

# HOMeward

Serving the Sacramento area homeless community

Volume Two, No. 3

June 1998

## Homeless Moms

At St. John's Shelter, Mothers and their children get a break from the streets

By Tracey Wightman Zahradka and Kris Ferdinandsen

Times change, and the role of mother constantly evolves.

According to the women who stay at St. John's Shelter, there is no single definition, but several components and facets to motherhood. "She is one who's constantly there..." "She's independent and responsible, she encourages, protects, cares, nurtures..." "She's as solid as a rock."

The stereotypical mother of generations past is gone. Single parenthood is now commonplace. Mom worries less about what to cook or when to clean, and more about how to spend an insufficient AFDC check or when CPS will return the other 2 children.

For homeless mothers, survival is priority, and the routine of motherhood includes moving from one shelter to another seeking safety and peace, in order to sort out more complex matters such as domestic violence, addiction and lack of resources. Within the safety of St. John's, women get a break and are able

to focus on the challenges of raising children.

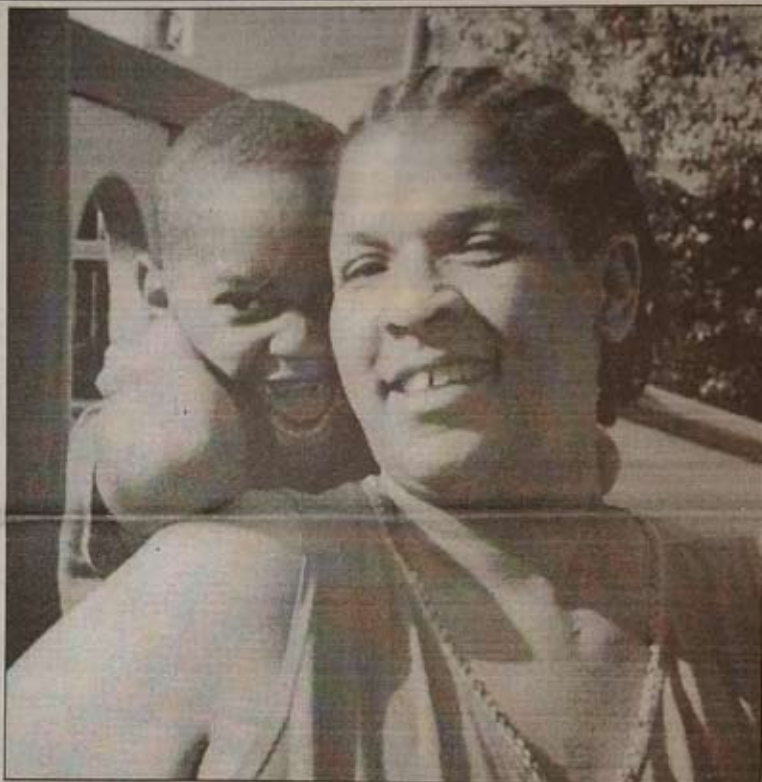
For Mary Ann, like the average mom, the issue is energy. Single mothers have to be the bread winner, or be dependent on the "system." For some it means making a choice between spending 8 hours a day at work or being a mother. It's tough to do both without a deficit in one area or another.

For Jessica Atchley, the most important issue is finding a safe environment for her daughter, keeping her away from racial tension and drugs.

Atchley, 24, and her 5 month old daughter, Sierra, have been at St. John's since last month. It is not their first visit. They are there as a result of domestic violence.

Atchley says she first heard about St. John's from friends who were staying at the Salvation Army Shelter. When asked to describe the environment at St. John's, Atchley says, "It's a great place to stay. They make you feel welcome." She also says she has made a lot of friends at the

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Rose Holloway will soon be moving from St. John's into transitional housing with her son Travis

Photo: Tracey Wightman Zahradka

## WEAVE continues 20 years of service to battered women

By Debra Belt

Perhaps it's best to approach the issue of domestic violence with a story.

It is told by Jacqueline McClain, Safehouse Manager at WEAVE (Women Escaping A Violent Environment):

"We had a client come to us three different times. She had been beaten, was frightened, had no identity and very low self-esteem. Each time she came, she was more severely beaten than the time before. On the third visit I asked her: 'When is this going to change? The next time you are going to be dead.'" The woman got angry and went to another shelter. There she had time to think things over. She called me back and said she was in denial and apologized for getting angry. She stayed at our

safehouse and was eventually able to relocate out of Sacramento with her three children. Today she has a college degree in counseling and does public speaking engagements addressing the issue of domestic violence. She speaks at the capitol every year and is active in supporting legislation that helps prevent domestic violence."

This woman and her children are just four of thousands who have found safety and refuge at WEAVE during its 20-year history. In 1997 alone, WEAVE received 21,933 calls on its 24-hour crisis line and provided shelter in its Safehouse for 936 women and children.

Because of WEAVE, this story and many others do not have a tragic ending.

Please see **WEAVE**, page 2

## Homeless fight for civil rights

Washington, DC - The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) is launching a National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project (NHCROP). Mary Ann Gleason, NCH executive director, recently outlined the civil rights concerns of homeless Americans in a meeting with officials of the U.S. Department of Justice.

"By definition, people who are homeless live in public. A lack of housing forces them to do in public what everyone prefers to do in private.

This indignity is one of many reasons we seek to end homelessness," said Gleason. "Unfortunately, it has also become the battleground for the most fundamental defense of people who happen to be homeless; the right to exist."

In cities with an admitted lack of day shelters and few jobs that pay a living wage, people who are homeless sometimes rest at bus stops or on sidewalks.

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# National coalition forms civil rights organizing project

Continued from page 1

Tucson, Arizona has made it unlawful to be at a bus stop for more than 30 minutes.

Police in Seattle, Washington have been instructed to fine or arrest people who are homeless for sitting on the sidewalk.

In cities with an admitted lack of affordable housing, people who are homeless are forced to carry their worldly goods with them wherever they go.

In Beverly Hills, California, it is a crime punishable by a fine or jail time to set baggage down on the sidewalks.

In Georgetown, a trendy part of Washington, DC, an archaic part of the District Code is being applied to fine or arrest people for storing property (including people themselves)

in doorways

There is an estimated 24 million people on the waiting list for public housing in this country. Despite this acknowledgement of insufficient housing options, the city mothers and fathers of Dallas, Texas, and many other cities across this country (including Phoenix, Jacksonville, Columbus, Boston, Austin, New Orleans, Long Beach, Virginia Beach, Atlanta, Sacramento, Tulsa, Miami and Buffalo) have made it illegal to camp or sleep in a park.

"The flaws in this effort to criminalize homelessness are as numerous as they are obvious. Though no one should ever have to sleep in a park or beg for food, making those acts

into criminal offenses does not help the people driven by desperation to commit them. These city ordinances (and similar state statutes) are misguided because they seek to hide homeless people, not end homelessness," said NCH Board member and Civil Rights committee co-chair Paul Boden from San Francisco.

Staff people at each location will work to bring together the efforts of all local homeless advocacy groups and to fortify efforts in communities that are resource-poor. People who are or were homeless will be hired to fill all field staff and AmeriCorps\*VISTA positions created by NHCROP.

It is too often the case that the harshest anti-homeless attacks occur in those

communities that lack the resources to organize an immediate, effective response. NHCROP will make it much easier for such locales to hook into the knowledge, experiences and resources of other civil rights efforts in order to improve their ability to best protect the civil rights of people who are homeless.

Ultimately, NHCROP will: show the similarities between tactics used by different local governments,

organize a well-planned counter-campaign against existing or proposed anti-homeless laws, and support groups attempting to set up or expand documentation efforts.

NHCROP committee members urge local

communities to document and forward any anti-homeless activities in local communities to the National Coalition for the Homeless.

The Project will start with eight organizing posts in different regions of the country; with a national office in Washington, DC. Proposed field offices include Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, Portland, San Francisco, Jeffersonville, IN, and Washington, DC.

"Our primary objective is to publicly build support for our efforts to stop anti-homeless legislation in our cities while building a framework in which homelessness is eradicated from our nation," said Gleason.

## WEAVE

Continued from page 1

McClain wants people to know that when they call WEAVE they will receive "a sympathetic, non-judgmental listener who will encourage them to talk about what they are feeling."

To anyone who feels threatened by domestic violence McClain says: "Don't keep it a secret. Talk to someone." She says abuse can be verbal (name calling, put downs, screaming), emotional (negative statements, being told you're unqualified, no good), physical (being touched against your will) or sexual (being forced to have sex against your will).

For anyone suffering these abuses, WEAVE has an 85 member staff and 113 volunteers offering counseling, legal services, emergency shelter and a 24-hour crisis line.

These services include:

- The Domestic Violence Victim Program offering drop-in sessions and support groups. "It's a safe place to talk and find out what needs to be done to take care of yourself," says McClain. Drop-in group times are Monday 6-7:30 p.m. and Friday noon to 1:30 p.m. Support Group times are Wednesday 6-7:30 and Thursday noon to 1 p.m. (No late comers admitted and children may not attend).
- ALIVE Program (batterer treatment): "This program teaches skills to manage anger," explains McClain. Drop in group times are Wednesday 7-8:30 p.m. and Saturdays 10:30 to noon. (No



Jaqueline McClain manages the WEAVE safe house for battered women.

photo Kurt Fishback

late comers admitted and children may not attend.)

- Children's Program offers individual and group counseling for parents and children. Also offers a parent counseling and educational group called "Cherishing Yourself & Your Child."

"This program helps mothers understand the cycle of abuse and how it affects children," explains McClain.

- Domestic Violence Victim Legal Services offers workshop in conjunction with The Sacramento County District Attorney's Office on how to obtain a temporary restraining order. There is also a court preparation drop-in group for domestic violence

restraining order hearing and legal consultations.

- Temporary Restraining Order Workshop Monday through Friday 9 a.m. (No latecomers admitted). Court Preparation Thursdays at WEAVE 10:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$5 donation. Call 448-2321 ext. 105 to arrange a legal consultation appointment.

- Domestic Violence Shelter Services provides temporary emergency housing for battered women and their children, crisis intervention counseling and emergency needs assessment, emergency transportation, food and clothing, child abuse identification and intervention, tutorial

activities and school advocacy, mother support groups, evening support groups and children's structured play group.

- Sexual Assault Program Services provides emergency response to sexual assault victims at the hospital, accessed through the crises line 920-2952, and individual and group counseling - call 448-2321 to schedule an appointment.

All WEAVE services may be assessed through the 24-hour Crisis Line 920-2952.

Debra Belt is a feature editions writer for the Sacramento Bee.

## To Volunteer for WEAVE:

WEAVE announces upcoming orientation sessions for prospective volunteers

Orientation sessions will be held on May 6 and May 21 for persons interested in volunteering with WEAVE. Attending an orientation is a prerequisite for volunteering or serving as an intern with WEAVE. Individuals interested in attending an orientation should call 448-2321, ext. 614 to request a volunteer packet.

There are many different volunteer opportunities at WEAVE. These include volunteer positions working directly with clients, such as working on WEAVE's 24-hour crisis line or working with children at the shelter, and indirect service positions, such as assisting with fundraising or clerical support.

After attending an orientation, community members interested in volunteering in a direct service capacity for at least four hours a week must go through a selection process in order to be accepted for WEAVE's comprehensive training class leading to statewide certification for counselors of domestic violence and sexual assault. There is no specific background required of applicants other than a willingness to learn about the dynamics of sexual assault and the ability to work with clients with sensitivity and professionalism. The 64-hour training, held twice a year, is conducted on Saturdays. The application deadline is May 28 for the next training, beginning August 1.

The training is open to men as well as women. As WEAVE serves non-English speaking clients as well as those who speak English, volunteers with fluency in a second language are especially encouraged to apply.

# Sacramento Crisis Nursery

## Helping parents care for their children.

by Ellen Frasier

The Sacramento Crisis Nursery is a program of the Sacramento Children's Home designed for kids who need a place to go. For parents who may not have family or friends they can call on for help, the Crisis Nursery can provide a temporary warm, loving and home-like environment for a child. The Nursery's ultimate goal is "child abuse prevention," says Director, Sue Bonk. It is designed for children whose families are in crisis, which may be a case of domestic violence or not having a place for a child to stay if their parents are incarcerated. Parents may need help caring for a child due to

illness, homelessness or emotional distress.

The services of the Crisis Nursery are confidential, voluntary, and free of charge. Parents are not only encouraged, but required to visit their child when they are able, and a case manager staff assists in strengthening the family. The nursery provides parenting education and counseling, as well as referral services. They even have a parental stressline. Additionally, if a family is homeless the facility will also try to provide help in finding housing. Presently the facility shelters up to six

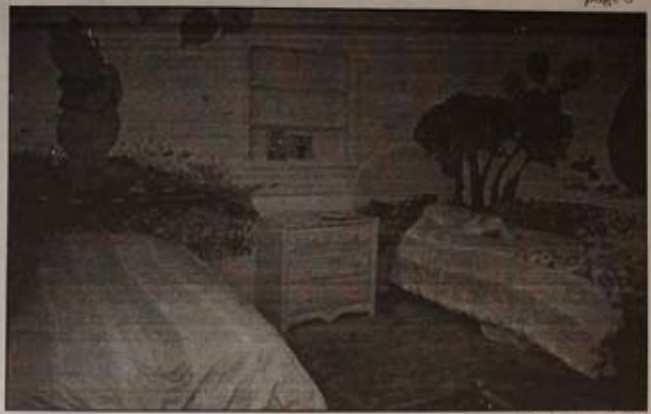


photo: Susan Giunta

The Sacramento Crisis Nursery creates an atmosphere of home for children.

children and is in the process of expanding to shelter ten.

Children aged 0-6 years old can stay from a minimum of 24 hours, up to 30

days, depending on the situation and the need. Bonk says that 30% of the children sheltered are approximately 2 years old and under.

### The Nursery's ultimate goal is "child abuse prevention," says Director Sue Bonk

with us, we provide all the clothing, food and health care that they need." Dr. Patricia Samuelson, medical director of the Sacramento Urban Indian Health Project, donates her medical services to the facility. Bonk continues, "We also provide transportation to the family!"

The Sacramento Crisis Nursery is a non-profit organization and is currently funded by grants and donations. The facility is open 24 hours. Due to the high volume of occupants, it is recommended that you call first for availability information. The Sacramento Crisis Nursery can be reached at their 24-hour line at (916) 394-2000.

*Ellen Frasier is a CSUS psychology student at and freelance writer*

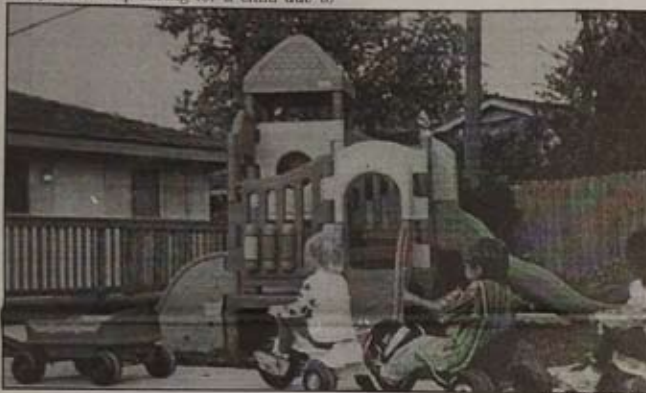


Photo: Susan Giunta

Children aged 0-6 years old can stay at the Crisis Nursery from 24 hours to 30 days.

# Homeless Artisans to show their work in "Salute to the Arts '98"

First of all, I've got a correction to make. In the last issue I announced that there would be a Homeless Artisans art show at the Swanks Dinner Theater in Rocklin, but it never happened. The theater closed due to lack of funds.

The Homeless Artisans do have other things in the fire though. May 2-3, we started our first organized art shows around town. The greenbelt on the corner of 21st and H is where we are holding these shows with about 6 artists who have already signed up. We plans be there every weekend with some unusual

### Artists' update

By Art Clay



art made from the streets.

On June 10, The Homeless Artisans will be showing their work in the "Salute to the Arts '98" in Old Sacramento, sponsored by the River City Small Business Chamber. The

work will be shown at the Firehouse restaurant, located at 1112 2nd Street. Any artist wishing to be in this show should get their work in soon. Please contact Art Clay at 492-1115, or give your work to Birte in the Loaves and Fishes Library.

We also have a couple of new things in the works - A theater group is being formed, and we meet every Thursday at Loaves and Fishes, in the gazebos at 1:00 PM. If you want to be a part of this group, show up and help us plan. Our theme will be, "Stories From the Streets."

If you have a true street experience that you think would make a good short skit, come by and tell us about it. We're looking for funny, tragic, police harassment, etc.

The Artisans are also in the business of protesting for our human rights, and if you are interested in joining this group, come to our Thursday afternoon meeting, or if you have any information, we should be aware of, come and let us know about it.

Know this. You don't have to be an artist to join the Homeless Artisans. You

### Homeward staff

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## Welcome to Homeward: Please help us make a difference.

Homeward is a publication of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC), which is a part of the Sacramento Housing Alliance.

Homeward's mission is to publish a newspaper for the homeless so that communication and concerns of and about the homeless are presented in a way that increases public awareness through education, involvement,

and encouragement of our community about this segment of our population. It hopes to alleviate miscommunication by providing a dialogue between disparate communities. It also serves as a creative outlet for homeless people.

The opinions expressed in Homeward are those of the authors, and not necessarily the Sacramento Housing Alliance.

SHOC meets every Monday at 10 a.m. to discuss political issues, and the Homeward editorial committee meets on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. All meetings are held at Loaves and Fishes' Friendship Park.

We welcome any participation or contributions. Articles, poems and other writing can be submitted to the Sacramento Housing Alliance or given to Birte

in the library at Loaves and Fishes.

Subscriptions are available with a \$15 contribution. A one-year subscription is offered with a \$50 annual membership to the Sacramento Housing Alliance. Make checks out to SHA.

All correspondence can be sent to Homeward, 2125 19th St., Suite 101, Sac, CA 95818. For information call 442-1198.

# A Hunger for Justice: Symposium on Human Rights

by Stacie Clary

Following on the success of its first workshop focusing on the human rights of homeless people, the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC) sponsored a second "Symposium on Human Rights for Homeless People" April 21 at Loaves and Fishes. Coordinated by SHOC's Jimmy Baca, the workshop featured leaders of human rights and social service organizations and drew an audience of homeless individuals and community activists that filled the seats in Loaves and Fishes Library. The overall message from the panelists and the dialogue that followed was to unite,

organize, and make all injustices visible. As Mary Todd from Food not Bombs stated, "We have the power of the truth."

Chris Ginty from the Loaves and Fishes Dining Room and Todd described the programs and their philosophies of compassion and the right to food. Jerry Fishman spoke of the successful work of Amnesty International in documenting abuses and freeing people from prisons and torture by flooding the abusers with letters. By bringing attention to the situation, Amnesty shows abusers they cannot get away with torturing and imprisoning people because of their beliefs. Fishman stated that local chapters (such as his in Davis) can accept depositions of abuses and send them to their international office. If they find a reasonable case they will alert Amnesty chapters worldwide. SHOC has been documenting cases of human and civil rights violations against homeless individuals in Sacramento and passed them on to Amnesty. The group is waiting to hear the results.

Both Robin Ware of the NAACP and William Kennedy of the Legal Services of Northern California discussed the political and economic context behind poverty and

homelessness and the importance of organizing. Ware spoke of lost jobs due to "merger-mania" among corporations and the large amount of government money spent on space defense compared to the small amount on human services. In Ware's opinion, apathy and division between the "haves" and the "have nots" play a strong role in the problems of poor people.

Kennedy spoke of decisions made by Sacramento officials that create and perpetuate homelessness, including General Assistance reductions and siting of drug and alcohol treatment facilities within the city. Officials were given information from staff and advocates predicting the results of these decisions, yet they made the decisions with this knowledge. Now, with increased poverty and homelessness facing Sacramento, the same officials question why such a problem exists and make efforts to blame homeless individuals and the people who provide for them, Kennedy said. One way to blame homeless people is to make it a crime—through ordinances such as the anti-camping and anti-paupering ordinances. Kennedy spoke of new issues coming up: the possibilities of more gated parks like Muir Park, closing of public



restrooms, banning waiting in lines at social services, and the implementation of an ordinance making it more difficult to site social services in the city.

As Ware stated, homeless and poor people need to get organized or else the little they have will be taken. Kennedy agreed, saying that it will be a big task to reframe the debate around homeless issues, and a way to proceed is to build coalitions among homeless people, their advocates, lawyers, unions, and churches. Individuals need to come together to make injustices visible and point to

the real causes of the injustices. SHOC and Homeward were emphasized as important forums to be utilized in this political battle.

Attendees were urged to keep the discussion going, to document any human rights violations, to participate in a newly formed speakers bureau, and to join SHOC. Ed Harris, president of SHOC, said, "We will be planning more workshops such as this one," to keep the dialogue and momentum going and to organize efforts by homeless individuals to stand up for their rights.

## Joining SHA

Annual Membership dues:

Individuals, \$35;  
Standard, \$15;

Low income organizations: non-profit, \$50;  
for-profit, \$100.

Send donations to:  
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CA 95818  
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photo: Tracey Wightman Zahradka

Jessica Atchley came to St. John's due to domestic violence.

## Mothers seek a new start

Continued from page 1

shelter.

A typical day for Atchley begins at 6 a.m. She gets herself and her daughter dressed and ready to be out by 7:30, when St. John's closes. From there, they are able to have breakfast and lunch at Maryhouse next door, which stays open until 3:00 p.m. They also spend time at Friendship Park across the street, waiting for St. John's to open again at 3 p.m.

"It can be stressful sometimes," says Atchley. She says her days are basically spent "waiting for the time periods to go by before we can get back to the shelter and settle in." She adds that weekends are particularly tough because neither the park nor Maryhouse are open, so she does not have anywhere to go until 3 p.m. "When it rains, what do we do?" she says. In order to try and hold life together for herself and her daughter, Atchley will soon be making a move.

She and Sierra will leave St. John's and travel to Turlock to visit her fiancée's mother. The following week, she and her daughter will be moving to Hawaii, thanks to her

future mother-in-law who purchased plane tickets for her son and Atchley.

Though not as sweet as it could be - her fiancée was recently sent to prison for a parole violation and will not join them right away - Atchley and Sierra will be going ahead, trying to get settled at the insistence of her future mother-in-law. Atchley says they plan to live with her fiancée's sister until Atchley is able to find work and then they will try to find their own place.

Though it may be six months to a year before her fiancée can join her, Atchley says she is looking forward to the move and sees it as a chance to start fresh; in her words, to "try to get on my feet and get my life back together."

With Atchley's determination, she will do just that.

*Tracey Wightman Zahradka is a journalism student at SCC.*

*Kris Ferdinandsen is a guest advocate at St. John's Shelter.*

# 'Mother' means something different to everybody

## Essay

By Lisa Smith

Mother, Mom, Ma, Mama, Motherhood, Abused Mom, Single Mom, Mother Nature, Mother Teresa, Mother Lode, Mother Earth, Mother Mary, Mother Superior, Ma Bell, Mommie Dearest, Dr. Suess's "Are you my Mother?"

Everybody has or had a Mom. Some of you are Moms. Some of you don't know your mother, some of you wish you didn't know your Mother, some of you absolutely adore your Mother.

Most of love our mother...

If you are an active mother, you know it is a '24-7' job. It is a tremendous responsibility. It can be fun, and rewarding - your most important purpose in life.

But for some it can be overwhelming. Motherhood can be too hard to handle along with problems such as drug abuse or alcoholism, incarceration, abuse, health issues, mental or physical, and homelessness. People suffering from these types of problems can not effectively participate in their mothers' or children's lives.

I too am a mother, but my children were out of my life due to drug abuse and homelessness. One of my children was given up for adoption, but the other is in my life today. He's fourteen and I'm so proud of him. My adopted daughter is 7 and every year on her birthday I buy a newspaper and save it, and periodically I write letters to her and save them too. When she's old enough, if she finds me, she'll know I never forgot her birthday. By reading the letters, she might know me better. Miracles happen when you let them.

My own mother has always been the strongest woman I've ever known.

That strength is even more apparent now as I watch her live with severe arthritis with its crippling and deforming effect on her body.... Her strength, courage and faith are remarkable. She encourages and supports others who have the same disease. She loves me unconditionally. When I was using and drinking, I put her through sheer hell. Addictions have the nasty power to allow you to hurt others when you don't even want to. Thanks to God, and recovery, we have a relationship today that is loving.

I always thought of my mother as being the prettiest lady in the world.

After all, Mothers give birth! There are easy pregnancies, hard pregnancies, painful deliveries, dangous deliveries, babies that are still born, moms dying after giving birth, multiple births, etc. Oh and don't forget conceiving! Motherhood is such a multi-faceted process!

We might be from happy homes, religious homes, dysfunctional homes, broken homes, orphan homes, foster homes, etc.

I spoke with a woman in recovery from alcohol and drugs about her feelings about her mom. She said growing up she wasn't close to her mom. She blames

family dysfunction and rivalry and says she became very rebellious. Her rebellion acted out by ahving children at 17 and getting married young. Today she is a grandmother also. She says she loves her mom today and does celebrate mother's day, by giving he mom a gift and spending time with her. Mother's day has significant meaning to her today

There are mothers with lots of children, adopted children, an only child, relatives or a friend's children.

A ten year old girl I talked to said she loves her mom, and would like to be like her when she grows up. She thinks her mother is very pretty. They talk about God together, sometimes just hang out together or go for long walks. She accompanies Mom to work at the auction and loves it! The charming girl told me that her cat is

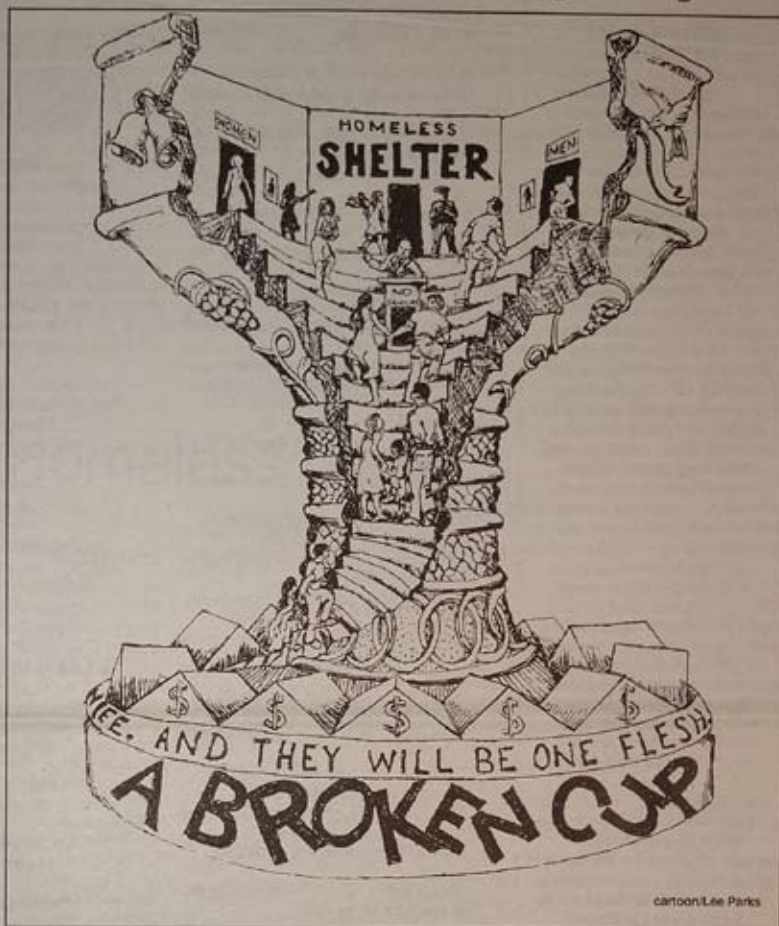
now also a mom. When asked what she observed watching the mommy cat, in action, she said, "She protects her kittens." Her mom is also in recovery.

We have professional moms, blue collar moms, outlaw moms, abusive moms, stay-at-home moms, famous moms, homeless moms, all sorts of moms!

A male friend of mine in recovery and working with alcoholics in his job, said this about his mother: "I remember her playing her favorite hymns on the piano and her love of quilting." They used to talk about God, and the most important thing she has taught him is how to love. He said, "My fondest memories of her were at family gatherings, because she'd be at the center of them spreading warmth." When asked if he had a chance to say anything to her today, what would it be, he replied, "I love you and miss you Mom. We'll be together again someday."

Another man said his only memory of his mother was her yanking him by his hair and throwing him to the floor. She left when he was 13. He referred to her as, "a bitch I have no use for."

If your mom or dad ever referred to you as an 'accident,' or a 'mistake,' let me assure you there are no mistakes in



God's world. You are definately part of the plan!

Here is a healthy outlook on children and parents written by Kahlil Gibran:

*"Your children are not your children they are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.*

*They come through you, but not from you, and though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.*

*You may give them your love, but not your thoughts. For they have their own thoughts.*

*You may house their bodies, but not their souls, for their soul dwells in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.*

*You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you. For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.*

*You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.*

*The Archer sees the mark upon the path as the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows might go swift and far. Let your bending in the*

*Archer's hand be for gladness; for even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable."*

A homeless mother I spoke with gave me a lot of hope. Her attitude towards life and God were positive. She knows she needs to put one foot in front of the other to see her children again and to get back on her feet. She's not bitter and had more love and patience in her mannerisms than most. God bless her!

Motherhood and mothers give us life. If your mother is still with us, give your love generously on this day. If she's not, perhaps visit her grave or say a prayer for her. Be grateful for your life. Allow your children to indulge you. If you're a mom without your child presently, due to addictions, homelessness or incarceration, or other legal trouble - remember that you gave them life, the greatest gift of all! Happy Mother's Day.

*Lisa Smith is formerly homeless and will soon return to New York to be with her son*

## Poetry

## Sons of Light

by Peter LaRue

so hard to find a match  
to some graceful fingerprints  
with these grisly incursions of death

or the sacredness divided by the  
rage in its collisions radiated  
from all the fright that escapes the  
depths of the night

sons of darkness - sons of light  
with that street-bred swiftness  
of angels with their  
seraphim smiles;

shekinah the trash and wash  
out the grey of skies  
crying on concrete as shining  
asphalt in this gleaming  
correspondence with the chariots  
of glee; screaming through a  
rainbow's might - sons of a well-  
practiced platoon of the  
devil's best demons are  
summoned to scratch out a song called  
the chosen maniac's blues - hoping to  
drive a few broken-winged angels lost  
and confused

it hurts so much to keep  
up this fight

sons of darkness - sons of light  
so on you go - speaking in tongues  
as you heal your cripples on  
broken down crutches propped-up  
by a more scholarly love  
as long-necked masochists  
wait so patiently in line  
for their small servings of  
spite

sons of darkness - sons of light  
all these well-fattened preachers  
of a franchised religion  
can never chain down the doors of  
greater truths - as these hands  
reach on out of the darkness to  
turn on a re birthing of  
sight

sons of darkness - sons of light  
rusted and robes reformed  
from the burning bowels of  
a converted cemetery are  
showcased in front of the  
spiritual prisoners from the  
moon on the poisoned  
trains racing quickly towards  
the last known survivors  
left from the isles of  
fright

sons of darkness - sons of light  
of the local insane asylum  
full of reincarnated kings  
and queens all refusing  
to give up on the royalties  
in their blood coursing  
through our veins  
looking at safe-houses  
stuffed by government sponsored  
witches, there to do more  
than just observe  
how they enjoy every inch  
pain - how you tell  
me; what gives them  
the right-

sons of darkness  
sons of light

## Artist

by Bill J. Komptske

An artist was found in a well  
there for many decades is all one could  
tell  
If there was a Shöel or Hades or Hell, it  
had only been a tale  
Not found in the story of his life in the  
well  
vanishing after rescue leaving only this  
poem of life  
surprisingly written for Page, his  
beloved wife:  
I'll Be Found Before Valentine's

There was a deep pool of water though  
the floor was dry  
my only view was a round portal  
leading up to the stars and the sky  
my luck was there were caverns that  
spread like passageways do  
here I was at the end of the trail they  
led to  
before any time at all a friend was  
made  
a black rat with a white heart on his  
chest came out of the shade  
before there was worry of what was to  
be my next meal  
the rat I name light heart came back  
with a carrot he laid at my feet,  
following light heart was his mate who  
was all white with two hearts  
one on each hip  
laying down an apple, Two Kind I  
named her, brought from their trip  
through the years they provided for me  
as parents do  
Listening to all my stories but most  
important Page my love for you  
Two Kind and Light Heart showed me  
their kingdom that tunnels  
allowed them come and go as they  
please  
This is how I came to have enough gifts  
to reach up to my knees  
newspaper pieces, letters, magazine  
parts always gave me something  
to read if only a line or two  
but the greatest was that tiny heart  
shaped Valentine's card  
that read the more hearts to love the  
less life seems so hard  
That's why when I was rescued I  
hurried out before I was placed on the  
news  
because Page, I never suffered one day  
of the blues  
Here is the one place, page, we will  
spend Valentine's Day  
With all the hearts surrounding the  
heart shaped card that's  
pictures and words were the

Belonging  
by Lenore Mathews

Oh night so long  
cold, awesome  
where do the homeless belong?

Not in a nearby park  
where they sleep  
fearing the dark.

Or to families that scatter  
as the homeless wonder  
what's the matter.

Always longing, never belonging

The following poems are from the  
collection at the Leaves and  
Fishes Library. If you would like  
to read more, please stop in the  
library and take a look.

## For Elijah

from Shannon and Bob, April 17, 1997

Bob held him first  
in a cradle hold, smiling,  
and both crying.

I, relieved with joy  
motherhood really  
hit me in the face

Couldn't wait to embrace  
him - bigger than  
I thought he'd be,  
still wet from my womb.

The both of us...  
amazed...  
astonished...  
befuddled and scared...

our eyes entirely on Elijah

## A Child is Not to Blame

by B.B.

A Child with no name  
with grief and pain

A child with no name  
feels no shame

A child with no mother  
to give him love

A child with no name  
has his dove above

A child with no name  
has no one to care

A child with no name  
don't want to share

A child with no name  
don't know what to do

so he just goes around  
feeling blue.

## Living Alone On The Streets

by Nedra, 1996

Living alone with no phone  
Living alone with no bed  
Please people use your head  
My child is cold and wet  
The streets are not for me  
So please help me Lord  
Help me get my child

Out  
Of  
The  
Cold

## Len's Serenity Poem

by Leonard Goldstein

Just for today,  
I won't do any drugs,  
if I get the urge,  
I'll go to Cassie for hugs.

She doesn't like them,  
and now neither do I,  
but it will take a lot of hugs,  
to get Daddy by.

She's a good little girl,  
so happy with life,  
a carbon copy,  
of my beautiful wife.

This help that I'm asking,  
I don't think she'll mind,  
She's loving and caring,  
and so very kind.

So just for today,  
If I think I need drugs,  
Come here baby girl,  
Daddy needs some more hugs.

## Mask

by Sunshine, aka Billeen Pruett

Where have you been?  
What have you seen?  
I hope you would have been my  
friend./

There is sorrow in your eyes.  
Have you known  
some of the same grief  
as me?

Serene and broken hearted  
beyond words

Just like me you stuck a flower  
in your hat  
You could still see beauty  
and carry it to others

There have been  
burdens and sorrows.

Did you still believe?

## Lullaby

by James Lee

Go to sleep you weary hobo  
let the town drift slowly by  
for that's the hobo lullaby.

Go to sleep you weary hobo  
let the town drift slowly by  
for tonight you have  
a nice warm boxcar  
to lay your head and cry.

I know the police  
give you trouble everywhere  
you go, gut when you die  
and go to heaven you will find  
no police there.

Do not let your heart be troubled  
if the world calls you a bum,  
because if your mother lives  
she loves you, cause  
you are your mother's son.

# Needle Exchange Programs Save Lives

To fund, or not to fund. To care, or not to care. To accept or not to accept. How about deciding after all sides are covered, all opinions and statistics are in, and then include some logic, some compassion, and don't forget God.

We already know by the statistics that needle exchange programs do not promote drug use. Yet Senator John Ashcroft of Missouri said that if exchanges are funded, they "accept and encourage drug use as a way of life," and "opens the door" to future federal funding of exchanges. Hello, hello - I hate to inform you of this, but for those addicted, it is already a way of life! Pretending it isn't so is pure denial. It's preposterous. Oh, I forgot! The election is coming up.

We heard from politicians, (probably some of them have addiction troubles somewhere in their own families) we heard

## Opinion

by Lisa Smith

from Donna Shalala, Health and Human Services Secretary, we heard from Doctors and Directors from AIDS groups.

Yet no one asked an opinion from a needle exchange recipient! Why not? Good question.

I've managed to obtain a copy of "The Lancet," which is a Medical Journal. In the October 12, 1996 summary in the Lancet, it gives detailed statistics and findings of studies that prove needle exchange programs save lives and do not promote drug use. The statements are from many reliable sources, (thirty of them) listed the end of the report.

To make a long story short, I was a client of

the Lower East Side Needle Exchange in New York City for four years. I not only do not have the H.I.V. virus, but I am fully recovered and no longer use drugs of any kind. It would take me many pages to describe all of the benefits I received from the Lower East Side Needle Exchange Program. This was life or death for me - no lie - and I'm still here, thanks to the program.

I say, let's hear from all sides involved before any decisions are finalized.

Whether you want to accept this or not, it still remains true, we're all in this life together, drug addicts, politicians, homeless, rich, poor, male, female, all nationalities and races, children, straight, gay, and so on. All ways of life ultimately merge into one and the same - we are all breathing the same air!

## CLASSIFIEDS

Submit your classified to the Housing Alliance or put in the black and white can in the Loaves and Fishes Library.

One ad free to private parties and non-profit organizations per issue. Try to keep it under 25 words.

Would appreciate any yarn or related items for crocheters and craftspersons living at Quinn Cottages, 1500 North A St. Ask for, or label for 'Sunshine,' cottage #102. These items will be shared with the Homeless Artisans. Thank you.

Loaves & Fishes Retail Store, 1225 N. B Street, open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mon-Sat. Donations of unwanted items appreciated.

Give hope and happiness. Give a job - such as moving, yardwork - to a homeless worker. Call Loaves & Fishes job phone: 446-9316 Ask for Marie or Margaret Mary, or mail to: Loaves and Fishes, Jobs for Homeless, P.O. Box 2161, Sacramento, 95812.

Searching for whereabouts of David B. Burton. Please call Stacy 369-5348, 697-9391 (pager). I last saw him Monday before Easter. I love him and miss him.

Wanted: Anyone interested in wood sculpture class. See Razor in the Loaves & Fishes Library 8 a.m. to noon.

# NASNA: National Homeless News

## Report Documents rise in Homelessness

In an effort to examine how this nation has fared in its efforts to address homelessness over the past decade, the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has completed a detailed report. The report examines homelessness in 11 urban, rural and suburban communities in 4 states. The report documents a dramatic increase in homelessness over the past 10-15 years. Most of the communities studied doubled or tripled their shelter capacity to respond to an increasing need. A second finding was that despite the tremendous expansion of the shelter system, the demand for emergency shelter far exceeds supply. The report also documents significant increases in the number of children who are homeless. Other findings include increases in the number of employed persons who are homeless and the increasing prevalence of policies restricting access to shelter.

## Welfare-to-Work

Since January of 1995, the number of people on welfare rolls in Maryland has dropped by 39 percent, apparently because of a "Work, not Welfare," tax-incentive program. The program offers a financial incentive for Maryland businesses if they hire welfare recipients - two tax credits: one for a portion of the amount paid out in wages and the other for child care expenses. Employers who hire a person who has been on welfare at least three months can claim a tax credit of a maximum of \$1,800 during the person's first year of employment, \$1,200 during the second and \$600 during the third. Additionally, employers who pay for or provide child care to the employees can receive a tax credit of as much as \$600 in the first year of employment.

Credits are not available for an employee hired to replace an employee who is on strike or has been laid off.

Maryland says taxpayers are also benefitting, since the state is realizing a savings of roughly \$2 in welfare payments for every \$1 in tax credits taken under the program. The program, however, will end July 1, unless legislators and the governor

extend it for another three years.

## Streamlining Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Seven programs that aid homeless may be consolidated into a block grant for states and local governments, according to House legislation approved on March 3. The bill is part of the Republican-controlled Congress' effort to "streamline" HUD. The Clinton administration, however, has "concerns." It objects to provisions that would preserve approximately one third of the funds for developing permanent housing, and discourages states and local officials and others who serve the homeless from using more than 35 percent of any grant for "support services." The bill also tries to "eliminate duplication" by requiring federal departments to coordinate their efforts. Sponsored by Rep. Rick Lazio, R.N.Y., and backed by several housing groups, the measure also authorizes Congress to spend up to \$1 billion a year on homeless assistance through the year 2002, an increase from the current \$823 million. Lazio said that

homelessness and hunger have gotten worse even though federal funding for homeless programs have more than doubled during the 1990s.

## Congress Slashes Legal Aid

In 1996, Congress slashed funding for Legal Aid to two-thirds of its previous budget, leaving many low-income citizens without the legal services they need. For fiscal year 1998, only \$238 million is being distributed to 275 programs across the U.S. Lawyers for Legal Aid have found themselves able to assist in only the most desperate cases, forcing many low-income citizens to attempt to navigate the legal system on their own. (Studies have shown that those who attempt to represent themselves in court usually do so poorly.)

Over one-third of the cases brought to Legal Aid clinics are of a domestic nature, from divorce to obtaining restraining orders against abusive spouses. Housing and battles over public benefits make up the bulk of the rest. Without help, the poor are receiving less than equal justice in our nation's court.



photo: Curtis Hagen

# Homeward hits the streets

The Homeward staff is implementing a plan that will allow homeless people to distribute this publication to those willing to give a small donation. In other cities around the country like Seattle and Chicago, homeless newspaper vendors personally benefit from the donations they solicit from the community. Marvin Jensen, Homeward's North American Street Newspaper Association representative, says the ideal objective of this type of newspaper "is to put dollars directly in the hands of the homeless."

Initial experiments show that the Sacramento area community is receptive to giving a small donation for a copy of the newspaper. Some see it as a positive alternative to panhandling.