

STREET SPEECH

THE VOICE FROM THE STREETS OF COLUMBUS

\$1

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE AUTHORIZED STREET SPEECH VENDORS



The housing drought

The art of spanging

Is there a flame in HEARTH?

Photograph by Gary Swain. Image edited by Marcos Arruda.

No shelter in the desert of austerity

By Mary Loritz

As federal funding evaporates, and national policy shifts from stimulus to cuts, the vision of housing on the horizon remains a mirage from homeless camps and parking lots. The nation is experiencing its worst drought since 1956, and its most severe housing crisis since the Great Depression. Temperatures rose to over 100 in early July, and so did the number of single adults who were turned away from shelter each night.

Welcome to the desert of austerity. We now have not only a major shortage of affordable housing, but of emergency shelter, in a sea of 6,000 vacant homes.

As part of the 2009 stimulus package, the federal government allocated an additional \$1.5 billion to combat homelessness through the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP). As the name implies, the funds were used to prevent homelessness and “rapidly rehouse” people, mostly through direct rental assistance. The funds helped to contain a significant rise in homelessness in the wake of the financial and housing crisis. About 3,000 households in Franklin County were served through the program.

However that funding has dried up. The program ended on July 1st, yet unemployment and homelessness remain high. Homeless programs across the nation and in Columbus are scrambling to maintain services with fewer dollars.

Locally, the loss of HPRP means a \$1.6 million budget shortfall for the Community Shelter Board (CSB), the lead agency that distributes funding and sets policy for homeless services in Franklin County.

“We all knew these dollars were temporary, but they were extremely effective in getting people housed and preventing

people from becoming homeless. Now they’re going away, but the need is not,” says Michelle Heritage, CSB’s executive director.

The need has grown in spite of the additional HPRP dollars: the number of individuals who stayed in emergency shelter in Columbus increased 10 percent in 2011 over 2010, and the number of families served by the shelter system increased by 20 percent, according to CSB’s Annual Homeless Assessment Report.

And many have not even been able to get into shelter. The CSB used HPRP dollars to establish a Central Point of Access (CPOA) for single adults seeking shelter in Columbus. Those who couldn’t get in were put on a waiting list, and for the first time the number of people who could not access shelter was tracked.

According to CSB’s report on HPRP, of single adults seeking shelter between April 2010 and December 2011:

“30 percent were immediately admitted to shelter” and “Forty-eight percent of individuals were put on a ‘waitlist’ for services as beds were not immediately available.”

Yet there has been no increase in the number of shelter beds. The situation is particularly bad for women. There are roughly 100 emergency shelter beds for women, versus around 500 for men. On July 7th, 35 men and 65 women were on the waitlist. On July 15th, the number of women turned away reached 74. And this number only reflects those who called in that day.

“I talk to women every day who say, ‘I’ve called in every day for a week or two weeks and haven’t gotten in’, and they’ve given up,” says Sue Villilo, Executive Di-

rector of Faith Mission, Columbus’ largest shelter.

“And it’s dangerous—we talk to women all the time about how to stay safe.” She says the shelter holds self-defense classes, and that they are encouraging women to stay on Faith Mission property, where there are cameras and security guards patrol.

Based on the current waitlist, Villilo estimates that we probably need double the current number of shelter beds for women.

Residents outside Faith Mission agreed.

“They need more shelter space... a warehouse. There’s so many disasters, acts of God, happening so close together—windstorms, firestorms. All of these things have made people displaced and homeless. Everything altogether plays a part,” said Ms. Allie, a shelter resident.

However CSB has no plans to fund an increase in shelter capacity.

“If we spend money on sheltering, that’s all we’ll ever be able to do,” said Heritage. Instead, as a result of the HPRP cuts, CSB’s 2013 budget [which began July 1st] reduced funding to emergency shelters by \$348,000.

“This is a 14% reduction in our funding from CSB,” says Villilo. “We talked about reducing our capacity, but with the waiting list... there’s no way we can cut back on the number of people we’re serving.”

Villilo says Faith Mission is looking for ways to make up for the lost dollars, and working hard to not let the cuts affect the quality of their services.

“We’re being creative about it. It’s forcing us to look at new partnerships and new ways to provide services. I think it’s broadened our horizon and our view of what we

need to do and how to do it. It’s also... reinforced that we really have to think carefully about the people who are here. The system here in Columbus is not responding to the needs of the individual, and it makes us feel a stronger commitment to doing what we’re doing, and doing it well.”

Heritage says CSB’s priority for the single adult shelters is to redesign the system to make it “as efficient as possible,” and to focus on prevention and housing.

“The system as it’s currently structured is not able to meet the needs,” says Heritage. “We don’t see on the horizon any massive infusion of resources from the federal government or anywhere else.”

Insufficient allocations for federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance grants for 2013 could spell deeper cuts. Heritage says currently proposed funding levels in Congress for McKinney are about \$100 too low nationally. “Right now we don’t have enough to meet the need we have, so cuts would be devastating.”

“We’re facing a huge challenge: The number of families who need shelter has increased dramatically. At the same time the number of individuals who need shelter is going up. At the same time as we lose these stimulus dollars. At the same time there’s a chance that the McKinney-Vento bill will be cut. The bottom line is—we can’t solve homelessness if we don’t have the resources.”

“Long-term solution: we have to develop enough affordable housing,” she says.

“We need more resources, period. When our providers have resources, they can get people housed.”

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COLUMBUS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Vendor Spotlight: Michael Carano

By Tom Over

Michael Carano first began working with the Street Speech program back in July of 2009. "I gave up back then. It seemed I wasn't making any money. I said, 'Maybe this job's not for me.' So, I quit."

"When I came back in 2011, I got with Lester. He told me, 'Mike, just for today, I want to you watch and listen to me.' I picked a lot of stuff from Lester: how to approach and talk to people. If it's in the morning, you say, 'Good morning, Ma'am.' If it's in the afternoon, you say, 'Good afternoon.' If it's in the evening, 'Good evening.' Then you say, 'Would you like to buy a paper to help the homeless?' 'Since I've been doing that it's been a lot better.'"

Carano has been homeless on and off for a few years now. "It was six months in Louisville, Kentucky. I didn't like it there. So I came back to Columbus."

He said he had an apartment off West Broad with a bug problem in June, but moved into a new apartment July 1st with the help of Ray Daigle, the vendor manager for Street Speech at the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless.

"On the 29th, I went in there to see Ray, and he said, 'Mike, I'm glad you came in. Call this guy. He's got a house for rent. \$300 a month including utilities.'"

To help with the problem of homelessness, Carano said more beds and meals would help.

"Also, you got all kinds of people trained with skills. Some of them are electricians. Some of them are carpenters, plumbers, or painters. They got all kinds of abandoned houses here in Columbus. What I don't understand is why they don't put the money they got from the federal government to use? Put people to working fixing up all those abandoned houses. They can have a home and worry about sleeping under a bridge, or 'where am I going to eat tonight?' or 'how am I going to wash my hind end tonight?' or 'where am I going to sleep tonight?'"

"If the government would step in and do what they're supposed to do, it would help the homeless a great deal."

"All of my close family is deceased, but I got a few friends here in Columbus. I was the only child. I got aunts and uncles, but because of my background, they shy away from me."

He said when he got out of the military he worked for Buckeye Steel, which is now Columbus Steel.

"I came home from the military, January 3rd of '71. I started working there on the 20th of January. Then in 2002, when they wanted to break up the union, they wanted us to take a cut in pay, and I told them, 'thank you, but no thank you.' I wish I would have taken that cut in pay now."

"That's neither here nor there. But I never dreamed I'd become homeless. I was a crane operator making \$22 an hour. After that, I was making \$6 an hour at the convention center. That's what they were paying back then."

"When I first became homeless, that's where I was working, the convention center. It was hard for me to pay the rent and pay for water, gas, electric, phone, and cable. I cancelled the cable and just watched regular channels. But it wasn't enough."

"When I saw I was having problems paying rent, I went to my landlord and said, 'Dave, just making \$6 an hour, it's hard paying \$350 for rent, plus utilities. I'm going to have to leave.' He said, 'Mike, I want you to stay. You're a good tenant.' But I said, 'no, Dave, if I stay, I'm just going to get deeper in debt.' So I left. I went down to Faith Mission."

"I rented a storage space for my stuff for \$35 a week."

He said his preference at the time was to be at a shelter with some money for food than stay in his apartment without enough money for food. As it turned out, he got some of his meals from soup kitchens.

"I used the sandwich lines at Grubb Street and Faith Mission."

He said he thought about, but never resorted to, dumpster diving or picking food from public trash bins. He said staying at shelters was miserable.

"I'm in recovery from a drug and alcohol problem. To be around that type of environment, especially when it's done right in front of you... it pissed me off. I didn't like it. In the shelter, they sneak it upstairs."

He said dealing with the stress of being homeless made it more tempting to return to using drugs and alcohol.

"But you try to stay away from it by remembering that when the high is gone, the pain and misery is still there."

He said turning to religion or some other form of spirituality works for some people wanting to stay away from abusing drugs and alcohol.

"I believe in a higher power. I believe there is a God. That helps me not to get bitter and it makes life a lot easier to deal

with. I wish I had a dollar for every time I was called a HMF. You know what that means. Homeless mother... --- I don't have to say it. But when that happens I say, 'God bless you. Have a nice day.' Then I get away from them and go on to the next person. You get turned down out here, but every person isn't going to say no."

"When I was in Vietnam, I was a gunner on a tank. I took 13 weeks of basic training on Paris Island. Then I went home for a week. Then on December 26, 1967, I went straight to Saigon. My military life is why I'm linked with Southeast Mental Health. In fact, for me to work with Street Speech, I have to be in counseling. When I came home from the military, I had a lot of anger, hate, and stress. I had a lot of nightmares. It was more than 40 years ago, but still today I have some nightmares from that war. But let me say that I love my country and I did what I had to do for my country."

"When I left Paris Island, they gave me 3 bars of soap, a towel, a wash rag, two tubes of toothpaste, and a toothbrush. What you did out there in Vietnam was you get your buckets. You go to the river and fill your buckets. You're stripped down. You wet yourself. You lather up real good and rinse yourself off. Just like a shower, except guys got shot standing there."

"There are some homeless out here in their teens, but most of them are in their 40s, 50s, and 60s. I'm not sure why that is. It might be harder for them to find jobs, or they might not have ties to their families like someone who's younger. I really don't know, but, unfortunately, some of them just don't seem to care."

"Let's be honest, there are some who might not be selling papers for the right reason. But for a lot of us, this keeps us fed, and gets us housing, and hygiene and maybe even you can see a movie once a month."

He said some of the people selling Street Speech take more of an interest in public issues because of it.

"I write stories. One was about Vietnam. I've done two or three. I'm working on one



now. I write at night, especially when my two roommates are in bed. I got the whole downstairs to myself. I get myself a nice cup of coffee and I get my tablet and pen out and go to work."

"Sometimes, I go down to the library and listen to music for relaxation, or I read the paper or type or work on the computer. I like to play some of the different varieties of computer games."

As for music, he said he likes some Christian music, some country, and some of the "oldies but goodies."

"I like Conway Twitty, Hank Williams Junior and Senior, Merle Haggard, Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton.... I had a little Walkman. When I moved out of the shelter I knew it wouldn't make any sense to try to go back and get it because it was going to be gone."

He said he has a TV and a radio in his apartment, but no computer or internet.

"I watch the news every night. I've been paying attention to this bus driver strike and the presidential election. I like Obama. When he first got in office four years ago, you might as well say he dove in a hornet's nest. If President Kennedy was around and got elected now he couldn't even straighten out all this chaos in four years. If Obama wins a second term, we'll start seeing the difference: more education, more health insurance, and more jobs."

STREET SPEECH

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Editorials and features in *Street Speech* are the perspectives of the authors. We welcome submissions of news, opinion, fiction, art, poetry, and letters to the editor. *Street Speech* reserves the right to edit any submissions. Please send submissions by email when possible to street.speech.columbus@gmail.com.

VENDORS

Like other papers in the street newspaper movement, Street Speech aims to empower homeless and low-income individuals through employment as newspaper vendors. Vendors buy the paper for twenty-five cents, which pays for a portion of our production costs, and sell it for one dollar to the Columbus community. The difference is theirs to keep.



Street Speech vendors must abide by a Code of Conduct which can be found on the back page of the newspaper.

Contact vendor manager Ray Daigle for more information about the vendor program or if you would like to become a vendor.

OUR MISSION

1. To act as a voice for the most vulnerable of the community while advocating for issues of social and economic justice.

2. To foster self-sufficiency by providing a source of income to people living in poverty.

3. To create awareness of the issues of poverty and homelessness through newspaper content and positive interaction between vendors and community members.

ABOUT US

Street Speech is a bimonthly street newspaper published by the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless since March 2008. We are a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA) and the International Network of Street Papers (INSP).



Spanging

Or, the Art of Acquiring Spare Change

By Gatana

“Hey Bub, spare a dime?” We’ve all heard this somewhere—some of us have used the phrase in all earnestness. The beloved drunken bum can usually average about \$5 a day in asking for spare change. However many have trouble coming up with such a lofty sum—plenty have tried a round of panhandling only to walk away with nothing other than disappointment. Though not my forte, I’ve decided to work on a fairly inclusive list of yeas and nays for panhandlers.

The first and most important information for all is the location. Finding a spot where other people gather loose coins is best. New spots are not for the novice. This is true about fishing holes and real estate too, guys.

A couple of quickies: Never spange near a bank, ATM, or food cart. Even half-hearted attempts near one of these locales could garner the wrong kind of attention. The idea, whenever working any activity, is to find a place where others are already doing the same task upon which you wish to endeavor.

There are various ways to achieve the goal of getting a dollar in your hand. By far the most successful method for the newbie is to smile very big and genuine, while asking the most basic “Hey buddy, could you spare some change?” The smile and friendliness factors are most important. By very actively following this basic script, individuals can expect between a dollar or two an hour.

Though rumors abound about those that make millions begging change, in a decade of street experience, this author has not found that to be true. The average panhandler will make \$5 or \$10 in a day. I’ve not seen a person in 20 states support a house in the ‘burbs with

the spange.

For so many people, asking for change is an impossibility--so many different social factors must already be present before an individual can begin to engage so many people in a row. However the shy need not despair. Quite often a person can acquire a few dollars in a week simply by sitting quietly in the same spot. This works well, but takes three or more days before dollar one is seen. This works because people notice and actively look out for those that get to such a point at which they can sit for a week without having something to do which would require movement.

Something often seen, but not recommended, would be walking down the street asking everyone for change. On a dark corridor or the wrong scene, even the best intentioned spanger may find the situation go awry. There are plenty of stories gone wrong using this method.

A final recommendation would be to always be honest when working a handful of change. Asking for phone or bus money when thirsty is very transparent. Some people will give money for drink or drugs when asked, but those same people will be mean-tempered when pressed with a lie. If you’re to the point of asking strangers for money, be honest about your intentions. People have sympathy for drunks. It’s not cool to be a liar. There is a lot of respect in the world for a drunkard.

Ave Maria
God Save the Queen!

Safe at Faith

After Explosion

By Anthony Chambers, *Street Speech* vendor

I awoke to the sound of a thunderous boom and the shouting voice of my bunkmate. “Wake up! Get up everybody! The gas tanks at COTA have blown-up!” he cried. I looked out the window and saw a huge fireball rising into the night sky, which validated his claims to me. Honestly, my first thoughts were that the union had blown the tanks because of the labor disputes (remember I was still half-asleep...) with COTA management.

But, needless to say, his report was wrong. The explosion had actually been caused by a train derailment, which leaked chemicals into the air not more than three blocks from the Faith Mission Shelter. This caused officials to call for the emergency evacuation of an entire neighborhood for the safety of its residents and the Faith Mission Shelter itself.

As for the evacuation of the shelter, I thought the night staff at Faith Mission did an excellent job. They ensured that calm was kept among the residents, that information about what had happened was accurate, and clearly communicated what safety procedures were to be followed. All of the residents were taken by vans to the Faith Mission Shelter on Long Street. I am happy to report that everyone remained safe.

Homeless News from Planet Earth

By Thorstein

Philly sued over homeless feeding ban

PHILADELPHIA -- For the past several months, the City of Philadelphia has been trying to prohibit charities from feeding the homeless in the city’s parks. In particular, homeless advocates have maintained that the city’s efforts, redoubled in May, were timed to coincide with the opening of the Barnes Collection of fine art in its new location on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

On July 9 and 10 the American Civil Liberties Union and four religious organizations that had long fed Philly’s homeless pled the case of the homeless against the City of Philadelphia in U.S. District Court. The court has imposed an injunction against Philly’s feeding ban until it reaches its opinion, which is expected in the next week or two.

Homeless in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- On January 12, 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake almost completely destroyed the capital of Haiti. The quake, followed by at least 52 significant aftershocks, affected an estimated three million people. Some 316,000 died, and 300,000 were injured.

The International Organization of Migration (IOM) recently reported that the number of displaced Haitians living in the camps had dropped below 400,000 from a high of nearly 1.5 million in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. What the IOM couldn’t explain was where the displaced people had gone, and why so many had left the camps.

The Center for Economic and Policy Research looked closer and found that as of April 2012, only 12,000 rental subsidies had been given out, 13,000 houses repaired, and fewer than 5,000 new homes had been constructed. In addition, some 108,000 “transitional shelters” have been built, but CEPR estimated that only about 40 percent of these went to the homeless. Altogether, this still left some 600,000 homeless Haitians unaccounted for.

On July 2, Haitian grassroots organizations and their international allies launched a housing rights campaign called “Under Tents”

in response to the failure of the Haitian government and international aid organizations to address this epidemic of homelessness. According to Haiti Libert , the campaign will press for congressional and parliamentary action in the U.S., Canada, and Europe to support the construction of housing for displaced Haitians. Central to the campaign is an online petition addressed to President Martelly, Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and other senior Haitian and American officials to take action to combat Haiti’s severe housing crisis.

Green Party nominates homeless advocate for VP

BALTIMORE -- On July 15th, the Green Party of the United States nominated Cheri Honkala as its candidate for Vice President of the United States. As a young person, Ms. Honkala was herself often homeless. Last year she ran unsuccessfully for sheriff of Philadelphia on a platform of halting evictions.

Ms. Honkala is currently the National Coordinator of the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign, an organization committed to uniting the poor across color lines as the leadership base for a broad movement to abolish poverty. It works to accomplish this through advancing economic human rights as named in the universal declaration of human rights- such as the rights to food, housing, health, education, communication and a living wage job.

The nominee of the Green Party for the office of President is Jill Stein, a Massachusetts physician who ran against Mitt Romney for governor.

The Green Party has adopted a platform that addresses homelessness on ten points, the first of which is to “prevent homelessness before it occurs by addressing its structural causes, through raising the income floor under the working poor, creating living-wage jobs, providing job training and education that will enable low-wage workers to obtain living-wage jobs, preserving and expanding affordable housing, providing affordable health care, ensuring sufficient mental health care and substance abuse services, availability of healthy food and providing effective, holistic assistance that connects vulnerable individuals with sources of income and essential services.”

Illegally homeless in Victoria

VICTORIA, BC, Canada -- In 2009 the Creating Homefulness Society bought a farm along the semi-rural five mile stretch between Victoria and its airport. In the three years since, local governments have denied the Society the necessary permits to allow up to 96 homeless clients and 24 staff to live on the farm. On July 7, without permits and out of patience, the Society began constructing the tent platforms that will be Camp Compassion.

Richard Leblanc, spokesperson for the Society, said the camp area is just one percent of the property. “Not only have we marked it off, but we piled up the hay that normally would be hayed off this amount of land. That would feed one horse for about 10 months,” Leblanc said. “Do we feed one horse for 10 months, or do we have 96 people turn their lives around?”

Homeless couple return \$10K found on street

S O PAULO, Brazil — A homeless couple in S o Paulo found a bag containing about 20,000 reais (\$10,000) on a street in S o Paulo’s east end, and turned it over to police. The Brazilian news service O Globo says the police have arrested a suspect in the robbery, which took place at a Japanese restaurant.

Jesus Santos and Sandra Domingues had been living under a nearby bridge. At 3:30 a.m. They heard the restaurant’s alarm go

off and went to investigate. Santos said the only thing he wanted from the situation was for his mother to see him on television. “My mother taught me that I must not steal and to tell the police if I see anyone doing anything illegal,” he said. “If she sees me on TV, she’ll know that her son is still one of the honest people in the world.”

Down and out in Palo Alto

PALO ALTO -- Home to Stanford University, as well as some of the world’s largest venture capital investment firms, Palo Alto is one of the few communities in California that has not yet outlawed living in one’s vehicle.

Deborah Gage reports for the Wall Street Journal on “vehicle dwellers” in Palo Alto, California.

Ms. Gage relates the story of Kurt Varner, who moved to Palo Alto from Los Angeles in search of work as a computer programmer. Since the median price of a home in Palo Alto is currently more than \$1.34 million, Mr. Varner sleeps in his van. However he must move it at least once every 72 hours to comply with Palo Alto regulations.

Mr. Varner showers at a fitness club, and does contract computer programming work at a “co-working cubicle” he rents nearby. He pays \$139 per month for the fitness club and the cubicle rent.

Homeful residents of Palo Alto feel unsafe having the likes of Mr. Varner sleeping in their cars on Palo Alto’s streets. The city is considering stricter controls on the practice.



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Is There a Flame in the HEARTH?

By “Too Many Daves”

Street Speech continues the series of articles presented as homeless “progress” editions for the 25th Anniversary of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. The timeline continues with the introduction of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009. HEARTH represents the first significant legislative change to the McKinney-Vento Act.

The bill makes many changes, imposes new regulations, and streamlines and updates programs, but its real value is far more profound: “To establish a Federal goal of ensuring that individual and families who experience homelessness return to housing within 30 days.”

The Act expands the definition of homelessness to acknowledge those who did not qualify in previous programs. The definition of “chronically homeless” has been unchanged since 1987, but now is broadened to include those who have experienced a long term period without living independently in permanent housing; have experienced persistent instability evidenced by frequent moves over such period, and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment.

HEARTH merges the definition of homelessness used by other Federal agencies such as Health and Human Services and the Department of Education. HEARTH also includes a definition for those *at risk of homelessness* to include: a family or individual with income below 30 percent of median income for the geographic area; has insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing stability and/or has moved frequently because of economic reasons; is living in the home of another because of economic hardship; has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing will be terminated (within 14 days); lives in a hotel or motel; lives in severely overcrowded housing; is exiting an institution; or otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

The HEARTH Act modifies the existing Emergency Shelter Grants authorized under McKinney-Vento, and renames them the Emergency *Solutions* Grants Program (ESG). The basic idea behind the newly defined ESG is to fund more prevention, rapid re-housing, and emergency shelter activities, in addition to those already being provided. Under HEARTH, these activities are expanded to include a host of services for those who are homeless or at-risk, including: housing relocation or stabilization services, housing search, mediation or outreach to property owners, legal services, credit repair, security or utility deposits, utility payments, and assistance with moving costs.

In short, the HEARTH Act concedes a



Photo by William Warby.

plethora of systemic causes for homelessness to join the main causes, which are affordable housing and poverty. As such, homelessness prevention is a key element of HEARTH. Previously, the *residual social welfare policy* called for organized public involvement only when the normal resources of family and marketplace completely broke down. In other words, services were only available *after* a person became homeless and *only if* the problem could not be resolved through their own resources. The focus had always been on individual behavior and responsibility—*blaming the victim*. HEARTH provides a legislated structure for the implementation of local programs to prevent homelessness as part of our social obligation. Now, it becomes a normal function for our society to reconcile systemic causes.

However, the HEARTH Act is not a panacea. It provides a fresh opportunity with a financial buttress to maintain a platform of *meaning* rather than just *definition*. For instance, the first 13 pages of the lengthy document is devoted to definitions. It then outlines reporting duties, confidentiality requirements, and technical assistance. Only then does it present details of a potentially substantive and functional Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).

Successful implementation of this new design will depend upon: understanding the new regulations, designing and implementing new programs, effectively building on the experience of operating the Emergency Shelter Grants program and HPRP, and cultivating collaboration between ESG recipients and their Continuums of Care. The new ESG allows for emergency shelter renovation, rehabilitation, and conversion to address local growing needs. Additionally, funds can be used for employment, health education, substance abuse services, victim services or mental health services. Will that happen? Time will tell.

Will HEARTH succeed? You cannot define success until you achieve it. We all recall the “Mission Accomplished” banner-backdrop of a President Bush announcement, over 9 years before fighting stopped in Iraq. Did we End Homelessness in Ten Years? That has been said far too long in

spite of the growing problem. HEARTH finally acknowledges the systemic causes of homelessness and the need for an ongoing approach, or it would not have become law; “ensuring that individual and families who experience homelessness return to housing within 30 days.” Paradigms shift. Challenges persist. As Tip O’Neil said, “All politics is local.” Though HEARTH relies on federal funding, its potential can only be realized at the local level. That means solutions must be simple, mundane, and address everyday concerns in the community. It is personal issues, rather than big and intangible ideas. Ten-year plans mean nothing if you cannot get into shelter now!

As such, homelessness cannot be ignored, defined, or proclaimed out of existence. Tying the hands of local service-providers by diverting funds to long-term solutions ignores current needs. Even with the infusion of Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program funding (stimulus funds), the local homeless numbers were swelling. In a 2010 *Dispatch* article, “Shelters are Full, and it isn’t Winter Yet”, the local problem was identified; *not enough shelter*. Nonetheless, our community has not spent money on additional shelter beds for over 10 years. However, the article records The Executive Director of the Community Shelter Board (CSB) response, “the board doesn’t plan to budge on that policy despite the prospect of an overwhelming winter demand.” The nightly waitlist for shelter as of mid-July is around 100. It is time for flexibility. After all, they are the *Shelter* Board; they should either change their *name* or change their *attitude*.

Simply staging the formerly homelessness at annual fundraisers to express their appreciation for housing is not advocacy, nor does it substitute for an ample understanding of the dilemma. No...the fear is that, if we listen to those actively experiencing homelessness for input, we might hear stories we don’t want to hear, on faces we turn from – because of feelings – feelings we don’t like to feel. So we gloss over them, with, apprehension, accusation, or advice. Assumption, like plaster, covers

our fear of being shunned, unwanted, unloved, and uncared for like them. But each one has a name.

Will HEARTH succeed?

Ask them: Those currently experiencing homelessness have little collective voice in articulating and advocating for their needs. The two thirds of homeless people who are not severely mentally ill or addicted and do not make it to the agenda of the federal government (or local, for that matter). HEARTH is still in its implementation stage. Input from those currently homeless is critical for local program design. They know what they know, if you know what I mean!

Motives must merge with methods – the age old dilemma. Way back in 1929, Porter R. Lee, a founder of social work, spoke with candor to depict the tension between broad social problems and the delivery of social services. He concluded the conflict between “cause and function” are inherent in professional social work. Although those with a cause may sway the beliefs of people, it is the role of those *in-the-trenches* “to administer a routine functional responsibility in the spirit of the servant in a cause.” As such, they can define the essentials.

HEARTH affords occasion for a paradigm shift where questions can be *asked within* the current system that can *only be answered from outside it*. The most common – and most dangerous – failure is the tendency of leaders at all levels to overlook opportunities for feedback; a missing link. As first responders to the crisis of homelessness, shelters extend hospitality and warmth as a welcome to comfort and care, and where homeless circumstances can stabilize, as shelter providers ensure that the neediest in this community receive priority access to resources. *Ask them*. Shelters are the *flame* in the HEARTH.

Will HEARTH succeed? We want more than success. We want *significance*; a responsive, humane, and sensible impact that reflects our true values. Significance comes from establishing a purpose in our lives...and then doing it.

Where do human rights begin? In small places close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the factory, store, office, school, and neighborhood where they work or play. And unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Dignity: so simple. Yet, so often absent from daily lives. We all think of the large places on the map, when in reality and practically, we miss the simplest way to send a ripple into the pond of humanity, with the preservation, celebration, and consideration of the rights of the man or woman or child right next to us...and right now. Identity, self-worth, and dignity cannot be borrowed or bought. Those who see that and understand are few. Those who commit to that with passion and purpose are rare. Are you one?



Only purchase Street Speech from vendors.

Vendors wear **yellow** badges when they sell papers.

The YWCA Family Center

Helping the most vulnerable homeless population, children

By David Teran

Cars, motels, campgrounds, emergency shelters, and the couches of family members are all places many children have come to call home. Families with children are the fastest growing homeless population now. In Franklin County, the number of homeless families served in shelters increased by 20 percent in 2011. According to the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) there was a 13 percent increase in homeless children between 2010 and 2011. Today, there are over 1 million homeless children in America's public school system. Their living situations are all different according to the NCHE: 72 percent of these homeless children live doubled up with family members, 18 percent in emergency shelters, 5 percent in motels, and 5 percent in cars, parks, and campgrounds.

In addition to the lack of steady housing homeless children face instability in their educations and inadequate healthcare. Adrienne Corbett, the executive director of Homeless Families Foundation in Columbus, said "children who experience homelessness are approximately two years behind in school." Homeless children often switch schools multiple times, meaning they must adjust to different peers, teachers, curriculums and environments with each switch. Along with many other programs, the Homeless Families Foundation provides academic after-school assistance to children staying in shelters. Healthcare is also a challenge, as homeless children are less likely to have access to healthcare, and get proper immunizations and regular checkups.

The YWCA, the only family shelter in Columbus, works to ensure that children have a nurturing and positive experience and get their needs met. During the day, the YWCA provides age-appropriate child care services while the adults leave the shelter to fill out housing applications, apply for jobs and food stamps, and be linked to social services. This allows children to enjoy free time and activities during the day. Services for the children include: summer camps, playgrounds, gardening, and arts and crafts.

I was able to sit down and talk with one resident, Anthony Jones, as well as his family. His daughter showed me a book she was reading, while Anthony's son and I discussed the dinner menu for the evening. In addition to providing a safe and comfort-



Kids playing at the YWCA.

able environment, the YWCA works to help the children outside of their facility.

The YWCA works with Project Connect of Columbus City Schools to meet the educational rights of children. Project Connect makes sure that homeless children can attend the same school they attended before they were homeless, giving them some measure of stability, by having a bus pick them up at the shelter and give them a ride to school. Since it can be embarrassing for some youth to be homeless, the YWCA makes sure that the older youth are picked up a few blocks away from the shelter.

To help meet the healthcare needs of children, Nationwide Children's Hospital visits the YWCA to provide children with immunizations and to help them maintain good health overall. Shawn Daniels, a child advocate at the YWCA, says that colds and other illnesses pass quickly through the center as there are many children running around in a small area.

Corbett and Daniels both agreed that there needs to be more family shelters in Columbus. Fortunately, the YWCA has a practice of not turning families away, even if they are at capacity. Yet due to the high number of families seeking shelter in the past few years with limited space, many families have to sleep in "overflow" areas such as dining room space.

In addition to more space, there is a

need for more flexibility for working adults. All families sleeping in the overflow space must wake up at 5am for breakfast and clean-up and then be out meeting their housing and employment goals during the day. This schedule doesn't work for all residents. For instance, Jones said he works

from 4pm to 2am..."I get here at 2 and then since I am in overflow.... I have to get back up at 5, and I'm up all day." This lack of sleep can compound the stress experienced by homeless adults with children.

To help combat the issues of overflow of the YWCA the Community Shelter Board, in midst of budget cuts, has developed the Kinship Care Program. Instead of building more shelters, this program plans to provide monetary assistance to friends and families that take in families who are homeless, in order to reduce the number of families seeking shelter. Hopefully, the program will allow more flexibility for working adults and provide more stability for children.

The constant changes and repeated moves that accompany homelessness are often stressful and traumatic for adults, let alone children.

Daniels said, "as adults we can verbalize it... we can kick and scream, but children don't know how to verbalize it." The YWCA Family Center, Project Connect, the Homeless Families Foundation, and Nationwide Children's Hospital are a few organizations providing support for this vulnerable population who lack a voice.



Photos by Stephen Takacs.

A Rice Recipe for World Hunger

By Robin L. Hinch, *Street Speech* vendor

A website brought to existence by World Food Program helps end hunger globally. It is not just free and educational, but fun. The website address is www.freerice.com.

Adults can play as well as children.

The game asks you questions, and for each correct answer 10 grains of rice are donated. Ten correct answers in a row is a requirement, or the process starts over. With each correct answer you get, you see 10 grains of rice fall into a computer image of a wooden bowl. Ten right in a row and the bowl empties, and you start over again.

Questions in different categories can be chosen, as well which countries that you wish to assist.

Unique poetry can be viewed on their blog. Photographs and stories of the assorted areas are also available.

Numerous school classes and clubs have joined. Playing of the game is unlimited. If you don't have internet access, you can visit your local library. On July 8th of this year, 5,921,970 grains of rice were donated. The website will also inform you of daily totals.

On a personal note, I truly wish to extend my sincere gratitude toward not only my regular readers but others who have helped with the "Feeding America" project. That means quite a lot to me.

No room at the shelters

From Page 1...

But resources for housing are also scarce. The National Low Income Housing Coalition recently reported that Columbus has a deficit of about 55,000 affordable housing units for extremely low-income renters.

About 4,000 people are on the waiting list for Section 8 vouchers in Columbus, and the list is closed to new applicants, as are waiting lists for certain supportive housing programs.

As with everything, it seems, it comes down to the money. And homelessness—like a lack of affordable housing, well-paying jobs, and a deteriorated social safety net—is a problem of national scope.

"People are still facing the effects of the recession significantly," says Heritage. "Our local elected officials have stepped up. But they can only go so far. And our corporate leaders have stepped up. But it's hard to replace these kinds of dollars."

Heritage encourages people to call, email, and meet with their legislators. "It really makes a difference when people call," she said, "Literally, silence will kill us in this."

In the meantime, here in Columbus, we are facing a crisis of shelter shortage. More people walk the streets; they are thirsty. For water, food and shelter, for space, for stability, privacy, safety, and sleep. There are hundreds of women on the streets, and not because they choose to be.

"I would hope that people who are involved in this system that are looking at these numbers every day would come together and try to brainstorm some at least short term solutions," says Villilo. "I don't know what's going to have to happen to someone before we're going to pay attention to this problem. And that's when I think it will get attention is when something horrific happens, and then it's too late." For some it's already too late.

Charlotte has been on the

streets since she was evicted in May. She spent four days in a shelter, but lost her bed after missing curfew, and has been trying to get back in since. She has called the CPOA several times to no avail.

When Street Speech spoke with her, she hadn't slept in two days. "Sometimes I sleep on the steps... but I try to walk around a lot so nobody hurts me," she said. "If you fall asleep, people try to hurt you." She reports having recently been sexually assaulted while staying on the streets.

So call Congress: we need more funding for McKinney-Vento and affordable housing. And while you're at it, call CSB and the City: we need more shelter beds. There are hundreds of women on the streets, and not because they choose to be.

The mission in our backyard

Church youth group serves their neighbors and learns about homelessness

By Katy Hogan

Haiti, West Virginia and Mexico—these are a few of the places the Korean Church of Columbus has taken youth groups on mission trips. While these places were undoubtedly interesting, the Church's mission trips recently took a sharp turn back to Columbus.

The church leadership felt it was necessary to educate its youth about the social issues pressing their own community. What's more, they felt the central Ohio community could benefit from the service of their youth.

Kent Beittel, Executive of The Open Shelter, said, "The Korean Church of Columbus has been doing outreach projects for years. They'd been going to West Virginia and Haiti, but then Pastor Lee and his committee said we need to look at our own backyard."

This is the second year that the church group has decided have its service trip in Columbus. Beittel worked closely with the Korean Church to develop a meaningful week for the students. The group consisted of nearly 80 students with ages ranging from as young as 11 to college-aged.

"The whole group takes it seriously," Beittel said. "Parents take off work to drive kids from site to site: there is a real commitment from this faith community to see that their kids have this experience. The amount of work they do—cleaning, sorting, serving—is phenomenal."

Each day the group split into four teams of 20 each and set out for many different service sites in the Columbus area. The

student completed a myriad of tasks while serving at Community Kitchen, Faith Mission, Saint Lawrence, Maryhaven, Tosi, Star House, Largest Table, Holy Family, and Friends of the Homeless.

The students found important lessons and insights at each service site. Star House, a drop-in center for homeless youth, was a particularly sobering visit for many of the students. "I always knew in the back of my mind these situations existed, but then you see it and it changes your whole perspective," said Jacqueline Choe.

"It was sad to see someone our age dealing with stuff even adults probably can't handle," added Daniel No. While many of the students found their visit to Star House jarring, they were uplifted by the services Star House offers, "Providing them with resources to find jobs, clothes, computer and TV access—they treat the teens like family," said Michelle Kang.

There was also a strong educational component to the service experience. The students heard from Mike Tynan, former Director of Housing at the Community Housing Network (CHN), a supportive housing agency in Columbus. Tynan explained what CHN does to help those experiencing homelessness secure housing and sustain themselves in that housing. The students also heard from Ken Andrews, an outreach worker with the Mount Carmel Outreach van, who discussed how they provide healthcare to those experiencing homelessness. The speakers helped the students to understand different aspects of homelessness.

One of the greatest surprises for the stu-



dents was how easy it was for them to connect with the people they met experiencing homelessness. During a meal at which the students were serving, one of the men stood up and began to sing. "Hearing that man's voice was incredible," said Kang. Joyce Kin also had interesting exchange with one of the homeless men she met at a meal. "One man taught me some Italian and I tried to teach him some Korean. He felt like someone I had known forever, and we were just having a conversation."

Overall, the week was a learning experience, and one that the students will take with them in their future endeavors. "It has made me want to do something with homelessness in the future. I want to learn more

and have career that relates to it," said Joyce Kin. Richard Chan said that the biggest lesson he learned was the importance of compassion. "Compassion. We should all become more compassionate and learn not to judge," said Chan.

It seems the decision of the Korean Church of Columbus to move its service efforts closer to home has been a good one, for the community and for the students.

Gauge Terry, one of the participants, put it best by saying, "It is hard to be thankful sometimes until you see what going on in the world, or actually, what's going on in your own backyard."

Brazil takes steps to confiscate property of landowners using slave labor

By Clarinha Glock
IPS

Today, in the 21st century, there are still tens of thousands of Brazilians subjected to slave-like working conditions. Last year alone, 2,501 workers were freed from this situation by Ministry of Labour inspectors.

This is why the approval of Constitutional Amendment Proposal (PEC) 438/2001 by the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies on May 22, after a ten-year wait, was cause for celebration throughout the country.

PEC 438 would allow the government to confiscate the property of owners caught using slave labor. The property confiscated would be turned over to the government's agrarian reform program, in the case of rural land, or to social initiatives in cities, since the amendment also provides for the seizure of urban real estate.

At press time, in the midst of the whirlwind of activity around the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the draft amendment was still awaiting study by the Senate Committee on the Constitution and Justice.

"This is an important victory. There was a clear demonstration of support from various sectors of society, including 120 Catholic bishops, artists and intellectuals, on an issue and in a struggle that is symbolic in many ways," said Xavier Plassat, coordinator of the National Campaign Against Slave Labor of the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT).

"The confiscation of the property that was the instrument used to commit the crime, and the fact that it will be turned over to agrarian reform, offer both a punishment and a solution at the same time, breaking the vicious circle of slavery," Plassat told *Tierramérica*.*

"It is also symbolic because of the values it promotes, in line with the Constitution: dignity is worth more than land ownership, which will now be conditioned on respect for the land's social function," he added.

Plassat highlighted the fierce resistance to the amendment on the part of "sectors of

the Congress who represent agricultural interests, and who maintain that slave labor does not exist, since no one is working in chains, or that it is poorly defined in Brazilian legislation, despite the fact that this country is an international reference on this subject."

Article 149 of the Penal Code states that the use of slave labor is a crime punishable with a sentence of between two and eight years of prison, in addition to the payment of fines and of compensation to the victims. In 2003, its definition was expanded to also include any actions aimed at obstructing workers from leaving their place of work.

It is quite likely that the number of cases recorded is less than the true number. Prosecutors depend on reports that provide exact locations, usually in places that are difficult to reach, in order to catch the guilty parties in the act, so that they can be charged with the crime.

Between 1995 and 2011, some 42,000 workers were freed from slave-like conditions, according to figures from the Ministry of Labor and Employment. Most were working in rural areas, in sectors such as livestock ranching, charcoal production, plantations of sugar cane, coffee, cotton and other crops, industrial tree plantations, mining, logging and rubber tapping.

But cases of slave labor have also been discovered and prosecuted in cities, in textile sweatshops, hotels and brothels, as well as in domestic work and construction.

Nevertheless, freeing workers from these conditions does not guarantee that their rights will be respected. Modern slavery is tied to extreme poverty, and monitoring it is not enough to eradicate it, as demonstrated by the "Atlas of Slave Labor in Brazil", compiled by researchers from São Paulo State University and the University of São Paulo and released on Apr. 16 by Friends of the Earth Brazil.

In order to bring an end to this crime, workers must be guaranteed a means of livelihood so that they do not fall victim to slavery again, the Atlas maintains.

In Vacaria, a municipality in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, an employer

convicted of enslaving adolescents on his pine tree plantation was ordered to pay the youths compensation. As soon as the prosecutors who had freed them were gone, the adolescents were forced to repay him part of the compensation.

When he was reported a second time, the plantation owner claimed that he could not afford to pay the compensation ordered because of the small size of his business and his limited resources, but promised to comply.

"The confiscation of land without the right to compensation represents an important instrument to combat this labor and criminal offence," Ministry of Labor prosecutor Rodrigo Maffei, who worked on the case in Vacaria, told *Tierramérica*.

"The financial penalties imposed by the Public Ministry of Labor do not have the desired effect in terms of eliminating the incidence of slave labour. That is why the amendment is so important," he added.

PEC 438/2001 expands Article 243 of the Constitution, which provides for the confiscation of land used to grow plants for the production of illegal drugs.

The first version of the amendment was presented in 1995. In 2003, it was incorporated into a similar proposal that was sent to the Senate.

On Jan. 28, 2004, the murder of three prosecutors and a driver from the Ministry of Labor during an operation in Unaí, in the northwest of the state of Minas Gerais, helped the PEC pass a first vote in the Chamber of Deputies.

But the instigators of those killings remain unpunished. And the pressure exerted by deputies and senators from the Agricultural Parliamentary Front, the bloc that represents the interests of rural landowners, succeeded in delaying the second vote until May 22 of this year.

This "ruralist" bloc is now attempting to have the definition of slave labour revised when the regulations are drawn up for the enforcement of PEC 438.

The Penal Code defines slave labour as reducing someone to a slave-like condition, whether by subjecting them to degrading

working conditions that violate their dignity, or to exhausting work hours that prevent them from physically recovering and having a social life. It also includes the curtailment of freedom of movement and forced labour - when the victims are geographically isolated, their identity documents are withheld from them, and they are subjected to physical and psychological threats - as well as debt bondage.

Deputy Rubens Moreira Mendes, of the Social Democratic Party of Rondônia, in the northwest Amazon region, proposed the removal of "exhausting work hours" and "degrading working conditions" from the definition.

Plassat believes that the ruralist backlash will now concentrate on creating a legal void in the definition of slave labour in order to reduce the threat of confiscation.

In this way, when prosecutors determine the commission of the crime, "it would lead to legal action for the expropriation of the property, but subject to appeal," he said.

For Plassat, it is crucial to eliminate all ambiguities and overcome all short- and medium-term obstacles. In the short term, for example, it is important to ensure that there is no backsliding in the definition of the crime during the drafting of the legislation to enforce the amendment. He also called for better organisation of the fight against slavery with instruments like the "dirty list" of employers who use slave labour that is currently compiled by the Ministry of Labor.

In the medium term, he said, the judicial branch must ensure that perpetrators are sentenced as soon as the crimes are committed, in order to proceed with the confiscation of their properties.

**The writer is an IPS correspondent. This story was originally published by Latin American newspapers that are part of the Tierramérica network. Tierramérica is a specialised news service produced by IPS with the backing of the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank.*

“You don’t leave home if you’re happy where you are”

By Peter Brandhorst
HEMPELS-Germany

Sometimes, when it’s really important to him, Attila Horvath tries to express his thoughts in the few words of German he has managed to learn so far: “People good here,” he says, before hurriedly continuing in his native Slovakian. He wants to express his thanks, explains an interpreter, that so many Germans have been friendly to him and his family. And anyway, Attila, from the southern Slovakian provincial capital Rimavska Sabota near the Hungarian border, once a baker, then long-term unemployed and since last winter living in Kiel—is happy here, living outdoors and sleeping in a tent. And the same goes for the other men and women at whose side he spends his days and nights.

A year ago, an eight-strong extended family, all aged between 24 and 35, including two related married couples and a few cousins, decided to leave their homeland. Their move to Kiel was a product of the hope that all they had to do was move far enough away from the misery and deprivation that had been a daily part of their lives back at home, and all would be well.

“They’re quite content at the moment,” says the interpreter. Attila is just happy that a few tents put up in Kiel have, since the middle of April, given him, his family and, in the meantime, four other men and women from Slovakia, a little shelter from the wind and the rain. Before that they had had to be looked after by a city-run emergency scheme to stop homeless people from freezing. German street paper HEMPELS also tries to help by offering some of them the opportunity to sell newspapers.

Hardly anyone leaves their home, their friends and family, if they are happy where they are. Yet in the last few years, since the EU opened up its borders, there have been tens of thousands of Eastern Europeans like Attila and some members of his family, who, faced with poverty at home, set off in search of refuge in Germany. At first it was mostly Poles, but they have since been joined by mainly Romanians, Bulgarians, Hungarians and Slovaks. The Federal Office for Statistics claims that 95,500 Romanians and 51,600 Bulgarians have come to Germany in the past year alone, and forecast that these figures will rise steeply. These people, fleeing from misery and violence, have not been frightened off by regulations which specifically limit the freedom of Romanians and Bulgarians to travel or to take up any paid employment in Germany before 2014. Politicians and the authorities are only slowly waking up to the fact that some of these “tourists” may actually be staying long term.

Up to 300 Slovaks and Bulgarians are staying in Kiel at the moment, though it could be more. “We don’t have reliable figures,” says Thomas Voerste, Head of General Social Care in the city. He points out that

estimates of the numbers of Bulgarians living in Frankfurt-am-Main have been between ten and seventeen thousand. There are hardly any larger city councils which don’t have to wrestle with this latest issue of poverty. The majority of Bulgarians and Romanians who are living in Germany, including those in Kiel, belong in their own countries to the Turkish-speaking Roma minority. According to Amnesty International, the Bulgarian Roma were driven out of their homes and the Romanians have been mistreated by the police. They are all materially poor and even when they reach the place of their dreams, the welfare state that is the EU, they tend to remain so. They weren’t integrated in their home countries, and here in the West they are in a constant battle to keep from going under. They often share rooms in overcrowded, ramshackle houses, paying inflated rents, trying to make ends meet through casual labour and, because they are completely helpless, they often get bullied out of the 3 or 4 Euros an hour they had been promised. They have no right to claim social security, apart from child benefits.

Attila, our Slovakian salesman, tells us about his homeland, with which for some months he has only been able to make contact by letter.

His hometown, Rimavská Sobota, is known as one of the grimmest places in Slovakia. In the years after the 1993 partition of Czechoslovakia many manufacturing companies based in Slovakia closed down. According to reports in the media, unemployment has now reached 35%; hordes of young people are seeking their fortune in the west, leaving only the old and the sick behind. The consequence: the growing exodus leads to further impoverishment, and investors see even less reason to create new jobs.

In Slovakia, Attila lived with twelve people in a two-bedroom apartment with a small kitchen, costing 120 Euros a month. They were all unemployed, and the men were able to claim a kind of social security amounting to 60 Euros a month. When they got to the point of not knowing which way to turn, the younger members of the family set off for Germany in search of work, so they could support the rest of their family.

Attila and his family had to make the tough decision to leave four older dependents behind at home, amongst them Attila’s seriously ill 59 year-old mother. In order to continue to support them from afar, the boys save every cent they earn from selling the HEMPELS newspaper. If a day has gone particularly well, and he has managed to take 25 Euros from sales, Attila tells us via his interpreter, then the next day 10 Euros will cover the purchase of that day’s newspapers, 5 will cover food and drink and the rest will go in regular payments via Western



Slovak immigrants in Germany. Photo: Heidi Klinner-Krautwald

Union to his mother. If he manages to send her 50 Euros, he has to pay an additional 10 Euros in administration fees.

Meanwhile, aid agencies are pushed to their limits to try to offer some support to these people. The daily drop-in center run by the Protestant Mission, together with the “Manna” lunch club (from the Old Holstein and Kiel parishes), which occupy the same city-center building as HEMPELS, offer shower and washing facilities. Bed linens and clothes are also offered free of charge, breakfast and a hot meal at lunch-time each cost 1.20 Euro. The city and diocesan councils offer sleeping bags and on occasion tents for overnight use.

However, all of this is little more than a drop in the ocean. Here at HEMPELS we also try to offer what help we can. Nearly every day we get requests from Romanian, Bulgarian or Slovakian people for the chance to work for us selling newspapers, because they see it as their only chance. “Just now we had a young Roma family with two small children,” says Reinhard Böttner, who manages our office. “Sadly I had to put them off till later.” At the moment we have no vacancies for sellers.

“On issues like these,” says Böttner, “Europe doesn’t function the way we had hoped. But as a street magazine we can’t solve all the problems that arise.” What’s needed is for European and Federal German politics to bring some influence to bear, so that ethnic groups in particular countries don’t suffer discrimination, and young people are not forced by economic need and social misery to leave these countries in droves.

Meanwhile, these people continue their daily struggle to survive. In their heads and hearts they carry stories which tell of many disappointed hopes. Attila and his family expected to find proper jobs somewhere in Germany. But to do that you need to have a decent command of German, and most of them are nowhere near achieving that. But they won’t give up on their hope of one day, for once in their lives, getting the chance to

live normally like other people. “For this one chance,” says their interpreter, “they are prepared to keep waiting.”

But Attila shouldn’t pin his hopes on a major political solution to his and his fellow strugglers’ plight. A report on the situation of the Roma community in Germany was sent by the Federal Interior Ministry to the EU last December, stating that there was “no need” for a national strategy to solve the problem.

As long as nothing changes in this assessment of the situation, local councils face a difficult balancing act. On the one hand they are all trying to avoid attracting further incomers, on the other it is a question of dealing humanely with the people who are already here. “Most of them cope pretty well with their difficult situation,” says Thomas Voerste of Kiel City Council. “They don’t beg, they don’t steal.”

Because of all this, the campsite, which accommodates our Slovakian newspaper sellers, amongst others, was at first tolerated by the City. But recently the inhabitants were informed that they had to leave the site by the end of August, otherwise it would be cleared. Alternative ideas for their subsequent accommodation have not yet been forthcoming from any side, including the church. “They might have to go back home,” says the man from the City.

Attila says that he and his family will definitely stay in Kiel. Even if they take the tents away and make them have to sleep under a bridge somewhere, even that would be better than the life they had to lead in their homeland.

Translated from German into English by Peter Bone.

Sudoku Challenge

By William Crandell, *Street Speech* vendor

	8				3			
5	1				4	7	9	
	4		1	6				5
		4		3			5	8
6			5	2	8			4
8	7			9		3		
1				4	2		3	
	6	9	3				2	1
			6				4	

Easy

			3		8		5	4
8	5		6	9				
2				4			8	
6						8		1
7	2						4	5
3		5						2
	7			5				3
				8	6		2	9
4	6		9		3			

Hard

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1. Street Speech will be distributed for a donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than \$1 or solicit donations for any other purposes while selling Street Speech. If a customer donates more than \$1, I am permitted to keep the donation. I will be clear that the donation goes to me and not CCH.

2. I will purchase papers only from the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless at \$0.25 per paper. I will not sell to or buy papers from other vendors.

3. I will present my badge when buying papers and display while selling papers. If I do not have my badge, I cannot buy or sell papers.

4. I understand that my badge is property of Street

Speech and I will not deface it. If I lose my badge, I will purchase a new one for \$3. If my badge becomes ruined or weathered, I will purchase a new one for \$1.

5. I agree to treat others-customers, staff, and other vendors-with respect. I will not use abusive or forceful language when selling papers. I will not be aggressive, threatening, or continue to ask after a person has said no.

6. I agree to stay off of private property while selling Street Speech. I will not sell door to door.

7. I will not sell any additional goods or products while selling Street Speech.

8. I agree to respect the space of other vendors, particularly those who have been at a spot longer. If I encounter another vendor selling papers, I will move to another location before selling papers.

9. I will not sell or purchase Street Speech under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

10. I will attend monthly meetings at the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless the first Friday of every month. The next month's papers will be released at the meeting.

11. It is my responsibility to police fellow vendors. I will report violators of these rules to CCH. The value of the paper depends on keeping it credible.

12. I understand that any violation of these rules will result in suspension of my privilege to sell Street Speech and possible termination from the program. Badges and Street Speech papers are property of CCH and must be surrendered upon demand.

Please report any alleged violation of these rules to the Coalition by calling 228-1342 or emailing ray@columbushomeless.org