past year.

Contact: Susan (603) 969-5318 or Cross Roads House, Jessica Brazeau (603) 436-2218, j.brazeau@crossroadshouse.org

New Jersey

Camden

Event: Project H.O.P.E. scheduled an event that provided guest speakers, presentations on available services, a complimentary lunch, and then conducted a memorial service at the Bergen-Lanning Health Center.

Sponsor: Project H.O.P.E

Jersey City

Event: The Garden State Episcopal Community's interfaith memorial took place at 1pm at the Church of the Incarnation at 68 Storms Ave. Throughout the day, volunteers were invited to make sandwiches and put together bagged gifts for the homeless.

Sponsor: The Church of the Incarnation

Contact: 201-209-9301 (Hudson County) volunteer@gsecdc.org

Trenton/Mercer County

Event: The event began with breakfast for the homeless, followed by a 10am service at Turning Point United Methodist Church at 15 South Broad Street in order to remember those who lost their lives while they were on the street.

Sponsor: Turning Point Methodist Church

Middlesex Co/North Brunswick

Event: Along with a candle-light vigil, the program included information about homelessness, music and poetry readings from the homeless people, and a collection of sleeping bags and non-perishable foods. Triple C Housing hosted the event on December 21, 2012 to show respect to those who lost their lives while being homeless.

Contact: Bridget Kennedy (732) 745-4228

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Newark

Event: The Garden State Episcopal Community Development Corporation held an inter-faith homeless memorial service for the homeless neighbors, friends, and loved ones of homeless who died this past year. Volunteers were asked to make up gift bags and bagged meals for the homeless coming to the reception.

New Mexico

Albuquerque

Event: On December 20th, 2012, a homeless memorial vigil was held at the AHCH Memorial wall where Joy Junction provided lunch. There was a silent march to First United Methodist Church in order to have a short ceremony and a moment of silence for those who have lost their lives.

Sponsor: First United Methodist Church.

New York

Bronx

Event: Picture the Homeless held its annual interfaith memorial service for our homeless brothers and sisters who passed away this year on Friday, December 21, 2012 at Judson Memorial Church 55 Washington Square South.

Buffalo

Event: The Western New York Coalition for the Homeless hosted a Memorial Day on Friday, December 21, 2012 at 3pm at the Matt Urban Hope Center, 385 Paderewski Drive.

Sponsor: Matt Urban Hope Center

Contact: Phone (716) 893-7222 Matt Urban Hope Center

Jamestown

Event: On Friday, December 21, 2012 there was a memorial at the St. Susan Center located at 31 Water St. to remember those who passed away due to or during their time being homeless.

Contact: Assemblyman Goodell e-mail goodella@assembly.state.ny.us

New York City

Event: Care for the Homeless held a memorial program at our main offices at 30 E. 33rd Street, 5th floor, New York City, New York, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on December 21. The program was arranged by Care for the Homeless clients and former clients and Care for the Homeless staff. Speakers included Care for the Homeless Consumer Advisory Board members and Executive Director Bobby Watts, and included a public education dimension on homelessness as a health crisis, candle lighting and exhibits.

Sponsor: Care for the Homeless

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Rochester

Event: Four homeless men passed away in June of 2012 and were remembered at St. Mary's church in Rochester with Saint Joseph's House of Hospitality and House of Mercy.

Syracuse

Event: A simple roadside memorial was set up for a homeless individual who died due to smoke inhalation and burns. The memorial was put up by the McBride Street Camp, and the memorial was set up with concrete bags, and has items such as a purple scarf, empty beer bottles and vodka, and two pennies that are at the bottom of the memorial.

North Carolina

Greensboro

Event: On Wednesday, December 19th, 2012 the Homeless Memorial Walk of Remembrance started at Interactive Resource Center (407 E. Washington St.) and ended at Grace Community Church (643 W. Lee St.). The memorial service was to respectfully honor those who passed away in 2012, and began at 6:15 pm.

High Point

Event: Volunteers and organizers with Partners Ending Homelessness held a memorial community dinner, in order to make those without a permanent address feel whole. The event was at one of the premier buildings during furniture market - Showplace.

Raleigh

Event: Homeless Memorial service remembered and celebrated the homeless who passed away this year at South Wilmington St. Center, December 21, 2012 at 7:45pm.

Ohio

Cincinnati

Event: Each year in Cincinnati the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless and others come together to commemorate the lives lost, and to recommit to housing for all. The event was held on Friday from 5:30 to 6:30 at Washington Park, near 14th and Elm.

Sponsor: The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless

Cleveland

Event: The Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless hosted a candlelight vigil, where the community paid homage to those who passed away or had previous experience with being homeless. The service included lighting candles, taking a moment of silence, and learning how to combat homelessness in the community.

Sponsor: Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless

Contact: 216-432-0540

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Columbus

Event: This event is held every year to honor and remember those who have passed away who were homeless or formerly homeless. The evening is run by representatives from various faith backgrounds, and is concluded with a candle lighting ceremony.

Toledo

Event: On Friday, December 21, 2012 from 7-8pm, there was a memorial to remember those who passed away in the last year while unhoused. The ceremony included candles, prayers, singing, and honoring the memory of their lives. Afterwards, there was a light reception for community and fellowship. It was held at Salem Lutheran Church, located at 1127 N. Huron St.

Additional Cities Holding Events:

Dayton

Oklahoma

Tulsa

Event: Those who had passed away in the last year were recognized at a candlelight vigil at the Tulsa Day Center in order to reflect, recognize, and remember those who died due to homelessness.

Sponsor: Tulsa Day Center

Contact: Day Center 918-583-5588

Oregon

Albany

Event: Homeless individuals, City staff, social service providers, faith based organizations, American Legion Post 10, St. Mary's School Choir and the general public gathered together on December 21, 2012, at the Albany City Hall Plaza in recognition of three people who lived and died on our streets, in abandoned properties, from illnesses or conditions directly related to homelessness. The event marked the City of Albany's fourth participation in National Homeless Person's Memorial Day. The event was sponsored by the city of Albany, Oregon, the Homeless Enrichment and Rehabilitation Team, Samaritan Health Services, American Legion Post 10 and the Community Services Consortium.

Coos Bay

Event: The service was from 5:30 to 6:30pm December 21, 2012 on the Coos Bay Boardwalk under the shelter of U.S. Highway 101 and Anderson. Guests were asked to bring a candle for a vigil held in remembrance of those who passed away due to homelessness and were asked to bring either cookies to share or warm clothing donations.

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Grants Pass

Event: Homeless Persons' Memorial Day: The Longest Night of the Year on December 21, 2012 at the Josephine County Courthouse. There was a remembrance and collaboration to create HOPE for those who are in search of a place to call HOME, facilitated by the Josephine County Homeless Task Force.

Sponsor: Josephine County Homelessness Task Force

Hood River

Event: A vigil was held on Friday, December 21, 2012 with a group of community members who came together to pray, light candles, and speak the names of people who died, while currently or previously homeless. The event was held at Overlook Memorial Park at Second and State streets.

Newport

Event: To those who had lost friends, relatives, and other loved ones to homelessness observed National Homeless Persons Memorial Day through a memorial service at Don Davis Park. Vivid testimonies and memories of each deceased person were told at the service as well.

Portland

Event: Due to the amount of homeless individuals in the area, the Multnomah County asked Street Roots to help provide information and more knowledge on why homelessness is happening. In 2012, 47 people were reported dying while on the streets, so this county took initiative in learning more on how to give back to this community and help fellow community members.

Sponsor: Street Roots

Contact: Dignity Memorial Homeless Veterans Burial Program 800-34-DIGNITY or Street Roots (503) 228-5657 and Rosecityresource.org

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia

Event: Many gathered at Thomas Paine Plaza with lit candles to remember those who had passed in 2012. Signs with names of the homeless and formerly homeless were held while friends of those who passed away were allowed to speak or tell stories of those who died. The program included poetry, music, a signature memorial, and a roll call of the names.

Contact: (215) 232-7272

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Pittsburgh

Event: At a street corner in Pittsburgh, people gathered to remember those who passed away in 2012 by having a memorial on December 21, 2012. There was an official reading of names, prayer, and song included in the program.

Sponsor: Pittsburgh Mercy Health Systems

Contact: Pittsburgh Mercy Health System

Operation Safety Net (*Operation Safety Net is part of Pittsburgh Mercy Health System, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy*)

1518 Forbes Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Phone: [412.246.2980](tel:412.246.2980) or [412.232.5739](tel:412.232.5739)

Email: operationsafetynet@pmhs.org

Pottstown

Event: At the Smith Family Plaza at 100 E. High Street there was a candle light ceremony to remember those who passed away in the region. Sweat socks and long johns were collected at the event.

Wilkes-Barre

Event: At St. Stephen's Episcopal Pro-cathedral, the Wilkes-Barre County conducted the Homeless Person's Memorial to commemorate the passing of the formerly and current homeless population. There were guest speakers and a candle lighting to honor those who had passed.

Sponsor: St. Stephen's Church

Contact: 570-822-7118 (Catholic Services) or St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen 570-829-7796

Additional Cities Holding Events:

Lancaster

Rhode Island

Providence

Event: At the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul at 30 Fenner St.(off of Broad St.) there was a service and a luncheon to celebrate the strength and the spirit of those who passed away in 2012 while homeless. During the service there were 32 candles that were lit to remember those who passed away, and one candle that was lit in remembrance of those who were unnamed. The service was held at 10:30am, with a luncheon provided at 11:30am.

Sponsor: Rhode Island Homeless Advocacy Project

Contact: (401) 721-5685 for the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless

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South Carolina

Spartanburg

Event: The sixth annual Homelessness Vigil was held at the Barnet Park on November 15th, 2012. The event is held every year to raise awareness of the circumstances of homelessness. Neil Donovan, Executive Director for National Coalition for the Homeless spoke, as well as a number of other entertainers and speakers. Warm clothing and a hot meal was provided as well.

South Dakota

Sioux Falls

Event: Behind Kilian College during the Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week, many gathered for a memorial service that's purpose was not only to remember those who passed away but also to help raise awareness of the many struggles people face. Along the riverbank where the memorial was held, there is a plaque to remember the homeless who have died.

Tennessee

Knoxville

Event: The public was invited to gather to recognize those formerly homeless, those who are homeless, and those who have died while homeless. Knoxville's fourth annual Homeless Memorial Day service included a candlelight walk starting at Cherokee Health Systems Broadway Clinic, and then followed by a brief memorial service at St. John's Lutheran Church.

Sponsor: St. John's Lutheran, Church

Contact: Lost Sheep Ministry Nancy Douglas 865-688-9636

Memphis

Event: The Memphis Health Center's Healthcare for the Homeless Program hosted a memorial service at the Mt. Olive Cathedral CME Church at 538 Linden Ave. from 6-8pm. After the service, on December 18, 2012, dinner was provided.

Sponsor: Memphis Health Center, Inc.

Contact: Sharon Hill, Homeless Case Manager, 901-261-2062, shill@mphshc.org

Nashville

Event: On Sunday, December 9, 2012, a homeless memorial service was held under the Jefferson Street Bridge. An opening reception was provided with coffee, pastries, and lunch after the memorial service. At the service a complete list of names were read, with a time in which anyone could add to the list, if necessary.

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Texas

Austin

Event: The mayor of Austin recognized November 18, 2012 as Homeless Memorial Day in order to give official recognition to the men, women, and children who are living and dying on the streets.

Sponsor: Homeless Memorial

Contact: <http://www.housethehomeless.org/contact-us/>

Bryan-College Station

Event: Community members gathered outside the Twin City Mission Bridge Homeless Shelter to honor those who passed due to the cold. Many came to light candles to remember the local homeless community and to reflect on the struggles of homelessness.

Corpus Christi

Event: At the 12th annual Sunrise Homeless Memorial Service, Mayor Nelda Martinez encouraged all citizens to remember and recognize the need to help transition homeless citizens from the streets. The service was held to honor the homeless who died in 2012.

Fort Worth

Event: Tarrant County Homeless Coalition will be holding a candlelight vigil for families of those that have passed at the Salvation Army, 1855 East Lancaster, at 1:30pm. A discussion on the issue of homelessness and a remembrance of lives lost was held at the Union Gospel Mission, 1321 East Lancaster, at 7:00pm.

Contact: Cindy J. Crain (817) 509-3635

Houston

Event: The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston Harris County hosted a National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day Event on Friday, December 21, 2012 on the steps of City Hall (901 Bagby) at 5:30 p.m. Names of those who died while experiencing homelessness were read. Additionally, blankets, winter coats, hats, scarves, and gloves were collected at the vigil for distribution to members of our community currently experiencing homelessness; donations were greatly appreciated.

Sponsor: Coalition for the Homeless

Contact: (713) 739-7514

Lubbock

Event: The Community Health Center of Lubbock held a candlelight vigil on December 21st at the Dave Freriks Park. The Center worked with Salvation Army to host the event that included a reading of names, public discussions, and a prayer service.

Sponsor: Community Health Center of Lubbock

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Utah

Salt Lake City

Event: About 100 people gathered in Pioneer Park, lead by the Fourth Street Clinic, and remembered those who died with a candle light vigil. Also, the community took this opportunity to unite in order to raise awareness for permanent housing solutions.

Vermont

Montpelier

Event: Held a candlelight memorial in order to recognize and remember the men, women, and children who passed away in 2012 while homeless.

Randolph

Event: CVCAC/Clara Martin held a food drive for the local food shelf and a candlelight vigil.

Rutland

Event: Housing advocates gathered in Rutland's Depot Park to light candles and raise awareness of the city's homeless community. The service started at 5pm, in which the public was invited to listen to the stories of the homeless and to light a candle to symbolize a commitment to end homelessness.

Sponsor: Rutland County Housing Coalition

Contact: (802) 775-9286

White River Junction

Event: Several communities came together to remember the homeless people who died. A list of names were read at the service and put together by The American Friends Service Committee.

Sponsor: Tri-County CAP Homeless Program

Contact: (603) 443-6150

Additional Cities Holding Events:

Brattleboro

Burlington

Virginia

Charlottesville

Event: The Haven hosted the annual homeless memorial service to take time to remember those in the homeless community who passed away and to raise awareness about the effects of homelessness. The service incorporated a combination of mourning, words of hope, and personal reflections on homelessness.

Sponsor: The Haven

Contact: Stephen Hitchcock, Day Haven Manager, Chaplain & Volunteer Coordinator:

stephen@thehaven.org

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Chesapeake

Event: Chesapeake's vigil took place from 5:30-7pm at Heron's Landing apartments, 2133 S. Military Hwy. The vigil honored those who died while on the streets.

Contact: (757) 622-9268 Yilla Smith

Norfolk

Event: Norfolk hosted a vigil and a half-mile walk from 5:30-6:30pm, that started at the Salvation Army at 5525 Raby Road.

Contact: (757) 622-9268 Yilla Smith

Portsmouth

Event: The Portsmouth's vigil was scheduled from 5:30 to 6pm at the High Street Landing, to both recognize those who passed away while homeless and to raise awareness in the area.

Contact: (757) 393-7848

Virginia Beach

Event: Virginia Beach held a vigil from 7-8pm at the Lighthouse Center, 825 18th Street, to remember those who have passed away while homeless.

Washington

Bremerton

Event: A small memorial was held for the five lives that were lost, and were honored with a reading of names and singing songs of remembrance held outside of First Christian Church in Bremerton. Food, clothes, and a few holiday presents were also donated to the Bremerton Salvation Army and Kitsap Rescue Mission.

Seattle

Event: On Sunday, October 21, 2012 a "Tree of Life" sculpture was placed in Victor Steinbrueck Park to inspire a future when homelessness no longer exists. The "Leaves of Remembrance" have names embedded on them and are scattered all around the sidewalks in order to not only forget, but to link all of us together.

Spokane

Event: The Community Health Association of Spokane held its "Longest Night" event on Friday, December 21, 2012 at 11am at the Denny Murphy Clinic, 1001 West 2nd Ave. The event was held outdoors. Our Homeless Outreach team led the memorial and a balloon was released for each person who passed away this year as the name was read.

Yakima County

Event: Held their eighth annual Homeless Person's Memorial Day Vigil at the Millennium Plaza, at 20 S. Third St. The program included a remembrance of each individual who passed away, music, and a litany written for the occasion.

Sponsor: Yakima Neighborhood Health Services

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Wisconsin

Green Bay

Event: The St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter Ministry Team held a Local Memorial Service for the Greater Green Bay Area, in partnership with the National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, at St. John the Evangelist Church in Downtown Green Bay, 413 St John Street, on Thursday December 20, 2012. Event was interpreted for the Deaf Community.

Sponsor: St. John the Evangelist Catholic Parish

Kenosha

Event: The theme for the 6th annual National Homeless Person's Memorial Day was "Walkin' in My Shoes." It was held on Friday, December 21, 2012 at the Civic Center Park at 900-57th Street. Winter survival kits and community resource information were distributed to each street homeless person at the event and hot soup was provided after the event as well.

Sponsor: Library Park

Contact: Walkin' In My Shoes (262) 764-0214

La Crosse

Event: The Salvation Army hosted a local memorial for those who died this past year as a result of homelessness. On December 21, 2012, there was a memorial walk and candlelight vigil from Burns Park at Seventh and Main streets to Cameron Park at 4:15pm.

Sponsor: Salvation Army La Crosse

Contact: 608-782-6126 Kathy Bowling

Wyoming

Casper

Event: Poverty Resistance held a candlelight vigil at Poverty Resistance, 450 S. Wolcott, at 5:00p.m. on December 21, 2012. There was a short statement in memory of Virginia Sellner, snacks, and a mobile food pantry. Theme "Pray for the dead, fight like hell for the living."

Cheyenne

Event: The Wyoming Coalition for the Homeless held a ringing of the bell, speeches by various homeless advocates and by Wyoming Governor Matt Mead on December 21, 2012 at noon on the capital building steps in Cheyenne.

Saying Good-Bye: A Story about Loss in a Shelter

By: Barbara Anderson, director, Haven House Services, Jeffersonville, IN, and NCH Board Member

Charles "Cash" Brown. Cash was the first person to ever die in the shelter. He had pancreatic cancer and said that the shelter was his home and it was his right to stay there. At first we tried to hospitalize him, including his daughter but he refused, adamantly. The staff and residents cared for him, as they would a family member, and he died 10 minutes before the ambulance arrived, that forced him to go to the hospital via a court order his daughter finally won. His daughter called us two months after his cremation and asked that his ashes be buried under the Japanese Elm in the front of the shelter. There are now six trees there. A plaque, donated by a local memorial company, bears their names. She said her father felt at home there for the first time in a long time and it meant something to him. He was an African American Vietnam Veteran, played in several bands, and retired from the Jefferson County Public School System as a maintenance man. They visit him and us, both she and her brother.

Jonelle Akers was our oldest in age, at 75, and our oldest in time at the shelter. She was a paranoid schizophrenic who I found sitting in the rain in 2006. We fought endlessly with the mental health system to get her placed but they said she was "lucid" and couldn't help her. She played the piano beautifully, cussed like a sailor, and looked over the children as if they were her own, while her own would not even claim her body. She too is under the tree.

Mike Kahafer was a Vietnam Veteran as well. He had constant pain and was a great guy, when he wasn't clouded over by the pain medication. His smile was the most infectious thing; you had to smile when he did smile on those rare occasions. His eyes were brilliantly blue; and was a quiet man who really just wanted to get along. He died from heart failure after taking too much of his medication. He did not commit suicide, but was just trying to kill the pain.

Tommy Rawlings was an older man who drove his moped around town like a religion. He was struck by a car and died after 10 days. Tommy was a friendly optimistic man. He didn't let anything stop him and just loved to ride his moped. There is a video about him on Facebook saying he didn't get hugs as a child, until he became homeless he didn't feel loved. Once he entered homelessness he found an abundance of hugs. It was an odd statement because he felt more loved as a homeless man than a housed child.

"Cincinnati" John Anderson was an older man, a veteran, devoted to his deceased wife, Mary. They were nomadic in lifestyle and I really thought when Mary died two years ago that John would settle in and finally become housed because he had a substantial monthly income from veteran's and social security. He did not. His nickname came from the travels at the first of the month to Cincinnati to get his money. He would come back around the third week of the month dead broke and stay for two weeks. The cycle was repeated monthly for as long as I have known him and that was about 25 years. He had dancing blue eyes and loved to spin a story. He never lived without his drink and would not even ask to come to shelter because he knew he couldn't bring a drink. He would tease me and say, "Someday you are going to let it rip and we will party at the shelter all night long."

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Jean Ruel died at 57. She worked for me as a VISTA volunteer for 3 years when we first started the shelter. Once her VISTA time was up she worked for us until she felt she couldn't work anymore. Her back and chronic pain was taking its toll on her body. That was 10 years ago, and since that time, a healthy robust woman became an emaciated shell of her former self. The pain medication she was taking became something she couldn't control. She eventually became homeless herself and entered our shelter for the fourth and final time, three months ago. She thrived. It was almost like having the old Jean back. Her humor was contagious, her daughter had come with her, and Jean was devoted to her, who is now a young adult. Jean got sick right after Christmas, so her name wasn't mentioned at the Memorial, but we lost her on Dec. 29, 2012. We would want her remembered.

"Old Nick" was an older gentleman who took care of the other street guys in Louisville. Being one of the oldest and longest to live on the streets, he knew them well and would mentor the guys. While he would look out for them, they would look out for him in return. When he died in his tent it was after many had taken care of him. He had been called their "daddy".

It was a tough year. You fight many battles to serve folks but this one is one you don't win. When you bury someone in homelessness you find yourself feeling the loneliness as well. We don't believe anyone should die without someone knowing or caring, each of our folks received a celebration of life.