



NCAB Newsletter

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Every Success Story

A new publication from the National Health Care for the Homeless Council entitled *Every Success Story is a Great Story: Health Care for the Homeless* tells the stories of sixteen people who have been homeless, have survived the experience, and who continue in the struggle to end homelessness altogether.

The 36-page booklet contains interviews with and photographs of HCH clients who attended the 2005 National HCH Conference in Washington DC and participated in the meetings of the National Consumer Advisory Board.

In publishing stories of people whose lives have been changed by Health Care for the Homeless, we rejoice with them in their recoveries from homelessness, from devastating addictions, from other illnesses, and from the traumatic effects of poverty. We delight in their continuing commitment to combat homelessness in their own lives and among their neighbors, including through involvement in local HCH Consumer Advisory Boards.

The fine people whose stories are in *Every Success Story is a Great Story* are

Amy Grassette	Darryl Taylor
James Schulte	Veronique Moore
Lisa and Tony Martinez	Glenise Hildahl
Bob McConagle	Carol Hall
Julie Flynn	Richard Drain

Kacia Wilkinson
Beth Kapla
Kristin M. Leve

James Tilghman
Ellen Dailey

It is gratifying to know that their stories are representative of countless others, people who have been assisted by Health Care for the Homeless, and who have moved on into better, healthier circumstances.

When we put this booklet together, we did not anticipate fully the meaning it would have for people who are homeless, who are finding important encouragement in its pages. It is also useful for telling the story of Health Care for the Homeless to politicians, funders and the general public.

The booklet is available on-line at www.nhchc.org. Hard copies are available for purchase on the same web site.

John Lozier
Executive Director
National Health Care for the Homeless
Council

We Have a Winner!!

Carol Hall of Portland Oregon is the winner of our logo contest!! Thank you, Carol for your entry. She said that it is helping hands helping other hands to help other people. The logo committee agreed that the message was right on !!

Deadly dehydration: dying on the streets of Phoenix

by Michael Woodard and Lisa Garcia-Gray

“Hey Joe! Joe! Jooooooooo!” But he didn’t answer back when I screamed at my friend to wake up, rivers and oceans of sweat rolling down my back. Every stitch of my tattered clothing clung to my overheated body, adhered by days of Phoenix’s inhuman 110 and above summer heat.

Old Black Joe, as he’d called himself ever since he landed on Arizona’s homeless streets several years ago, was an African Descendent elder with a bad story, a sad story and a left-behind life, just like all of us have, but in Joe’s case, somehow it was sadder, at least to me. Joe was decidedly unpolitical, and if you tried to talk to him about the plight of the Black man in Amerikkka, he would tell you once very politely in his well-enunciated, Southern hotel bellman-trained English to hush. If that didn’t stop you, he would tell you again; but this time it wouldn’t be so polite. Of course I learned fast ‘cause I wanted to be Joes’ friend. He was full of some of the best Louisiana-Cajun-African folk tales, and it made summer on the streets of Arizona a little less painful. But this summer is different. Instead of a few days each week above 100 degrees, 110, 112, 115 and even the whopping 116 degree weather has rolled on and on for over three weeks. That kind of weather is hard for everyone, but the little known story is the houseless victims, who are literally stuck outside on the sidewalk with little or no access to water, air conditioning or even the much sought after shade. So far this summer, the homeless death count is over 14 people.

Now, the story is complicated: first it begins with the root causes of homelessness and poverty in Amerikkka, leading to the breakdown of the psyche, the power and the humanity of Black people, Brown people and poor white people, which leads to mental illness and substance abuse. But the other equally important issue is the fact that there is a serious shortage of shelter beds in Arizona, making the heat, which in some ways is more dangerous than cold weather for folks living outside, actually deadly.

According to Bill Manson, development coordinator for Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS), an estimated 8,000 homeless people live in Maricopa County, where Phoenix and its suburbs sit, but only 1,600 shelter beds are available citywide. Add to that, there are a lot of houseless folks, like Joe and up until last week me, so oppressed, so tortured by their many past lives and spirits, that they refuse the help that is available. So in the depth of some of the worst heat, when government workers, social service agencies and volunteers were driving across the city giving out fluids and medical care, some of the folks they reached refused the help.

I guess for me the wake-up call was the death of Joe. I kept yelling at him for almost an hour that 115-degree afternoon in July, until I realized he wasn’t waking up. Ever again.

Michael Woodard is a poverty scholar and survivor of Maricopa County. Tiny aka Lisa Garcia-Gray is the co-editor of POOR/PNN and created the story as part of POOR’s writer facilitation program.

Project to Increase Participation of HCH Clients

From March through June, 2005, the National Health Care for the Homeless Council piloted a project intended to increase the capacity of Consumer Advisory Boards and other consumer groups to participate effectively in the governance of Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) projects. The project was designed and implemented by Paul Boden of the Western Regional Advocacy Project and was overseen by the National Consumer Advisory Board, a component of the National HCH Council. The project was supported by a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). This article is excerpted from the project's Report and Recommendations; the full report is available at <http://www.nhchc.org/advisory.html>

Using a standard form for the collection of information, local CAB members at 13 program sites in 6 cities reached out to and documented the input of 249 HCH clients on issues relevant to both local HCH programs and the National Council. By design, these HCH clients were not necessarily involved in local CABs or otherwise identified with the HCH project; the clients were selected as contacts because of their presence at an HCH site.

Four open-ended questions were asked:

- (1) Have you found the services to be effective in addressing and treating your healthcare needs? If yes, in what way(s)? If no, why not?
- (2) How would you describe your interactions with staff and providers? Do you feel comfortable here? Are you treated with dignity and respect?
- (3) What would you say is the best part of the program?
- (4) What are your suggestions for improvement?

A very large percentage of clients report feeling they are treated with respect at HCH programs. This is not a common trend at many homelessness and poverty programs and shows a strong foundation from which to build. Clients answers also reveal some concerns (e.g., waiting time for HCH services) that are appropriately identified through this approach and addressed through a feedback mechanism.

Five recommendations are discussed in the report:

- Local CABs should conduct ongoing documented outreach to consumers at HCH sites as part of their role as consumer representatives.
- Findings from local outreach should be compiled at the national levels to determine common themes, issues, and appropriate follow-up.
- The National Council should budget to provide on-going support for increasing client involvement in outreach and HCH Governance.
- The role and functions of local CABs should be clarified.
- Local HCH staff should be supported in organizing and advocacy efforts.

-- From the Report by Paul Boden and John Lozier

WHO IS JEAN HOCHRON?

When I met Jean Hochron at my first HCH conference, I thought how can a person in such a high position care about what I have to say? I soon found out she was very interested! She is a gracious lady and she really cares about the homeless and their plight.

When I asked her if I could write an article about her for our newsletter, her response was: "I would be honored." When I returned from the HCH Conference, this past June, I thought long and hard about the questions I would like to ask her and which of these would be of interest to our readers. The following is the result:

As a little girl, Mrs. Hochron was always interested in medicine. But, as the older ones of us know, there was a time when girls were not encouraged to go into all the careers as they are today. She stated, "I steered toward the social sciences. Public Health seems to me to be the interface of medicine and people who receive care, so it was a perfect fit."

She received her Masters in Michigan and then went to Washington. She got involved in homelessness by chance. The opportunity came to help shape the Health Care for the Homeless program. She said, "I cannot say that I was looking to do this work, but I can say that it's been the most rewarding work of my Federal career."

When asked, "How long have you been in public health/special populations," her answer was, "A loaded question—it's been a long time!" However, she did admit that it has been 30 years since she started working for the Department of Health and Human Services moving through many different programs. Becoming involved with HCH in 1992, she has been involved in primary care and mental health programs for people who

are homeless and other underserved populations.

As Director of the Bureau of Primary Health Care's Office of Minority and Special Populations, Mrs. Hochron and her staff of 11 people, have a mission to "address the special needs of homeless persons, migrant farm workers and other special groups that have challenges accessing health care." She said, "We are involved in the full range of policy and funding decisions and also work closely with partners in other parts of the government on behalf of these groups." They also work with other advocates to fully understand and represent their interests in health care. "We are advocates for the advocates," she said.

Her dreams for the future of HCH? "Like so many others, my goal is that we work ourselves out of a job." Is this dream attainable? "Homelessness is not a simple problem. It is the result of poverty, discrimination, and other social problems. Solving these problems will require changes in our health care system and in many other areas of national policy. It also requires changes in local and personal circumstances as well."

When asked what can we, as homeless/former homeless people, need to do to help with her job, her answer was: "I am often asked to explain the impact of Federal policies on the lives of the people we serve. So I am eager to hear your stories—the challenges you face, the successes you have achieved, the work that remains. Your suggestions about how to improve the programs we support are always needed. I also want to hear when our programs are getting it right, so that I can share this with our leadership as well."

Submitted by:
Sarah Davidson, NCAB

Can't

Edgar A. Guest

Can't is the worst word that's written or spoken;
Doing more harm here than slander and lies;
On it is many a strong spirit broken,
And with it many a good purpose dies.
It springs from the lips of the thoughtless each morning
And robs us of courage we need through the day;
It rings in our ears like a timely sent warning
And laughs when we falter and fall by the way.

Can't is the father of feeble endeavor,
The parent of terror and half-hearted work;
It weakens the efforts of artisans clever,
And makes of the toiler an indolent shirk.
It poisons the soul of the man with a vision,
It stifles in infancy many a plan;
It greets honest toiling with open derision
And mocks at the hopes and dreams of a man.

Can't is a word none should speak without blushing;
To utter it should be a symbol of shame;
Ambition and courage it daily is crushing;
It blights a man's purpose and shortens his aim.
Despise it with all of your hatred or error;
Refuse it the lodgment it seeks in your brain;
Arm against it as a creature of terror,
And all that you dream of you someday shall gain.

Can't is the word that is foe to ambition,
An enemy ambushed to shatter your will;
Its prey is forever the man with a mission
And bows but to courage and practice and skill.
Hate it, with hatred that's deep and undying,
For once it is welcomed 'twill break any man;
Whatever the goal you are seeking, keep trying
And answer this demon by saying: "I can."

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Send Us Your Stories

We need you!!! Hopefully, in our upcoming issues you, the readers, will send in your personal stories, poems, and articles regarding how you started your board and how it is running today. Please send any helpful comments on what you would like to see in the newsletter that might help others to ncab@nhchc.org