

NCH . NEWS . . .

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NCH News - March 2009

This is the March issue of *NCH News*.

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Doctors Give Socks for DC Homeless **American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons**



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Hundreds of homeless feet in the Washington D.C.-area will soon enjoy the comfort of new socks, thanks to doctors attending the 67th Annual Scientific Conference of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) this week. Surgeons will be donating the new socks, which will be distributed by the National Coalition for the Homeless, at D.C.-area soup kitchens and shelters. "Socks are like gold to the homeless population," said Michael Stoops, executive director of the Coalition.

"Homeless people are prone to developing bacterial, fungal and viral infections that result from excess moisture when older socks, or no socks, are worn," according to Michael D. Vaardahl, DPM, FACFAS, chairman of the ACFAS Consumer Education Committee. "In addition, irritation, rubbing and blistering of the feet are common conditions that may result in further complications for people with chronic diseases such as diabetes."

"It is our hope that the donated socks will be the first step in improved foot health for the homeless of our conference's host city," said Vaardahl.

The sock donation drive is sponsored by DOX Podiatry, a medical software firm.

Information on conditions affecting the foot and ankle is available on the ACFAS consumer information Web site, www.FootPhysicians.com.

NCH Welcomes New Interns **By Ted Hunink, NCH Intern**

NCH welcomes this semester's additions to our team:

Charlotte Bazuin, 23, is a senior at The Hague University in the Netherlands. Charlotte is a Public Administration major and joined NCH in order to learn about the US governmental system and get the chance to live in Washington DC. She is currently working on the Homeless Challenge Project and will be assisting the Speakers Bureau in the future. She is planning to start her master's degree in Political Communications in Antwerp, Belgium next year. In her spare time Charlotte enjoys skiing, watching movies and playing field hockey.

Caitlin Schultz, 21, is a junior at Nazareth College in Rochester New York majoring in both history and political science. Caitlin came to NCH because she wanted to intern at a non-profit organization in Washington DC. She has been especially interested in homeless issues since participating in a week-long service trip in Maryland. She is currently working on the Criminalization Report and the National Homeless Persons Memorial Day Manual. In the future Caitlin would like to do a masters degree in Public Policy or Public Administration. She enjoys reading, spending time with friends and exploring Washington DC.

Caitlin Fortin, 20, is a junior Sociology major at Clark University. She is participating in a Washington Semester Program at American University and an internship is an important component of this program. At her home university Caitlin is a member of two student groups that raise awareness about hunger and homelessness which is why she chose to intern at NCH. She is currently assisting the Speakers Bureau in planning and will also be moderating some speaking engagements. She hopes to get a master's degree in the future and is interested in getting into the field of affordable housing or educational after-school programs. In her free time she likes listening to music, going for walks and planning events.

Ted Hunink, 22, is a senior at The Hague University in the Netherlands. He is a Public Administration major and is interning at NCH to gain experience in working for a non-profit organization. Ted is currently working on updating the Voting Rights Manual and the Homelessness Wiki and will be working on the 2009 Foreclosure to Homelessness report. He plans to start a master's program International Relations in September. In his spare time, he plays soccer and enjoys traveling. He also likes hanging out with friends and watching movies.

A Stimulus Proposal for People Experience Homelessness **By Richard Troxell, NCH Board Member**

On May 21, 2009, House the Homeless, Inc., the Texas Homeless Network and the Ending Community Homelessness Organization will host the Let's Get to Work Forum and Initiative. The forum, comprised of elected officials, employment and human service experts from Texas and across the U.S., will discuss how other communities have developed pathways to employment and housing for persons experiencing homelessness. This forum, sanctioned by Austin Texas Mayor Will Wynn and Travis County Commissioner Judge Sam Bisco, will feature a panel of local employment experts that will discuss and explore the Ready, Willing and Able employment programs that are operating in Pennsylvania and New York. Additionally, the Corpus Christi Economic Development Corporation has been invited to discuss their use of local tax revenue to award development grants to business job initiatives. These local experts will then evolve into a Task Force whose focus will be to create pathways to exit homelessness through employment. These pathways will enable individuals that are experiencing homelessness to pursue job training that results in "living wage" jobs through local employer cooperation and that creates true self-sufficiency for the workers.

The program participants will enter the "pathway" through existing transitional supportive housing programs (note approximately 1/3 of these program participants do not need case management but have had to either accept it in order to get the housing or are now stabilized enough to pursue work). This means that many of these people are capable of working, desirous of doing so and in a position to take full advantage of the housing stability which they are already enjoying. Alternatively, applicants can enter directly through acceptance of the Program Supervisor. Program funding will be used in part to match the Federal Minimum Wage of \$7.25

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per hour (set to adjust July 24, 2009) thereby creating a Living Wage. This will enable an individual to afford basic food, clothing, shelter (efficiency apartment) including utilities, with enough income to access emergency medical care if needed.

The Fiscal Agent and coordinating entity for this program will be the Texas Homeless Network. House the Homeless, Inc. will chair the Program Oversight and Implementation Committee, which will include local employment and human service experts. Additional committee members are expected to include staff from the Texas Workforce Commission. The Oversight Committee will monitor the implementation, operation and effectiveness of the proposed program. This modest model program, involving twenty hand-selected participants, once proven to be practical and effective will be replicated throughout the state of Texas. Funds for this special-needs population program are sought from the Governor's Wagner/Peysner fund in the amount of \$200,000. On a parallel tract, we are seeking the funds from the State of Texas' portion of the Federal Stimulus Package \$200,000-\$400,000.

Funding

Funds to cover:

-Program Supervisor

-Schooling

-Match for Federal Minimum Wage

Program Justification:

On Tuesday August 19th, 2008, the University of Texas School of Social Work presented its preliminary findings on their "Solicitation" Report. They interviewed about 103 individuals and found that 51% of those surveyed wanted job training and 52% were looking for work and their over-riding common theme was that they were "soliciting for daily survival." (Soliciting refers to pan-handling while standing on street corners, sidewalks etc.)

In the Unsheltered Homeless Count Survey, conducted in Austin in May 2007, over 200 respondents were interviewed. When asked as to the cause of their homelessness, 100 said it was because of being "unable to pay either their rent or mortgage." Another 118 said it was "due to unemployment."

In a third survey, this time conducted by the City of Houston Health & Human Services Department, 345 persons were interviewed. When asked their reason for their street solicitation, 250 or 72.5% stated "income for survival." When asked if they enjoyed street solicitation 280 or 81.2% said "no."

When asked what would be required for them to stop street solicitation, 41 responded with "government financial support" and 196 or 56.8% responded with "employment."

The fourth survey was conducted by House the Homeless Inc. in Austin in November 2007. 526 people experiencing homelessness were successfully interviewed. 37.8% said they were working at the time of the interview. When asked if they would work a 40 hour week job, if they were sure it would pay them enough to afford basic food, clothing, shelter, (in other words a Living Wage), 468 or 90.7% said they would work 40 hours for a living wage.

In a subsequent survey conducted January 1st 2009 by House the Homeless, 429 people experiencing homeless were interviewed. Of those responding, (out of eleven, options), "job loss" ranked 1st at 150 and "insufficient income" ranked 2nd (unduplicated) with 94. Some might say these two causes could be combined under "insufficient income" for a total of 244 (or over half of those interviewed)

Also in this survey, we compiled a list of 20 jobs that are being taught at the local community college,(Austin Community College). We then asked, "If you could earn a living wage (enough to pay for food, clothing, shelter (including utilities) by doing one of these jobs, would you accept training? Yes -317 and No-38.

We then asked them to rank their top three choices.

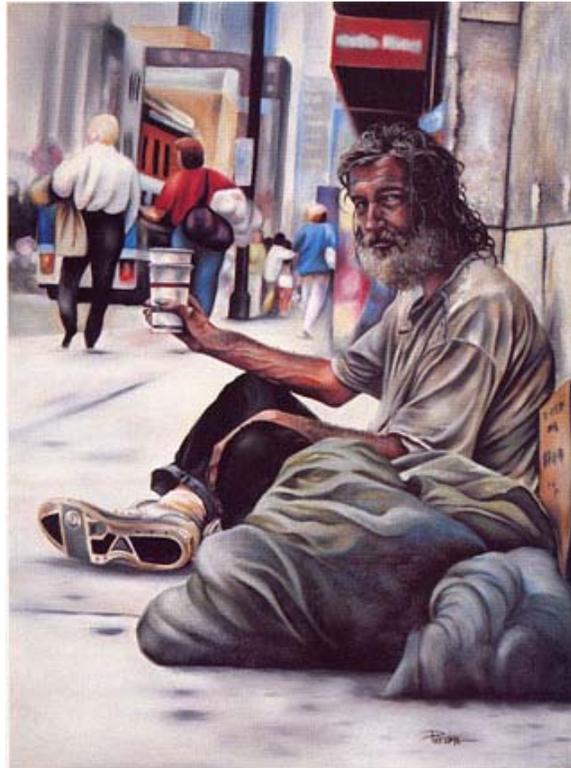
...bethesda hosting.com/.../397_2009...

112 truck driver
109 landscaping
64 bus driver
61 heating and air conditioning
52 computer tech repair
51 welder
44 solar panel installer
33 upholstery
41 small engine mechanic
38 tow truck operator
37 administrative assistant
36 nurses aid
35 auto body repair
34 small engine electrician
30 dental assistant
29 phlebotomy (draw blood)
25 TV/VCR?DVD repair
18 outboard motor repair
17 wedding planner
15 accounting

The surveys, coupled with the "Let's Get to Work Forum, provide the justification and the frame work for the creation of pathways to assist people experiencing homelessness go through job training and end up in Living Wage jobs. This program utilizes and involves city, state, federal, in-kind dollars and participants that include businesses, non-profits, educational and affected persons to improve our community in devising a replicable Initiative.

Seeing the Full Humanity of Our Homeless Neighbors

By Alan Clapsaddle (Sojourners)



Last week, January 27, just a few blocks north of the Sojourners' office on 14th Street in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of our nation's capital, a homeless man was attacked and lay dying on the street for 20 minutes, on this busy street, while passersby ignored him. Washington TV Station WJLA has posted security camera footage of this tragedy. The video even shows one person stepping over and around the dying man to load groceries into their car.

In this time of economic crisis, we are seeing the number of homeless people swell in cities across America. Yet we are seeing local governments across the country enact laws to prohibit sharing food with the homeless and poor, or to force them to designated areas. The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has published a report on 22 such laws and their impact.

One of the problems with these laws is they tend to reinforce the stereotype that a homeless person is somehow less than a full citizen with human rights. Violence against the homeless is rising alarmingly. In Orlando five teenagers, 13-16 years old, beat a homeless man to death 'for sport.' In Ft. Lauderdale teenagers were videotaped beating another homeless man to death with a baseball bat.

We just celebrated an inauguration two weeks ago, and much attention was focused on the election of an African-American president as evidence of how far we have come in the battle for civil and human rights in America, and rightfully so. But while we revel in this milestone, we need to remember the message of Civil Rights pioneer Rev. James Lawson, speaking at Trinity College at the Sojourners Pentecost 2008 conference. He called on us to name the 'isms' that are institutions of oppression that cause a spiritual poisoning — that cause poisoned people not to recognize the 'imago dei' (image of God) in others who are different than them, or you could say to recognize others who are different as somehow less human, less intelligent, less worthy of respect.

Read more [here](#).

NCH Thanks Recent Contributors

NCH would like to thank the following for their generous contributions during the month of January:

Talin Afarian	Ron Landes Family
Amanad Albergo	Johnathon Marvel
Roberta Alvero	Cheryl Matthews
Ellen Anderson	Betsy Menneg
Penny Anderson	Christine Monterosso
Veronica Barr	Rex Mudge
Jennifer Bidstrup	William O'Connell
Korrin Bishop	Tonya O'Leary
Adrienne Boles	Erin Payton
Natasha Braseth	Kimberly Pohl
Nancy Briere	Ellen Salkin
Steve Brown	Tanya Schlorholtz
Ronald Bushnell	

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	Cindy Schreiber
Karin Case	Albert Sevastos
La Clinica	Robert Shaw
Jeffrey Cohen	Paul Skilton-Sylvester
Death Penalty Information Center	Patricia Smith
Fair Housing Council of Northern New Jersey	Kim Strauss
Family Service Center	Mark Stringer
Joshua Freeman	Charlotte Tamason
Sara Fry	Valeria Taylor
Amanjit Gill	Warren Tiong
Andrea Gold	Brandon Tobar
Gertrude Goldberg	John Townsend
Angel Gonzales	Loretta Tucker
Gregory Sileo	John Tully
Stuart Hancock	Tony Urbanski
Carol Hawk	Margaret Whitman and Robert Blair
Brendan Hilleary	Wilmington Trust
Joan Himmelhoch	Becki Winchel
Hope Fund	Wendy Wingfield
Housing Partnership of the Fox Cities	Gordon Woodward
Carol Jansen	Catherine Zimmer

Public Policy Update

After an intense period of political jockeying and debate, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was passed by both the House and the Senate and signed into law by President Obama. The \$787 billion Act will do much to help low-income Americans—the hardest-hit victims of the economic recession—re-enter the workforce, put food on the table, and better afford necessary expenses like housing and health care. (To view a list of provisions, visit <http://chn.org/pdf/2009/ConfEconRecoveryChart21709.pdf>.) NCH commends Congress for taking steps to prevent an even greater swell in the number of Americans seeking homeless assistance services. Nevertheless, we remain disappointed that the final bill failed to include funding for the creation of new affordable housing or for the authorization of new Housing Choice Vouchers. These are vital projects that would target funding to the very low-income renters who are in greatest need of assigning a joint statement communicating the importance of targeting assistance to low-income renters. To read the statement, visit <http://www.nlihc.org/doc/What-We-Mean-By-Housing-2-10.pdf>, as opposed to programs that primarily benefit rich and middle-class homebuyers. NCH joined 546 other national, state, and local organizations in signing a joint statement communicating the importance of targeting assistance to low-income renters. To read the statement, visit <http://www.nlihc.org/doc/What-We-Mean-By-Housing-2-10.pdf>.

National Housing Trust Fund

NCH and other low-income housing advocates pressed Congress to include substantial funding for the National Housing Trust Fund in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Our proposal would have met the stated goals of the legislation by creating jobs, revitalizing neighborhoods, and helping struggling Americans get back on their feet. Unfortunately, to our great disappointment, the Act did not contain any funding for the Trust Fund.

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However, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan announced recently that President Obama will keep his pledge to fund the National Housing Trust Fund at a “significant level.” Secretary Donovan said that HUD must address the shortage of rental housing for extremely low-income households and the “rising tide” of family homelessness. Although he did not specify either the amount or the source of funding, such details are expected to be laid out in the President’s fiscal year 2010 budget, to be released in the coming weeks.

Foreclosure and Homelessness Prevention

NCH and a coalition of other organizations worked successfully to include \$1.5 billion in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for the Emergency Shelter Grants Program to provide housing assistance for families and individuals in danger of losing their homes. Additionally, the signed bill included \$100 million for FEMA’s Emergency Food and Shelter Program, which will provide a range of services—including food provisions, utility assistance, and emergency shelter—for homeless and precariously-housed Americans.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act also included a number of protections for renters of foreclosed properties. Among them are the provisions that no housing assisted with funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) can refuse to rent to someone with a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, and that any tenant occupying a foreclosed property purchased by NSP must be given at least 90 days notice before they are forced to vacate. NCH will continue to work to extend these protections to all tenants—not just those in NSP-purchased homes.

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