



The Voice Indianapolis

hello,
MAY

May 2015

SPONSORED BY: THE CREATIVE CHANGE PROJECT

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome!

By: Us

Welcome to the Voice, a newsletter by the homeless voices of our community.

Welcome back to another issue of "The Voice." Like always, if you have missed any of our previous issues click the following link to our website and find them there (www.creativechangeproject.com). On the Home page of our website you will see a designated box for the newsletters, click, and you are there.

The purpose of this newsletter is to raise awareness and educate the general public on real homeless issues and the truth about living homeless.

Our hope is that we can persuade readers to facilitate or attend a Cultural Competency Presentation which will profoundly change the way you view homelessness.

We hope you enjoy our work!

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IN THE NEWS!

Woman fined \$2,000 for feeding the homeless.....

Washington Post
By: Terrence McCoy

Joan Cheever, red-headed, bespectacled and feisty as all get out, is the kind of person who gets known around town. There goes Joan, puttering through San Antonio in her non-profit food truck and a bandanna, which she has done since 2005, serving up hot plates of food to the homeless. And here comes Joan, appearing on celebrity chef Rachael Ray's television show, palling around with cops for pictures, and materializing every Tuesday with more food for more homeless.

So that's why, given her local status, what happened earlier this month came as such a surprise. Cheever's accustomed to seeing cops when she's doing what she calls her "religious duty." They come by "to check on



me," she recalled in an interview, and sometimes she jokingly asks if they, too, are hungry. But on one such Tuesday night, she saw some cops approach. Something about them gave her pause. None of them were smiling. Within minutes, Cheever was hit with a citation. It carried a potential fine of \$2,000. All of that, she said, for feeding the homeless.

That ticket, as well as what came next, has made Cheever the latest flash point in what has become a contentious national debate over whether local municipalities have the right to criminalize street

donations to the homeless and panhandlers. Called "feeding bans," a growing number of cities have taken up the call to restrict food-sharing, activists say, in an attempt to de-incentivize homelessness. According to an October report by the National Coalition for the Homeless, 71 cities have either passed or attempted to pass an ordinance that restricts food-sharing.

The effect: Late last year, police in Fort Lauderdale busted a 90-year-old World War II veteran named Arnold Abbott twice in one week for feeding the homeless. In

Raleigh, N.C., a church group said the cops threatened to arrest them if they served food to the homeless. And in Daytona Beach, Fla., authorities unsuccessfully levied \$2000 in fines against six people for feeding the homeless at a park.

At heart in the issue are two questions. Does giving food or money to the homeless abet, if not perpetuate, homelessness? And does restricting — and criminalizing — such an act constitute an infringement upon someone's rights? "We're all human," said Megan Hustings of the National Coalition for the Homeless. "Giving someone a sandwich at a park is not going to keep them in homelessness; it's not encouraging anyone to remain homeless. This is just an act of charity, and do we really want to criminalize that in our society? This is a moral issue."

That's not, however, how former San Antonio Police Chief William McManus saw it. Panhandling is already illegal in San Antonio. In 2011, the city passed an ordinance that outlawed begging for money near ATMs, banks, parking meters and other public locations. Then last year, McManus pushed for a new law that would prohibit giving money or food to panhandlers. "If it's a crime to panhandle, it should be a crime to give to panhandlers as well," McManus said at a city council meeting, later telling the San Antonio Express-News that panhandling is a "quality of life issue." Some homeless, he said, had become too aggressive, spitting on windshields if they're not given something. The proposal was dropped following public outcry, and McManus stepped down at the end of last year.

But even now, Joan Cheever said, some local authorities

still want to crack down on giving to the poor. You don't have to look any further, she said, than what happened to her.

It was the night of April 7. She had just pulled her vehicle up to Maverick Park. She began dispensing food that she had prepared in her food truck. Out of the corner of her eye, she soon saw a group of grim cops approaching on bikes. "They said, 'You're breaking the law,'" Cheever recalled. They told her that her food-truck permit didn't extend to doling out food from anywhere beyond that vehicle. She said that didn't make sense. If true, why not outlaw pizza delivery men handing out pizza from their cars? What was really at work, she said, was an attempt to crack down on feeding homeless. She framed it as a violation of her religious freedom, protected under Texas's religious freedom law, an iteration of which has attracted considerable controversy in Indiana.

“He said, ‘You think I’m infringing upon your right to practice your religion?’” Cheever recalled. “Then he said, ‘Lady, if you want to pray, go to church.’ And I said, ‘This is how I pray. I pray when I cook. I pray when I serve.’”

San Antonio Police Spokeswoman Romana Lopez said she couldn’t comment “on what was discussed” that night.

Cheever, also an attorney, says she’s going to fight the citation and is awaiting an apology from the city. She has ignored the citation and orders that she desist. If anything, she’s accelerated her efforts, attracting dozens

of supporters, and hitting the streets last Friday and Saturday to feed the homeless. Even Joaquin Castro, San Antonio’s Democratic congressional representative, has called on the city council to “do right by Joan Cheever” and “allow her to feed the homeless.”

Cheever may even take her protest to the next stage. She says she’s considering filing a lawsuit against San Antonio on the ground that her religious freedom was violated, potentially setting religious freedom and local laws on another collision course. “I shouldn’t be the one on the hot seat here,” she said. “This is about

every church group or individual who wants to serve a meal. It’s terrible to criminalize the poor, but it’s just as bad to say to the good Samaritans that you’re a criminal too. The Bible says, ‘When I was hungry, you fed me,’ and I take that seriously. This is the way I pray, and we’ll go to court on this.”



IN THE NEWS



Special Thanks!



**3102 E 10th Street Indianapolis,
IN -46201 (317) 225-1881**



The IU-SOC is a non-profit student-run clinic dedicated to providing free medical care and other services to the underserved and uninsured of Indiana. We are able to fulfill this mission through the hard work and dedication of Indiana University students and faculty, as well as the generosity of our supporters.

While the IUSOC is now in its infancy, we anticipate a growing patient population with medical problems of varying acuity. We address a wide variety of conditions, including infections, musculoskeletal complaints, high blood pressure and depression. Also, our clinic continues to grow and now offers a diverse array of services thanks to our partner schools which include - Pharmacy, Legal, Social Work, Dental, Physical Therapy, and Occupational Therapy.

The IUSOC is open Saturdays from 10am to 2pm. All services except for dental services are offered on a first come first serve basis. We are located at Neighborhood Fellowship Church, 3102 E.10th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46201.

.For more information follow the link below:
<http://soc.medicine.iu.edu/about-us/>



Did you know?

By: Tim Henderson (Pew's Stateline)

HOMELESS FACTS

80%

Eighty percent (80%) of our homeless population suffer from mental health issues.

60%

Sixty percent (60%) of the homeless population have jobs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Did you know that “Rapid Rehousing” is an effective tool for Housing homeless families?

TRENTON, New Jersey—Two years ago Jenaie Scott had a \$20 an hour cleaning job, which was plenty to cover the rent for a modest apartment on the west side of this state’s capital city.

But Scott lost the job in a 2013 downsizing, setting off a downward spiral that led her and 5-year-old son Jyaire into homelessness.

“I had other jobs, but they just didn’t pay enough, and eventually they put an eviction notice on my door,” Scott recalled. She and Jyaire moved in with relatives, then begged for space in the back room of a church and finally started sleeping in her car.

“I came here crying. I was so upset,” Scott said from the offices

of Catholic Charities in Trenton, where she turned for help last year. With her strong history of work, she qualified for a local “rapid rehousing” program, which put her and her son in an apartment within a month.

The program paid her first month’s rent; Scott paid a share of the rent for the next two months and now is paying it all. She got a job at an Amazon warehouse, where she filled orders so fast her bosses made her a full-time coach for other workers. “Without this I don’t know where I’d be,” Scott said of the housing program.

The rapid rehousing strategy is based on the idea that in a majority of cases, a little temporary housing help can prevent people on the edge of homelessness from falling over it.

It started with a few local experiments 30 years ago, worked well in pilot programs, and went

national in 2009 as part of the federal economic stimulus package. Now used in every state, rapid rehousing is considered to be particularly effective for homeless families because it provides stability for children.

Mercer County (where Trenton is located) and other communities have found the program produces faster results than the previous strategy, which moved the homeless from shelters to transitional housing before giving them a permanent roof over their heads. And it costs less.

The number of homeless families has dropped by 75 percent to 71 families since 2007, before the program started, according to Marygrace Billek, Mercer County's human services director.

Mercer County was able to lower the cost of getting a family into permanent housing from about \$32,000 to \$16,000 by skipping the intermediate step of transitional housing and moving people directly from homeless shelters to permanent housing. Families had been staying in transitional housing an average of 253 days. **“We were actually managing homelessness, not trying to end homelessness,” Billek said.**

Only about 6 percent of Mercer County families helped by the program have returned to homelessness, compared to 21 percent under the old program, she said. *ing Evidence of Success*

One of the first to try the rapid rehousing [concept](#) was Minnesota's Hennepin County, where shelters were filling up in the early 1990s. When every shelter cot and motel bed was taken, the county had no way to help new families.

By placing some families directly into apartments or houses, the county saw its need for homeless shelters drop by 70 percent and nobody was being turned away, according to a 2013 U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness report.

Similar programs evolved in California and Pennsylvania. By 2008, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had taken notice and launched a \$25 million pilot demonstration project that included Mercer County and seven other communities in Louisiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington state and Wisconsin.

The strategy was expanded to 535 communities as part of the 2009 federal economic stimulus package and showed promising results, even as communities adapted the concept to meet their needs. More than 80 percent of rapid rehousing clients nationwide found permanent housing, according to a HUD report published in 2013.

By concentrating exclusively on rapid rehousing, Salt Lake City reduced its homeless population by

26 percent in one year.

“Rapid rehousing transitions people who are literally homeless into housing quickly. It directly decreases the overall number of homeless persons in shelters and on the streets,” the HUD report said.

By 2013, HUD was encouraging state agencies to funnel other welfare funds to rapid rehousing. HUD spent \$99 million last year directly supporting 450 programs around the country.

There are no nationwide numbers comparing rapid rehousing to other strategies for getting families off the streets, but HUD is conducting a study. A 2013 HUD interim report suggested rapid rehousing is more likely to be successful than other methods.

Last year, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness listed rapid rehousing as one of its top methods for ending family homelessness, saying it could help make homelessness “a rare and brief occurrence” for families.

Philip Mangano, former homeless policy “czar” under former President George W. Bush and



President Barack Obama, called rapid rehousing one of the most promising new strategies since the Housing First initiative of the 1980s, which provided more efficient ways of handling mentally ill or drug-addicted people.

“You get families into housing quickly, and the kids don’t carry the stigma of ‘homeless’ into the classroom and into the playground,” Mangano said.

Although rapid rehousing and programs like it have been taking a bite out of homelessness, the problem is large and growing in many areas.

HUD does an annual count of the nation’s homeless population. According to a Stateline analysis of the federal numbers, homelessness dropped in most states between 2007 and 2014, but it has grown in 17 states and the District of Columbia.

North Dakota, where the number of homeless doubled, and Mississippi, where the number rose 62 percent, experienced the biggest increases. The District of Columbia has the largest per-capita homeless population.

In Trenton, Mosudi Idowu, the rapid rehousing coordinator for Catholic Charities, said he screens prospective applicants and does not accept people who face prison time, or who have addictions, or severe mental or physical health problems. There are other programs for them, he said.

Having a track record of steady employment is important for inclusion in the program, he said. About 75 percent of people who ask to be included qualify.

“You have to be ready, willing and able to work,” Mosudi said. “The old way was the program making decisions for people. That doesn’t work for everybody. People do better in rapid rehousing because they make their own decisions.”

Though families are an immediate focus of rapid rehousing, many single people also are helped. Warcheerah Kilima, 40, lost a home and family business, and suddenly and had no place to go but a 135-bed homeless shelter.

He found work at night sorting mail for a temp agency, but was not allowed to sleep at the shelter

during the day. “I would go down to the train station and try to lie down for a few hours,” Kilima said. “Then I heard that if you are working, you can get help.”

Kilima now is living in a small apartment in Trenton, with a bed, fan and coffee maker provided by rapid rehousing to get him started. He works recruiting other homeless people for temp jobs.

Kathleen Francois, a case manager for Catholic Charities, said most clients are hard-working people knocked off their feet by a sudden crisis, like Kilima and Scott. “Some of these are working middle-class people. This shows that homelessness can affect anybody, including the middle class,” she said.



CHARTING THE WAY:

Source: Below

Attempted Food-Sharing Bans Nationwide

ALABAMA
Birmingham

ARIZONA
Phoenix

ARKANSAS
Little Rock

COLORADO
Denver

Connecticut
Middletown

CALIFORNIA
Chico
Costa Mesa
Hayward
Los Angeles
Malibu
Ocean Beach
Pasadena
Sacramento
San Diego
San Francisco
Santa Monica
Ventura

FLORIDA
Daytona Beach
Fort Lauderdale
Fort Myers
Gainesville
Jacksonville
Lake Worth
Melbourne
Miami
Orlando
Palm Bay
Pinellas Park
Sarasota
St. Petersburg
Tampa
West Palm Beach

GEORGIA
Atlanta

INDIANA
Indianapolis
Lafayette

IOWA
Cedar Rapids
Davenport

KENTUCKY
Covington

MARYLAND
Baltimore

MISSOURI
Kansas City
St. Louis
Springfield

NORTH CAROLINA
Charlotte
Raleigh
Wilmington

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Manchester

NEW MEXICO
Albuquerque

NEW YORK
Hempstead
Huntington

NEVADA
Las Vegas

OHIO
Cincinnati
Cleveland
Dayton

OKLAHOMA
Oklahoma City
Shawnee

OREGON
Medford
Portland

PENNSYLVANIA
Harrisburg
Philadelphia

PUERTO RICO
San Juan

SOUTH CAROLINA
Columbia
Myrtle Beach

TENNESSEE
Chattanooga
Nashville

TEXAS
Corpus Christi
Dallas
Houston

UTAH
Salt Lake City

WASHINGTON
Olympia
Seattle
Sultan



Homeless Experience - Alumni

By: Norma Gaidoo
(Solid Word Church)

You have to give something up or it is not a sacrifice... Giving up certain foods with no increased prayer and reflection... that's a diet. Giving up a warm bed and comforts without inner reflection...that's just minor inconvenience. My goal on this homeless experience was to see, feel and understand as well as possible during this short period how it feels to be homeless. In summary there are four words representing what I learned.

Invisibility. The first night we had an encounter as we were gathering together. A nicely dressed black gentleman with sound equipment was passing by and one of our group, a male spoke. He did not speak or even acknowledge him. Later Maurice spoke to the same gentleman and he simply turned his head and walked on. One of the ladies in our group held the door for a nicely dressed lady and she didn't acknowledge her at all. We had become invisible I think. Were we too painful to acknowledge as humans? Could we possibly represent their worst nightmares?

Unwanted. Another incident happened at a downtown local business. We entered and went upstairs to the mezzanine. We took time to charge our phones, talk and purchase food and drink for the evening as there was not



a feeding program for the evening. We sat for approximately two hours. One of our homeless experience people laid her head down and a staff person came over and said, "You can't sleep here." She apologized and sat up. It was not long at all until we saw six policemen come up the stairs. They sent the lone black female officer to confront us and ask us to leave. We were not rowdy, did not block others from coming up, used the space as students do to charge our electronic equipment and were purchasing food and drinks.

The management actually told a lie. They told the police that we had been "asked several times to leave". The policeman actually said, "**We have to ask you to leave because it isn't fair for you all to take up the space.**" There were four police cars parked in the front with lights flashing. There were six policemen who came upstairs for us "outlaws". Two other officers were placed strategically. One was positioned at the other stairway in case we attempted a back door escape and one in the vestibule of the building. Wow!

Adaptability. I learned that we each have the ability to make or break a person's day. One young lady at the theater was very rude and unpleasant put a pall over our evening at the theater. I learned that homeless people are just that. They people that are 'homeless' are people first and who happen to be without a permanent dwelling. I learned that the homeless have become family groups and that they protect one another as much as possible. I learned that even if someone has a mental health issue the 'family' will tolerate, lead and protect you. I learned that homeless people are intelligent, often hold various degrees and are grateful for the people that remember that they are people too.

Gratefulness. I learned that there are a few that, without need for recognition or acclaim, faithfully come weekly to share bounty with the homeless. They do not advertise what they do. As a result they are blessed beyond measure. I can never forget their eyes, their smile and their gentle voices. Next time you meet a homeless person remember that they are not

invisible. Look them in the eye and ask how they are. Show kindness, open the door for them if possible and if appropriate, find a way to help them as well as pray for them daily.

In recap of what I learned in my two day experience, **I learned some negatives:** business establishments want the business executives, the yuppie Mommies and the preppy college students to shop and stay around in their establishments. I learned that the best way to get rid of an unwanted group is to call the police, lie and tell them that the crowd will not leave although

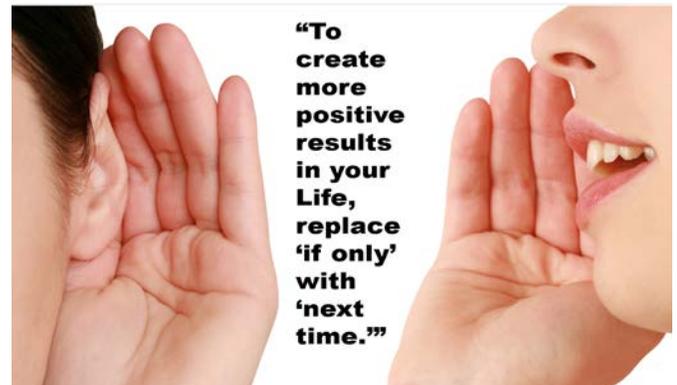
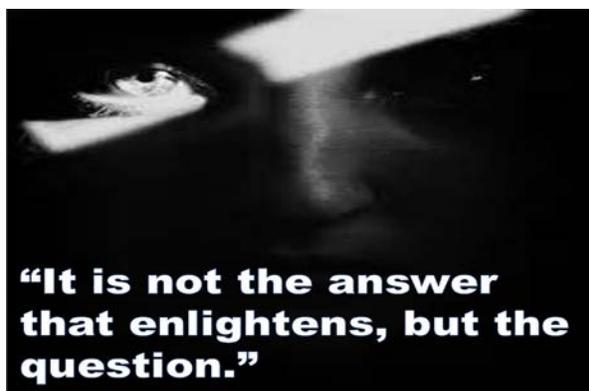
they have been asked to do so many times. I learned that there is a mistrust and a “hold on to your purse” mentality when homeless people are around. I learned that the easiest way to deal with homeless people sometimes it to pretend they do not exist or be angry that they do.

I learned some positives. I learned that the homeless take care of each other. I learned that they are kind and share information that they learn with others. I learned that homeless are NOT lazy at all. They are active and resourceful or they

would not survive. I learned that there are some who, not for accolades, not for praise or recognition, weekly give of their time and talent to bring food, clothing and medicine to those who have needs. They go the extra mile to make sure they send along a ‘to go’ package for later. I learned that we have the power to make or break a person’s day or spirit.

May I never forget what I have learned and use it well.

Homeless Graphic Art



Check out our Facebook page to see more: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Creative-Change-Project/303593586466151>



how to help the
HOMELESS



What do you really know about Homelessness?



PRESENTATION

May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

www.the-printable-calendar.net



SATURDAY

May 9, 2015



BridgeWay Community Church

12945 Parkside Drive

Fishers, IN 46038



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cultural-competency-presentation-tickets-16286961741>



**Child Care
AVAILABLE**



The **HOMELESS** EXPERIENCE



DATE: Friday, June 5, 2015 - Sunday, June 7, 2015

TIME: Friday, 4pm Begin - Sunday, 2pm End

LOCATION: Downtown Indianapolis



Have you ever wondered what it's really like to be homeless and live out on the streets? Come see firsthand the situations that homeless individuals face daily by "Walking a Mile in my Shoes." This new program will allow you to:

1. Engage with the homeless of our community
2. Meet those who serve the homeless community
3. Acquire knowledge regarding the growing crisis of homelessness and
4. Become aware of the public's attitudes towards people who are homeless

Space is limited, so visit our website to sign up for this rare experience. A general itinerary is listed on our website for preview.
<http://indy26aug.wix.com/indyhbr#!form/c6rr>



“What if instead of putting energy and resources into criminalizing homelessness, government and business leaders put their energy and the communities' resources into laws and practices that protect and increase permanent, affordable housing for all homeless and vulnerable people?”

The
Voice
Indianapolis

Downtown Indy
Indianapolis, Indiana
46202



CreativeChangeProject.com



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