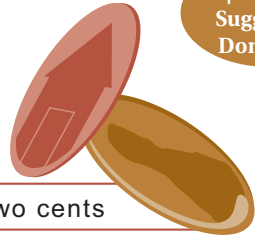




Vendor Jeffery McNeil argues that race does matter in this presidential election, page 12

\$1.00 Suggested Donation

# StreetSense



Where the Washington area's poor and homeless earn and give their two cents

January 23, 2008 – February 5, 2008 • Volume 5, Issue 6

www.streetsense.org



KATIE LEITCH/STREET SENSE

The Hermano Pedro shelter is expanding services after a \$3 million, five-year grant from the D.C. Department of Mental Health.

## Opening Doors

By Katie Leitch

says.

On a December morning in the cavernous basement of Sacred Heart Parish, the Hermano Pedro Day Shelter is serving oatmeal to about 100 men and women. Shelter founder Luis Vasquez is giving a tour, pointing out new staff members and a couple of construction workers putting the finishing touches on new rooms – a storage area and two offices. One of these offices will be Vasquez's, his first ever.

"Just having a little more room to think will be a good thing," he

The extra room and the extra staff are being paid for by a \$3 million, five-year grant from the Department of Mental Health. The grant, which began in early December, is by far the biggest that the day shelter has ever received. It is intended to transform Hermano Pedro from a drop-in that provides showers, a laundry room, meals and "what do you need today" assistance to a center that also offers more intensive case management, rehabilitation groups and recre-

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### IN THE FIRST PERSON

## Hearing Voices My Hour of Schizophrenia

By Mandy McAnally

I am about to learn first-hand what life is like for someone with schizophrenia. People with schizophrenia often hear internal voices and experience hallucinations, delusions or other related symptoms. About 50% of the homeless suffer from mental health problems, and about 25% of them have serious mental illness including schizophrenia, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

I join about 30 people, some who have family and friends with schizophrenia, in a Bethesda church to take part in an unusual workshop.

"Do not remove your earphones during the next hour," Joan Logan, a police officer who coordinates the Crisis Intervention Team in Maryland's Montgomery County, tells us firmly once we are seated with our portable MP3 players in hand.

"Over the next hour, you will hear voices, some will be quiet and some will be loud," she says. I put in my earphones and turn on the recording.

Hosted by the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, the interactive "Hearing Voices" workshop was last held four years ago to educate the community about schizophrenia.

See **Voices**, page 12

## Repairs Underway at CCNV

By Melanie Lidman

There's a giant leak coming from somewhere on the third floor, spilling down the stairs into the ground floor infirmary, and James Burton rushes to the scene. The director of maintenance for the Community for Creative Non-Violence Shelter (CCNV) runs up and down the stairs, trying to pinpoint the origin of the leak. The infirmary staff who brought the leak to Burton's attention shake their heads and smile in amusement. "No one can keep up with that guy," a nurse says, laughing.

CCNV, the largest shelter system in the nation with almost 1,500 beds, is renovating its building for the first time since it opened in the 1970s.

The shelter is run by formerly

homeless individuals and has occupied the giant building on 2nd Street in Northwest for more than 30 years. The renovations on the former Navy building began in May 2006 and were slated to last six months. Currently, the projected completion date is March 2008.

The budget for renovations was originally \$13.5 million but was later slashed to \$6.5 million by then-Mayor Anthony Williams.

Renovations include fixing the roof, replacing all the windows, replacing floor tiles, renovating the lobby, and fixing the rotting bathrooms to make them handicapped accessible, among other things. But some walls will remain partially dismantled and covered in plastic for the near future: the contractors found so much mold in the walls that they refused to continue their work until the city agrees to pay them more money.

To combat the slow pace of the city contractor's work, CCNV residents have completed some of the renovations themselves. A case manager's office on the second floor recently renovated by CCNV residents is gleaming with new paint and new furniture in contrast with



MELANIE LIDMAN/STREET SENSE

The renovation budget was slashed by half by the former D.C. Mayor Williams.

the rest of the building.

Abdul Nurridin, executive director of CCNV, proudly points out all of the work residents and volunteers did to build the much-needed case manager's office: they ran the electric lines, hung the doors, built furniture, and painted and cleaned the room.

"If residents had done the reno-

See **CCNV**, page 7

# StreetSense

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## Our Mission

Street Sense aims to serve as a vehicle for elevating voices and public debate on issues relating to poverty while also creating economic opportunities for people who are experiencing homelessness in our community.

## Our Editorial Policy

Editorials and features in Street Sense reflect the perspectives of the authors. We invite the submission of news, opinion, fiction and poetry, hoping to create a means in which a multitude of perspectives on poverty and homelessness can find expression. Street Sense reserves the right to edit any material.

## The Story of Street Sense

Street Sense began in August 2003 after two volunteers, Laura Thompson Osuri and Ted Henson, approached the National Coalition for the Homeless on separate occasions about starting a street newspaper in Washington, D.C.

A street paper is defined as a news- paper about poverty, homelessness and other social issues that provides an income to the homeless individuals who sell it. About 25 street papers operate in the United States and Canada in places like Seattle, Chicago, Montreal and Boston, and dozens more exist throughout the world.

After bringing together a core of dedicated volunteers and vendors, Street Sense came out with its first issue in November 2003, printing 5,000 copies. For the next three years the paper published consistently on a monthly basis and greatly expanded its circulation and vendor network.

For the first year, Street Sense operated as a project of the National Coalition for the Homeless, but in October 2004, the organization incorporated and moved into its own office space. In March 2005, Street Sense received 501(c)3 status, becoming an independent nonprofit organization.

In October 2005, Street Sense formed a board of directors, and in November, the organization hired its first employee, a full-time executive director.

A year later, in November 2006, the organization hired its first vendor coordinator.

In February 2007, the paper started publishing twice a month as the network of vendors expanded to more than 50 homeless men and women. To support the increased production, Street Sense brought on its first full-time editor in chief in April 2007.

We are proud members of:



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## Street Sense Vendor Code of Conduct

1. Street Sense will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations for Street Sense by any other means.
2. I will only purchase the paper from Street Sense staff and will not sell papers to other vendors (outside of the office volunteers).
3. I agree to treat all others – customers, staff, other vendors – respectfully, and I will not “hard sell,” threaten or pressure customers.
4. I agree to stay off private property when selling Street Sense.
5. I understand that I am not a legal employee of Street Sense but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
6. I agree to sell no additional goods or products when selling the paper.
7. I will not sell Street Sense under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
8. There are no territories among vendors. I will respect the space of other vendors, particularly the space of vendors who have been at a spot longer.
9. I understand that my badge is the property of Street Sense and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers and display my badge when selling papers.
10. I understand that Street Sense strives to be a paper that covers homelessness and poverty issues while providing a source of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

## WANNA HELP?

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, or have a great article or feature idea, please contact Koki Smith at 202-347-2006 or e-mail editor@streetsense.org

If you are interested in becoming a vendor, contact Laura Thompson Osuri at the same number or come to a vendor training session on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2 p.m. at our office (1317 G Street, NW - near Metro Center).

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**And a special thanks to:**  
All those who donated to  
Street Sense on Jan. 11  
for our Facebook Donation  
Challenge.

**Thank You!**

PROVIDER PROFILE

# Green Door Opens Path to Independence – and a Club

By Eugene Versluysen

Green Door calls itself “The door to independence.”

It’s a community program that provides treatment, vocational training, housing assistance, and community services to D.C. residents who suffer from mental disorders and substance abuse. There are close to 1,100 members in Green Door’s two separate units: a mental-health clinic and a support and empowerment center called the “Clubhouse.”

Green Door was founded in 1976 to assist the hundreds of women and men who were being released from St. Elizabeths Hospital. Many of them became homeless, or were re-hospitalized or arrested as there were no community services to support them after long periods of institutionalization.

Since then, Green Door has made it possible for thousands of mentally ill people from St. Elizabeths Hospital, homeless shelters and community mental health centers to rebuild their lives.

Green Door uses a holistic approach, focusing on the whole person – not just on his or her illness. About two-thirds of members are men.

Green Door’s goal is to make its members active participants in the community by teaching them the skills they need to live and work independently in D.C. It pledges life-long support to ensure that members remain self-sufficient and involved in the community.

Green Door’s mental health clinic is in a former warehouse on Taylor Street in north-



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREEN DOOR

A Green Door member prepares lunch in the training kitchen of the clubhouse.

*The Green Door Clubhouse, set in a historic mansion near Dupont Circle, is a place where members can focus on their strengths.*

west Washington. The clinic is certified by the Department of Mental Health as a core service agency that provides assessment, psychiatric services, medication and case management to people who suffer from mental disorders.

The clinic has several community support teams whose staff is trained in the treatment of mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and severe depression, and alcohol and substance abuse. Working with psychiatrists and psychologists, the support teams provide treatment, medication and recovery planning to members.

One of the teams – the jail diversion team – works with mentally ill people who are in jail to make it easier for them to readapt to society, receive needed treatments and break the cycle of homelessness and repeated in-

carcerations. The team visits inmates before they are released from jail, and works with pre-trial services, legal aid lawyers and probation officers. The clinic also has a family support group that offers counseling to families, helping them cope with, and understand, the mental disorders of family members and close relatives. The clinic’s services are free. They are covered by Medicaid under the category of essential treatment. Medicaid is the clinic’s principal source of income.

Green Door’s other unit is the Clubhouse, which was established at the agency’s inception. It is in a historic mansion near Dupont Circle and is a place where members come to rebuild their lives in a communal atmosphere.

At the Clubhouse, the focus is on people’s strengths, not their illnesses. There are 200

members, and membership is for life.

What makes the Clubhouse unique is that it is a community where the members can express and expand their strengths and abilities, so much so that they run the place with minimal assistance from Green Door staff. It is “their place.”

The receptionist and switchboard operator are members, the kitchen – which serves up to 70 lunches a day – and the computer room are run by members, and there is a roster of daily duties and activities.

The main tasks of the skeleton staff at the Clubhouse are to teach the members a variety of skills. They include vocabulary and reading to prepare for GED, cooking and food services, communications and computer literacy, all of which pave the way for the members’ independent productive employment.

Building on the skills training, the Clubhouse has two employment programs. In the initial phase of transitional employment, members are sponsored by Green Door for up to six months. During that time, they work with selected employers to gain on-the-job experience. After that members are encouraged to apply for work and write their résumés without assistance from Green Door.

The agency also owns and leases several properties, which it rents to Clubhouse members, making it possible for them to achieve independent living. While most members prefer to live alone, some apartments are rented to small groups.

Green Door is a recipient of the D.C. Housing Authority’s Local Rent Supplement Program, which is designed to help people with mental disorders live in the community.

## Donate to Street Sense

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- Another amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Another amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for vendor: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional items that Street Sense needs:

- \* Messenger and tote bags and backpacks for vendors
- \* Bottled water to hand out to vendors
- \* Food for vendor meetings
- \* Office chairs
- \* Laptop computers with at least Windows 2000 and 10 GB of storage space

*Please call 202-347-2006 or send an e-mail to [info@streetsense.org](mailto:info@streetsense.org) if you have any of these items to donate.*

**Hermano**, from page 1

ational therapy.

“I think we have an ability to work with folks and really change lives, and the great thing is that the city is funding it,” said Denise Capaci, division director for adult and family services at Catholic Charities, which runs the shelter. “The Department of Mental Health is making every effort to really cross that line and work with people where they are.”

In this case, Columbia Heights is where they are. Vasquez estimates that 60% of the neighborhood’s homeless people are Latino.

He opened Hermano Pedro in 2003, when there were few other services in the area for a homeless population that was not as visible as its downtown counterpart and not as easy to work with because of language and culture differences.

“The problem is, folks come to D.C. with no family, no culture, no language, no money. And when they’re on the street, around a lot of men, it can get bad,” Vasquez said. “We have a lot of chronic alcoholism in the Latin American population we work with.”

Most of the staff at Hermano Pedro is bilingual, and it is the only shelter that Vasquez can think of that offers bilingual therapy groups, where participants can speak to each other through translators.

“My goal for this is to be a model for multicultural day shelters, nationwide,” he said. “With this influx of resources, it’s possible. Not that we have to compete against that many people.”

Hermano Pedro opens its doors at 7:30



KATIE LIETHO/STREET SENSE

Luis Vasquez estimates that 60% of the homeless in Columbia Heights are Latino.

a.m. every Monday through Friday. Until noon, people can come in and eat, take showers and do their laundry. Group activities start at 1 p.m. and extend until 4 p.m. Before the grant, Hermano Pedro had to shut its doors an hour earlier.

In the afternoon, people can take English classes, get rent and legal assistance and find help making doctor’s appointments and accessing services. Right now, there are two new case managers and one new rehabilitation counselor, thanks to the Department of Mental Health grant. The extra staff members

have helped everybody concentrate on one or two jobs, as opposed to three or four.

“The case managers aren’t helping to clean up, now,” Vasquez said. “And until very recently, I was the one sorting the clothes. Not that that’s a bad thing.”

The new staff members have also been getting help from Louis, a longtime volunteer who asked that his last name not be used.

A truck driver for more than 20 years, Louis began volunteering at Hermano Pedro about four years ago. He went to Baltimore for a job last year, but got laid off. He returned to the

*“The problem is, folks come to D.C. with no family, no culture, no language, no money. And when they’re on the street, around a lot of men, it can get bad.”*

District in November, and was staying at La Casa shelter in Columbia Heights.

“I’ve been showing folks the easy way to do things,” Louis said, such as the right way to take donations and how to handle the meals. He also knows most of the people who come into the day shelter and helps iron out disagreements.

“If they have a rough day, I take them outside to talk to them,” he said. “I’m not any different from them, except I choose to be here, helping. This keeps me busy.”

The extra staff and programming have been making a difference with the Columbia Heights homeless population, he said.

“You’ve got to want the help. You’ve got to make up your mind to want it,” he said. “I’ve seen more people change their minds this year than in previous years. And that’s because there’s more help.”

**Adams Morgan  
Advisory Neighborhood Commission (1C)  
Business and Committee Meeting Information**

**Monthly ANC 1C Business Meeting**

Meets 1st Wednesday of each month  
**Next Meeting: Feb. 6 at 7 p.m.**  
Mary’s Center (The Pink Building)  
2355 Ontario Road, NW

**ANC 1C Contact List**

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**ANC 1C Committee Meetings**

**ABC and Public Safety**

Meets 2nd Monday each month  
**Next Meeting: Feb. 11**  
Kalorama Park Recreation Center  
Columbia Rd. and Belmont Rd., NW  
(concurrent with PSA 303 meeting)

**Planning, Zoning, and Transportation**

Meets 2nd Wednesday each month  
**Next Meeting: Feb. 13**  
3rd District Police Station  
17th St and V St., NW (Snyder Room)

**Public Services**

Meets 4th Wednesday each month  
**Next Meeting: Feb. 27**  
Kalorama Park Recreation Center  
Columbia Rd. and Belmont Rd., NW

# Maryland Kids Under 5 Have Lowest Poverty Rate in Nation

By Ben Meyerson  
Capital News Service (UMD)

Maryland had the lowest percentage of children younger than 5 living in poverty of any of the United States in 2005, according to new estimates from the Census Bureau.

The survey said 12.2% of children under 5 lived below the poverty line in Maryland, compared to a national average of 21.3%, according to a survey released by the Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program.

Maryland also had the second-lowest overall poverty rate in the nation, as well as the second-highest median household income, according to the survey.

The state moved up the ladder in each of these categories from 2004's survey, which might lead some to believe the state's welfare programs are doing well, according to Daraius Irani, director of applied economics at the Regional Economic Studies Institute at Towson University.

But Irani said the state should be wary of how it interprets the survey. "Arguably, if you're looking at data that says programs we've been putting in place are successful, it could say that we don't need to increase them," Irani said.

To change more than that, he said, would be a mistake. "We wouldn't want this to be taken as a sign we should cut poverty pro-

grams in Maryland," he said. "Hopefully this doesn't mask some of the issues going on in Baltimore," where the survey said the overall poverty rate was 22.2 percent. The state average was 8.3 percent.

Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) agreed that while the survey is encouraging, it's not yet time to declare a victory. "We have quite a distance to go . . . before every child across our state and across the country obtains the health care, nutrition, education, housing and overall support they need to fulfill their basic needs and reach their greatest potential," Cardin said in an e-mailed statement.

Matthew Joseph, executive director of Advocates for Children and Youth in Maryland, said that because of the state's wealth, the low poverty rates don't surprise him.

But, he said, the surveys shouldn't necessarily be taken at face value. Advocates for Children and Youth periodically calculates the cost of raising a family in Maryland, and Joseph said the group found it's significantly higher in Maryland than the federally-established poverty line, which is \$20,650 for a family of four.

"Maryland is one of the highest-cost states in the country to live in," Joseph said. "Depending on the jurisdiction, (the cost of living) could be two to three times the federal poverty level."

Consequently, the data could be deceiving, he said.

CCNV, from page 1

ventions, it would have been done long ago," said Nurriddin. But the residents are still struggling to be paid for their work by the city. The Office of Property Management, the city office responsible for overseeing the renovations at CCNV, was unaware of the residents' work and would not return further phone calls seeking comment.

The two "new" elevators are emblematic of some of the problems faced by CCNV – only one works, because the other needs some finishing touches by a general contractor, promised two months ago, before it can pass inspection. The working elevator lacks the security needed to travel between the men's and women's floors because it can be operated without a key.

"But compared with heating, bathrooms, showers, things people actually use, we can live with this," Nurriddin said.

Employees and residents alike are grateful for the much-needed renovations. "Comparing to how it used to be, it's heaven – it's a castle," said Mildred Cotton, who works on the women's floor.

But she pointed out that the cheap material is already breaking; for example, the new ceiling still leaks. She mentioned the new handicapped seat in the shower, which collapsed when a resident was taking a shower. The difference between the unrepaired shelter and the partially repaired shelter is the "difference between night and day," said Jim Beldon, a volunteer in the infirmary. But so much remains to be done: \$6.5 million

*But so much remains to be done: \$6.5 million doesn't cover the improvements that the shelter desperately needs.*

doesn't cover the improvements that the shelter desperately needs. Currently, there is no hot water in the kitchen, and workers must boil water on the stove to do the dishes, staff said.

Street Sense vendor and CCNV resident Leonard Cannady compared renovating CCNV to "painting an old trash can." "I don't see a difference," he said. "Out with the old, in with the used."

There's a lot still to be done before the building's condition can be improved to a satisfactory level for residents and employees. "We need to iron out all the niches and glitches, to be able to hold our own as a shelter for the next 10 or 15 years," said Burton, the director of maintenance who has worked at CCNV for almost 12 years.

"When you're looking at 20 years of nothing . . . the change from the roof all the way

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## Street Politics

By  
David S. Hammond



### Budget Crunch in the State Legislatures

Dozens of state legislatures are now in session, and tighter state budgets are among the top challenges lawmakers face this year. Those are likely to have an impact on human needs programs from housing to health care to homeless services.

The National Conference of State Legislatures has put state budget issues at the top of its issues forecast for 2008, giving the troubled real estate market as an important factor. NCSL's November 2007 state budget update reports that 24 states say the housing slowdown has hurt their public finances, and a dozen states report reduced revenues from real estate transfer taxes and processing fees.

Fears of an economic slowdown or recession are also a factor, and since the report was prepared, the picture has gotten worse, according to Arturo Perez, a fiscal analyst with NCSL. "The trends are not encouraging," he said.

An economic downturn means less public money all around, and human needs spending – especially the expansions which advocates often request to fill the most urgent gaps in coverage – is quickly put at risk.

The real estate slump has reduced revenues in the Washington area as it has nationwide, including both fees and taxes directly related to real estate transactions, and sales taxes generated by construction-related purchases.

And even affordable housing production trust funds may face a slowdown, although they often have "dedicated revenue" sources of their own to protect them from the ups and downs of a legislature's annual budget process. But where that revenue is generated by real estate-related activity like deed recordation fees and real estate transfer taxes, an economic and real estate slowdown has the potential to affect those dedicated funding sources, too.

All these factors are in play as Maryland, Virginia and the District move through budget season.

### In the District: A Chance to Move Ahead

D.C.'s budget process is expected to be easier than in some other places, due to a projected budget surplus.

Supportive housing and emergency help with rent will be on the wish list released January 30 by the Fair Budget Coalition, a group of advocates and service providers working with poor Washingtonians. FBC director Martina Gillis says the District's relatively favorable financial situation gives the city a chance to strengthen its best efforts.

"It's time to make some gains and to make up some of the cuts from the 1990s," Gillis said, stressing emergency help for people facing eviction.

### Homelessness Prevention Can Really Work

That approach works, according to Sue Marshall of the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness. Marshall's group oversees homeless services in the District, and at a January D.C. Council committee hearing on poverty, she said "we know that prevention works" in helping people stay in their homes.

"We should stop forcing families and individuals into remedial positions before we help them," Marshall said. "We've seen a decline in the number of families and individuals who come into shelter, based on the increase in spending on prevention."

Why is emergency help so important? Marshall reported "an increasing number of working families and individuals who cannot meet the cost of housing in the District of Columbia."

### So How About Poverty Prevention?

The hearing had opened with testimony from Alice Rivlin, a policy expert with Brookings Greater Washington, who described getting poor people into the workforce and helping them move up the ladder as the quickest, surest way to fight poverty.

The District's Poverty Commission, approved a year ago, has yet to get off the ground. But Rivlin was able to draw on her work to date studying poverty in D.C., describing a work force that is too often undereducated and underemployed. She said that "education, training, and work-readiness services" are key strategies that should be supported in the city's 2009 budget.

### The Bigger Picture

Making sure there are opportunities for those who are ready to work is not just in the power of state legislatures. For a passionate call for attention from the presidential candidates, see Jeffery McNeil's editorial on page 12 of this issue.

What's on your mind? E-mail [StreetPoliticsDC@aol.com](mailto:StreetPoliticsDC@aol.com).

# Revamped State Song Omits Slave References

By Eric Peters  
Capital News Service (VCU)

RICHMOND – Ten years ago, the General Assembly retired Virginia's official state song, "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia," because of its racial insensitivity. The tune, written by James A. Bland in 1878, describes an ex-slave's nostalgia for slave life.

Delegate Anne Crockett-Stark (R-Wytheville) wants to change the song's lyrics and replace it as the official state melody.

"A state song gives us a feeling of unity and pride," Crockett-Stark said. "We are 401 years old, the oldest government in the Western Hemisphere."

Crockett-Stark introduced HB-565, which features a slightly altered version of the song. The new lyrics were written by 52 Pearisburg High School alumni during a reunion.

"They've dignified the song," Crockett-Stark said.

The song was originally titled "Carry Me Back to Old Virginnny." Bland, a black man born in New York, wrote the lyrics, which included words such as "there's where the old darkey's heart am long'd to go" and "there's where I labored so hard for old massa."

Under HB-565, those lines would be changed to "there's where my heart shall always long to go" and "there's where I labored so hard in the summer," respectively.

Crockett-Stark sponsored a bill in 2007 on behalf of a different song titled "Virginia," which competed with two other bills that recommended state songs, but none of the bills passed.

"Everyone loved it (the "Virginia" bill) down here," Crockett-Stark said. "I think everyone wants it to be from their own area though."

Crockett-Stark's current bill has some competition. Delegate David A. Nutter (R-Christiansburg) is sponsoring the bill supporting "Virginia: Where Heaven Touches Earth," by Leslie Brooks and Ray Roberts.

It's impossible to put everything about

Virginia into one official song, but until one of these trials jumps out at the legislator, Virginia will be without a song at all.

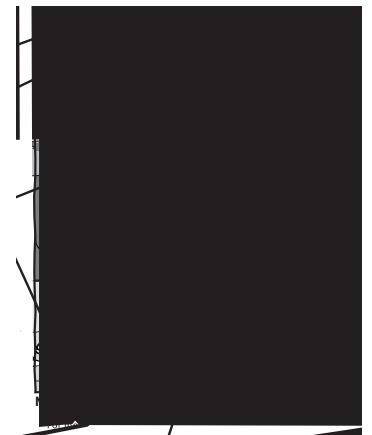
## The Two Versions

**"Carry Me Back to Old Virginnny"**  
by James A. Bland  
**Official song of the Commonwealth of Virginia from 1940 to 1997**

Carry me back to old Virginia,  
There's where the cotton and the corn  
and taters grow,  
There's where the birds warble sweet in  
the springtime,  
There's where this old darkey's heart  
am long'd to go,  
There's where I labored so hard for old  
massa,  
Day after day in the field of yellow corn,  
No place on earth do I love more sincerely  
than old Virginia,  
The state where I was born.

**The proposed version of "Carry Me  
Back to Old Virginia"**  
altered by  
**Pearisburg High School Alumni Party**

Carry me back to old Virginia,  
There's where the cotton and the corn  
and taters grow;  
There's where the birds warble sweet in  
the springtime,  
There's where my heart shall always  
long to go.  
There's where I labored so hard in the  
summer,  
Day after day in the fields of yellow  
corn.  
No place on earth do I love more sincerely  
than old Virginia,  
The state where I was born.



# Mental Health Funding in Virginia Has Uncertain Future

By Lauren Page  
Capital News Service (VCU)

RICHMOND – Mentally disabled citizens and their advocates showed up in droves Jan. 14 to ask the General Assembly to increase funding for Virginia's mentally disabled, specifically in the form of Medicaid waivers for the mentally retarded. Called MR waivers, these would help defer the costs of caring for mentally disabled and special-needs family members.

"We're hurting. We have real issues. And we need your help right now," a mother of a mentally disabled child said at the hearing.

Gov. Tim Kaine's 2008-2010 budget proposal would increase the number of slots for MR waivers by 150.

Out of all 50 states, Virginia ranks No. 47 in providing funding for people with mental disabilities, advocates said. In 2006, the National Alliance on Mental Illness rated Virginia's mental health programs a "D."

Some hearing speakers and Kaine cited the April 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech as a wake-up call for the urgent need to increase funding for mental health programs.

"There's been a great deal of publicity about devoting more resources to treating mental illness. The tragedy at Virginia Tech last spring was terrible," said Stewart Wolfe, father of a mentally disabled child who spoke at the budget hearing.

He acknowledges there is a difference between the mentally disabled, like his daughter, and the mentally ill, like Virginia Tech gunman Seung-Hui Cho.

"I can just about guarantee that the people I speak for would never do something like that. Does that mean they're any less deserving of our support?" Wolfe said.

Advocates for the disabled said the biennial increase in funding MR waivers is not enough. One of the issues speakers addressed was that almost 4,000 people are on the list of urgent cases and waiting to receive a waiver. To clear the list of urgent cases, advocates say the number of MR waiver slots will have to be increased to 750 during the next five years.

"Preliminary discussions indicate increased spending in these areas," said Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee Delegate Lacey E. Putney, I-Bedford.

Kaine proposes \$41.6 million to expand

mental health care services in the commonwealth during the next two years, allocating \$7.2 million to MR waivers. Putney said a statewide economic recession could cause funding problems in many areas.

Putney said part of the problem is a decrease in holiday spending this past year. This led to less state revenue acquired through sales taxes. Because of a tight budget, he says that MR waivers and other types of help for the mentally disabled are not the only areas that might be shortchanged in the next two years.

"As we proceed through the budget-making process, we will be reducing a number of the governor's initiatives," Putney said.

Kaine proposed taking \$200 million from the stabilization or "rainy-day" fund to pay for some of his initiatives.

## LETTER FROM CANADA

# A Visit to Vancouver's Supervised Safe Injection Site

By Tavis W. Dodds

There are some strong opinions out there about Insite, Canada's only supervised site for substance abuse victims to inject themselves with illegal narcotics. On the previous weekend, I'd attended a huge block party rally for Insite on Carrall Street that shut down traffic for hours with live bands, stilt walkers and free BBQ.

The enforcement pillar of the drug industry, the police department, lobbies the governments to shut down the facility.

The whole project has survived on six-month exemptions to Canada's drug laws, leaving staff and clients not knowing how long the site will last. Vancouver's Mayor Sam Sullivan makes statements on both sides of this fence and has stated that Insite might make the transition to distributing legal drugs.

I decided to see for myself what the center is like from the clients' perspective, so on a rainy Tuesday afternoon, I headed down Hastings Street from Main and entered Insite's frosted door bedecked with stylized needle logo and window, all with dark green trim. Sickened people sway back and forth, leaning on shopping carts.

It smells like industrial cleaner. The room inside the door is like a coat check room for shopping carts -- all the worldly possessions of perhaps a dozen people. A man at a desk asks my name.

"Ever been here before?"  
"No."

A lady with a clipboard is assigned to give me an orientation. She makes it very clear that nothing must exchange hands in the building. Also, no one can help me inject drugs into myself. They give me a syringe, alcohol swabs, a little metal bowl, and water in tiny blue plastic containers.

The next room is like a collaboration between William S. Burroughs and H. R. Geiger. Seats face into stainless steel cubicles built out of the mirrored wall. It's very bright. A

lady at the end spurts blood out of her arm all over her cubicle. There is a big man there whose job it is to watch the injection room, and he wipes up the blood and gives the lady a band-aid.

The glare is so strong it makes you blink at your reflection, which distorts as the drugs take effect or wear off or not work. Research on the cocaine in the Downtown Eastside neighborhood of Vancouver shows the drugs to be as low as 10% cocaine and the rest amphetamine or other chemicals that produce a rush similar to inhalants.

The people doing this sort of drug twitch and fiddle with their needles. They are in agony. Once one has been trapped into slavery to this drug there is often nothing left but an all-consuming need for more. These addicts clearly hate the substances they crave. The spastic fidgeting is like poisoned bugs.

Two chairs over from me is an old man, presentably dressed. He's on heroin, the other drug. He nods slowly, slouching down in the relief of fixing. Heroin hurts when you don't have it, but now that the old man has had it he seems almost okay. His eyes roll up slightly and says something about not being allowed to shake hands.

We are ushered out into the next room, a "chill out room." A man behind a counter hands out styrofoam cups of what looks like soup.

On the street outside the green door a police car pulls up next to a cluster of people sheltering from the rain. The police squawk their siren and the crowd quickly disperse.

Around the corner, in Blood Alley, people sprawl out in the muck. A woman fills her syringe from a puddle.

Others sift through the sludgey buildup everywhere in hopes of finding lost drugs. One woman is particularly spastic, and a tall Jamaican man walking past says to her "You have to slow down! You're

going to kill yourself if you don't slow down. Or go to Insite!"

"Go to Insite!" echoes someone else.

It's impossible to tell if the woman hears them.

In the National Post story "Four Blocks of Hell," and in nearly all the coverage of Downtown Eastside drug epidemics, the dealers are mentioned to be plying their wares in plain sight, but this is not the reality. It is true that you can see drugs being sold, but this is an industry where the retail level customers serve themselves and the real dealers drive Mercedes.

The drug industries, both the illicit one and Big Pharma, are trillion-dollar industries. We are meant to believe that an industry this size can be conducted by bike gangs and a few dirty businessmen? This is macroeconomics and at this level all industries are inextricably linked, from tourism to energy to security.

*Once one has been trapped into slavery to this drug there is often nothing left but an all-consuming need for more. These addicts clearly hate the substances they crave. The spastic fidgeting is like poisoned bugs.*

How many degrees away are the real dealers from our elected officials: both Vancouver and British Columbia have been purchasing rooming houses at way over the assessed value, contributing to real estate hysteria, and giving millions of tax dollars to several companies known to be associated with narcotics distribution. Crystal meth labs are found in \$10 million homes in Jericho Beach. Maybe we should look to the Four Seasons Hotel for the real dealers.

The higher we go the closer to reality we seem to get, until it starts making more sense to believe what the police originally said when they raided the British Columbia Legislature Building, that they were investigating a drug trafficking ring. Police later said that they covered up information because it "made the government look bad."

We'd be better to look for truth not in the Basi-Virk trial, but perhaps in the National Film Board of Canada documentary "Citizen Sam," in which real-life Vancouver mayoral candidate Sam Sullivan defends his having bought crack for a kid to smoke in Sullivan's van so the concerned leader could watch the effects.

"Give out free drugs," Sam jokes in the film, "that's how to get the homeless vote."

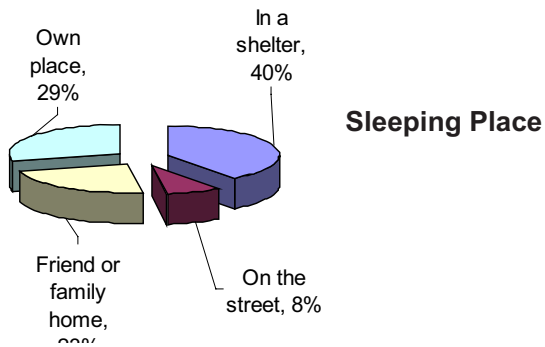
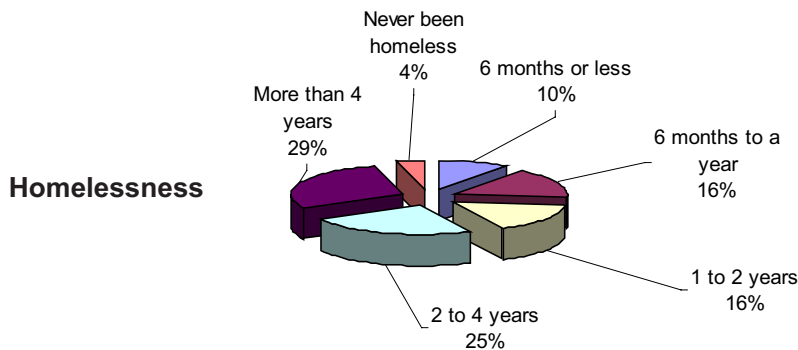
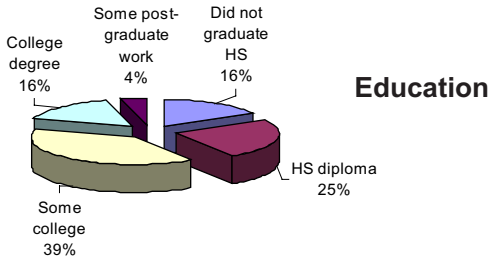
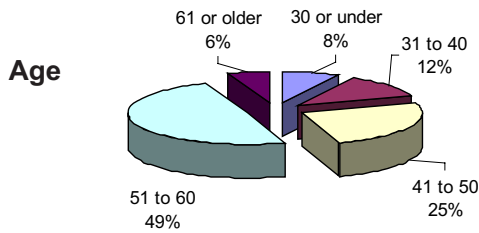
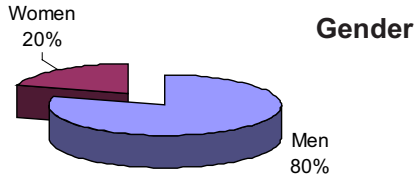
Is this reality-state and capital conspiring to suck profits out of a plague whose victims litter the streets? If this is the case, then what can anyone do beyond damage control, or harm reduction, like at Insite? God damn the pusher man.

*Tavis has been floating back and forth across Canada for five years of solidarity with the homeless, as both a homeless person and a homeless activist. His work has appeared in Monday Magazine, The Christian Radical, and AlbertaViews Magazine, and he is a regular contributor to The Republic of East Vancouver Newspaper.*

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ANNUAL SURVEY RESULTS

# Who Are the Street Sense Vendors?



## What Do You Like Most About Selling Street Sense?

- It gives me a sense of hope.
- The way I use the money to help me buy food, clothes and bus fare, and I like the staff. They help you with whatever you need.
- Everything.
- It gives me a challenge that's safe.
- Self respect.
- The thing I like most is the hours.
- Meeting people.
- It's a nice thing to do and you meet a lot of different people along the way.
- It gives me a chance to redeem myself and my dignity, plus I feel good about myself since I started working for Street Sense.
- Networking with the public [and] writing poetry.
- Street Sense is a real and informative paper that covers homelessness and poverty. It enables anyone, homeless or not, to have access to the paper through purchasing, selling, writing or volunteering and it does a service for the community and country it represents.
- I enjoy the smiles and laughter of the men, women and children as they react to hearing my sales pitch. I also like the fact that I work for myself. Therefore, I work when I want to.
- Talking with people.
- It's a good paper, it gives me a chance to meet people and learn about the newspaper business. The people I'm working with are good people. I'm learning to like what I'm doing.
- I like Street Sense because I can keep faith in God that He will make a way each day. Thank God for Street Sense.
- It gives an opportunity to prove I am an excellent salesman and gives me the confidence to deal with my present situation. It is a legitimate source of income. It enables me to publicize homeless issues and it allows me to report on issues which translates into advocacy.
- Chance to meet nice people.
- Informing the public of important news.
- Self-employment.
- Greeting different people, working with my boyfriend, helping other vendors sell the paper, being a resource to the homeless and being a new vendor.
- Working with my family.
- Freedom.
- Opportunity to interact with the public. Open hours.
- The whole concept.
- You have freedom, no time clock. It's your effort that makes the money.
- I enjoy bringing contributors' attention to issues that matter to society, and the income I can generate.
- I make friends and meet people every day.
- Feeling invincible.
- Money.
- Letting people know what's real.
- The people that make Street Sense, Mr. and Mrs. Homeless.
- The customers make the difference.
- Street Sense is a friendly paper. It advocates for the homeless and the poor.
- The vision of the staff directors, editor or vendors manager, and of course my regular customers.
- The profits go directly to the vendor.



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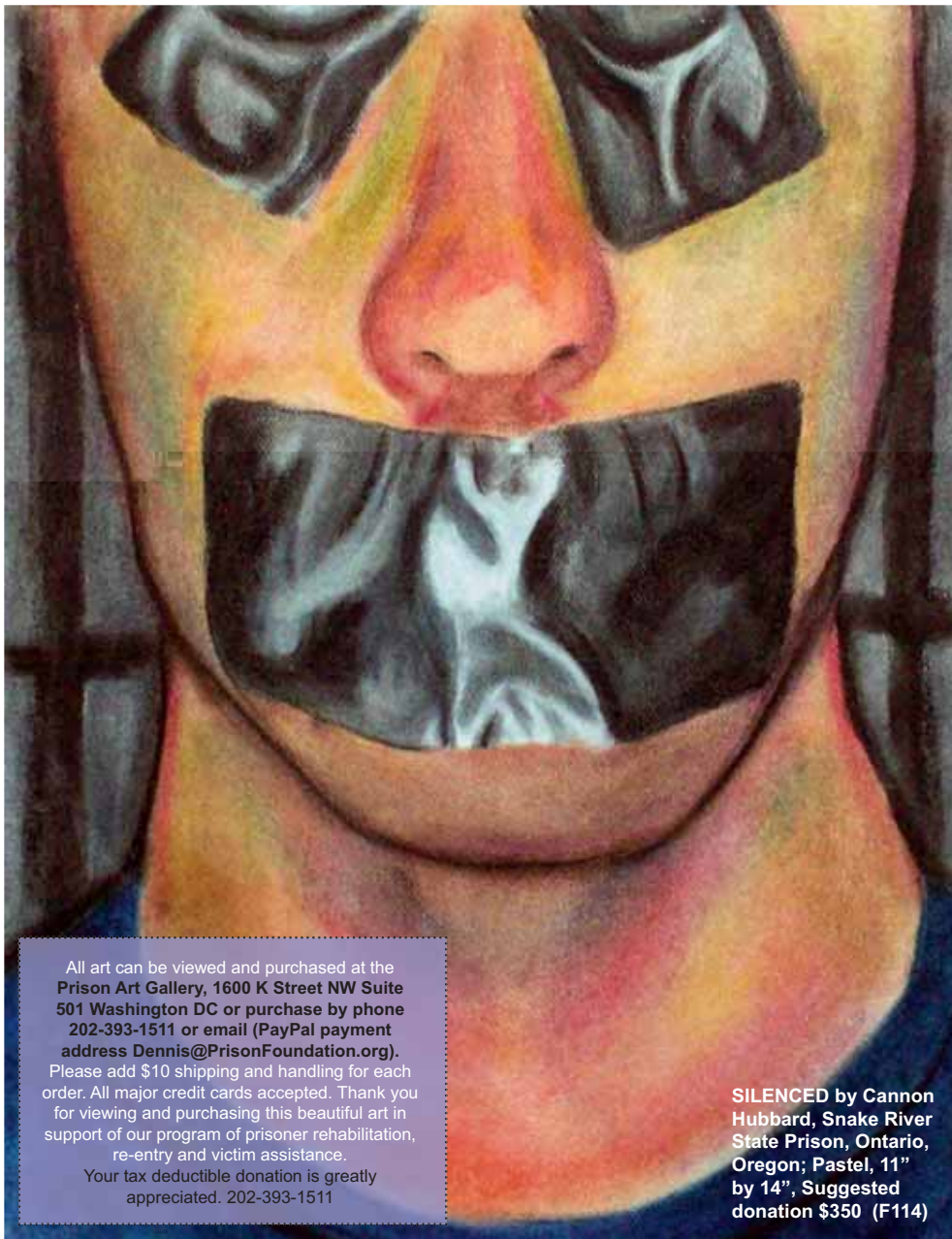
# Art For Justice

Art for Justice is published monthly in conjunction with Street Sense

Sponsored by Prison Art Gallery

Funded in part by the D.C. Commission on the Arts and  
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February 2008



**A MOMENT** by Reginald Harris, State Prison, Hartford, Connecticut; Oil Pastel on paper, 12" by 14.5", Suggested donation \$75 (F103)



**HILLARY CLINTON** by Larry Walker, State Prison, Trenton, New Jersey; Acrylic on Canvas, 12" by 16", Suggested donation \$150 (F101)



**VINCENT VAN GOGH** by Tenola Gamble, California State Prison; Pastel, 14" by 17", Suggested donation \$100 (F102)



**PROUD BUCK** by Lon Caruthers, State Prison, Oglethorpe, California; Pencil, graphite on paper, 15" by 18", suggested donation \$60 (F104)

**SILENCED** by Cannon Hubbard, Snake River State Prison, Ontario, Oregon; Pastel, 11" by 14", Suggested donation \$350 (F114)

All art can be viewed and purchased at the Prison Art Gallery, 1600 K Street NW Suite 501 Washington DC or purchase by phone 202-393-1511 or email (PayPal payment address [Dennis@PrisonFoundation.org](mailto:Dennis@PrisonFoundation.org)). Please add \$10 shipping and handling for each order. All major credit cards accepted. Thank you for viewing and purchasing this beautiful art in support of our program of prisoner rehabilitation, re-entry and victim assistance. Your tax deductible donation is greatly appreciated. 202-393-1511



RED MACAWS by Michael Schinkel, State Prison, Vacaville, California; Watercolor on paper, 14.5" by 21.5" Suggested donation \$150 (F109)



MR. DYNAMITE (JAMES BROWN) by Brian Cole, Rivers Prison, Winton, North Carolina; Pencil and Acrylic on an X-ray Cover, 14" by 17", Suggested donation \$100 (F120)



TWO DEER by John Grubb, Texas State Prison; Acrylic on Paper, 11" by 15", Suggested donation \$40 (F121)



U.S. REP. SHIRLEY CHISHOLM by Larry Walker, State Prison, Trenton, New Jersey; Acrylic on Canvas, 12" by 16", Suggested donation \$100 (F122)



ROOSTER by Timothy Bursleson, Texas State Prison, Tennessee Colony, Texas; Watercolor, 11" by 15", Suggested donation \$130 (F123)



WHY CAN'T I TOUCH HER HEART by Brian Driggers, Snake River State Prison, Ontario, Oregon; Pastel, 17" by 14", Suggested donation \$250 (F126)



YELLOW and ORANGE CARP by Michael Schinkel, State Prison, Vacaville California; Watercolor on paper, 14.5" by 22" Suggested donation \$150 (F110)

# NEW ART

# ARRIVALS



HALF DOME MOUNTAIN by Freeman Payne, State Prison, Mineral Point, Missouri; Coffee, Toothpaste, Ink, Colored Pencil, 12" by 18", Suggested donation \$100 (F125)



HIDING by Geoff Newman, State Prison, Lancaster, California; Acrylic on Canvas, 23" by 29", Suggested donation \$230 (F116)



2 OWLS by Michael Schinkel, State Prison, Vacaville, California; Watercolor on Paper, 14.5" by 22", Suggested donation \$150 (F112)



BEAST HIDDEN IN GREEN by Anthony Dye, Dooly State Prison, Unadilla, Georgia; Colored Pencils, Creamer, White Out, and Floor Wax on Brown Paper Bag, 11" by 14", Suggested donation \$280 (F127)



CHRISTOPHER REEVES by Canon Smith, D.C. Jail, Washington, DC; Colored Pencil on Paper, 14" by 17", Suggested donation \$125 (F124)



CONGO DANCERS by Theodore Nelson Jr., State Prison, Amarillo, Texas; Watercolor, 12" by 9", Suggested donation \$100 (F119)



Tenola Gamble, California State Prison (#P41)



Tenola Gamble, California State Prison (#P42)



Russ Luncsford, Iowa State Prison (#P43)



Tenola Gamble, California State Prison (#P44)



Larry Walker, New Jersey State Prison (#P47)



Ras Mosi, South Carolina State Prison (#P45)



Larry Walker, Trenton State Prison, NJ (#P24)



Curtis Easton, Southeast State Prison, IL (#P25)



Brent Fategoni, Rikers Island Prison, NY (#P28)



Dwayne Murray, Minnesota State Prison (#P46)



Ritchie Weatherspoon, Michigan State Prison (#P48)



Rene Vu, Gatesville State Prison, TX (#P26)



Timothy Burleson, Coffield State Prison, TX (#P40)



Brian Driggers, Snake River State Prison, OR (#P16)



Kevin Smith, Rikers Island Prison, NY (#P29)



Ted Berkey, Federal Prison, AZ (#P3)



Richard Hinger, High Desert State Prison, NV (#P9)



David Porter, Roxbury State Prison, MD (#P13)



Anita Winston (mother of prisoner), DC (#P30)



Ras Mosi, Evans State Prison, SC (#P37)



Richard Seymour Jr., Auburn State Prison, NY (#P35)



Selvyn Tillelt, Maryland State Prison (#P39)

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John Grubb, State Prison, SC (#P20)



Michael Jewell, Powledge State Prison, TX (#P27)



Ras Mosi, Evans State Prison, SC (#P36)



Ras Mosi, Evans State Prison, SC (#P18)



Anthony Dye, Dooly State Prison, GA (#P32)



David Schofield, Pack State Prison, TX (#P33)



Tito Parra, El Paso County Jail, TX (#P38)



Larry Walker, Trenton State Prison, NJ (#P23)



Ras Mosi, Evans State Prison, SC (#P19)



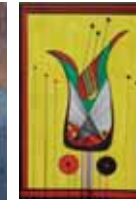
Brian Cole, Rivers Prison, Winton, NC (#P21)



B.K. Nash, Brushy Mountain State Prison, TN (#P22)



George Bozeman, State Prison, KY (#P34)



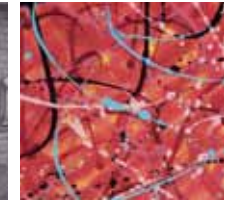
Sudan Paul Miller, Ionia State Prison, MI (#P11)



Russ Luncsford, State Prison, IA (#P12)



Frederick Benjamin Thompson, South Woods State Prison, NJ (#P14)



Michael Jewell, Powledge State Prison, TX (#P10)



Lynda Baker, Scott State Prison, MI (#P2)



Ronna Baer, Federal Prison, FL (#P4)



Brian Cole, Rivers Prison, Winton, NC (#P5)



Ritchie Weatherspoon, Ionia State Prison, MI (#P1)



Francisco Gonzales, Arizona State Prison (#P8)



Tammy Williams, Federal Prison, WV (#P15)



Derrick Steilman, Washington State Prison (#P31)



Carolyn Cosmos, DC Jail (#P6)



Larry Walker, Trenton State Prison, NJ (#P17)



Laura Crescio, Federal Prison, IL (#P7)



ON THE PROWL by Michael Schinkel, State Prison, Vacaville, California; Watercolor on paper, 14.5" by 22", Suggested donation \$150 (F111)



ABSTRACT by Larry Walker, State Prison, Trenton, New Jersey; Acrylic on Canvas (framed), 23" by 29", Suggested donation \$350 (F115)



HIPPOS AT... by Earl Thompson, Federal Prison, Coleman, Florida; Charcoal, 15" by 22", Suggested donation \$180 (F118)



GIRL WITH PEARL EARRING by Tenola Gamble, California State Prison; Chalk Pastel on paper, 22" by 29", Suggested donation \$200 (F105)



YOUNG PAINTING by David C. Nelson, FCI- Bennettsville, South Carolina; Oil on Canvas Panel, 14" by 18", Suggested donation \$50 (F106)



COLORFUL CARP by Michael Schinkel, State Prison, Vacaville, California; Watercolor on paper, 14.5" by 21.5", Suggested donation \$150 (F107)



WATCHING THE KID by Michael Schinkel, State Prison, Vacaville, California; Watercolor on paper, 14.5" by 22", Suggested donation \$150 (F108)



RAY CHARLES by Timothy Dodge, State Prison, Albion, Pennsylvania; Enamel on Paper, 15" by 22", Suggested donation \$180 (F113)



SOLITUDE by Anthony Dye, Dooly State Prison, Unadilla, Georgia; Paper Clippings, Colored Pencils, White Out, and Floor Wax on Cardboard, 11" by 14", Suggested donation \$250 (F117)

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Prison Art Gallery curator and formerly imprisoned artist, Emelinda Perez, at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.



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**The Homeless**

Their clothing shows their status  
 Their face tells a story  
 And their body projects their strength  
 As they stand on their stage  
 Yes, this is the spotlight for them  
 Where they stand before the crowd  
 Seeking the support to continue their journey  
 Sometimes they wear a smile  
 Sometimes they look sad  
 You may pay them no mind  
 But do know that  
 They are traveling through time  
 Like you and me  
 They may be homeless  
 But they are human, and they have a story to tell.

—Annisha Hayes

**Gray**

The colors  
 are before your eyes –  
 the violent startling sapphire  
 of cloudless winter sky;  
 crystal white of fresh–fallen snow,  
 pastel pinks and limes  
 of the houses in your neighborhood  
 chill–borne flush  
 on the cheeks of passersby

yet in the milky lens of your vision  
 all you perceive  
 are shades of gray –  
 you dwell  
 in a world of shadow.

Shouts and laughter of strangers  
 who live in technicolor  
 are muffled to your ears  
 as your world blurs  
 behind a sheen of tears.

Gray  
 is the color  
 of life in a cloudbank –  
 your hands reach and grope  
 for shapes of sustenance  
 but can only grasp  
 the substance of shadows  
 and you starve,  
 fresh juicy fruit  
 inches from your lips.

Your ragged fingernails  
 claw at your eyes  
 to scrape away  
 cobwebs and cataracts  
 they blind you to the color around you;  
 your effort fails,  
 more tears drip to your feet  
 staining the ground  
 the grimy gray  
 of week–old snow.

—David Harris

# The High Cost of Overdraft Fees

By Matthew Peterson



With the increased use of ATMs and debit cards, you may be surprised at just how easy it is for you to make an overdraft. Banks and credit unions collect \$17.5 billion annually in overdraft loan fees, according to the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL). These fees are a major source of revenue for financial institutions and come at a high cost for consumers, particularly low- and middle-income Americans.

Overdrafts occur when you write a check, withdraw cash from an ATM, or make a debit purchase for more than the amount in your checking account. CRL reports that 72% of overdrafts come from electronic transactions like ATM withdrawals and debit card purchases. Many ATMs allow customers to withdraw more money than they have in their account without providing warning that an overdraft is about to occur.

Debit card transactions account for almost half of all overdrafts by allowing purchases to go through even if there are insufficient funds in the checking account. This makes debit cards, which may seem a good way to avoid overspending, just as dangerous as credit cards for getting into debt.

To protect consumers in case of an overdraft, financial institutions can offer what is known as an "overdraft protection plan" or "bounce protection." Under these plans the bank or credit union offers to cover the consumer's overdrafts so that checks won't be returned and ATM and debit card transactions will go through, even if there are insufficient funds in the account. A fee, usually \$20 to \$35, is charged for each overdraft.

Overdraft fees amount to a type of short-term loan with an extremely high interest rate. While these are often billed as "courtesy" plans, there is nothing courteous about how quickly and easily these fees can add up for the consumer. Overdraft two cents and you can be hit with a \$30 fee for the pennies you were "loaned."

Furthermore, financial institutions often enroll customers in these plans automatically, leaving customers unaware they have been signed up for protection that amounts to an unsolicited loan. Financial institutions may also hold deposits and

manipulate the order in which checks and debits are cleared. When the largest deposits are cleared first, overdraft fees are triggered more frequently.

Consider the following example of how an overdraft protection plan might work. On your way to work you withdraw \$40 in cash from the ATM. However, you have only \$35 in your checking account. Later that day, you charge a \$5 sandwich to your debit card and write a check to pay a bill for \$20. You have now overdrawn your account by \$30.

If you have overdraft protection and the financial institution decides to cover all three transactions, each transaction will trigger an overdraft fee. If the fee is \$30 per overdraft, you will owe \$90 in overdraft fees. Combined with the \$30 you spent that wasn't in your account, your total is now \$120. That amounts to a 300% interest rate on the \$30 loan. That's one expensive sandwich!

So what can you do to prevent these costly overdraft fees? Ask your financial institution to link your savings account to your checking account. Then, if you overdraft your checking account, your savings account will transfer money to cover the difference of the overdraft. There may be a small fee to transfer the money between the accounts, but it will be significantly less than the fee the financial institution charges for covering the difference.

Most importantly, though, it is up to you to practice good financial management and always know the balance in your account so that overdrafts never occur. You can do this by keeping your checkbook register up-to-date and by keeping tabs on your account balances online or over the phone.

Also, remember to keep track of any automatic bill payments you make. These are easy to forget and often trigger overdraft fees. Websites like [www.thebeehive.org](http://www.thebeehive.org) offer basic budgeting tips. For more information on ways to save, sign up to receive free monthly updates about local financial education resources and events at [www.dcsaves.org](http://www.dcsaves.org).

Resolve this year to practice good account management and you can make the high cost of overdraft fees a thing of the past.

*This regular financial column is presented by Capital Area Asset Builders, [www.caab.org](http://www.caab.org), a nonprofit organization that helps people of all incomes to improve their financial management skills, increase their savings, and build wealth. Send your questions or ideas for future topics to [saving@caab.org](mailto:saving@caab.org).*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Housing First

Dear Editor,

As a speaker for the National Coalition for the Homeless, I have been an aggressive proponent of the Housing First initiative. After all, this is the type of program that got me off the streets at the end of 2006. When people ask me whether or not I think Housing First works, I can speak from personal experience when I say yes.

Therefore I was understandably dismayed by a Jan. 9 article in Street Sense, which analyzed the recent report by the Department of Housing and Urban Development on a year-long study of new clients of three Housing First programs. The article, and indeed the report, seemed to suggest that the much-lauded new housing approach was less successful than previously believed.

The main statistic cited in the article was that 84% of clients studied remained housed at the end of one year. This seems to me to be an overwhelming success, undiminished by the caveat, also cited, that 41% of participants had returned to the streets at least once during that year. This only underscores the success of the program.

Where in the past we have abandoned those chronically homeless individuals who have left programs (which often happens because of the client's inability to adjust to this drastic change in lifestyle), most Housing First programs work aggressively to re-house these individuals. Often times a client with a background of mental illness or substance abuse must be housed two or three times before a successful fit is found.

Several of the assertions of the report disturbed me, but the most glaring was that there had been no appreciable improvement in the sobriety, employment or income of the new Housing First clients who were the main focus of the study.

While these issues and many more seriously affect the lives of those branded chronically homeless, the greatest detriment to their lives, and the greatest impediment to alleviating these and other problems, is the lack of stability afforded by housing. The main goal of Housing First is to remove this impediment by providing permanent housing.

Housing alone will not solve the other issues in these individuals' lives. Supportive services are a key element in the Housing First approach. The manner in which these services are offered and run determines their success, and there is a vast range in the quality of service providers.

However, problems such as unemployment, substance abuse and mental illness are not unique to the homeless. These problems and others exist throughout the spectrum of American society, and solving them will not be easy. What we as a community have to decide is whether we will allow chronic homelessness to continue until we have resolved all of the other physical, mental and emotional ills of this country.

Keep up the good work,  
David Pirtle

## Want to help the homeless with your writing talents?

### Then participate in the Street Sense Write for Poverty fundraiser

**Who:** Journalists and professional writers in the Washington area.

**What:** Write an essay (600 to 1,000 words) on a pre-assigned topic related to poverty and/or homelessness. And collect a few donations to support Street Sense on a per-word basis (like in a walk-a-thon). Select essays will run in the April and May issues of Street Sense, DC's newspaper about poverty and homeless issues.

**When:** Writing Week: Saturday, April 5 to Friday, April 11  
Award Presentation and Reception: Thursday, April 24

**Where:** The writing is done from wherever you choose.  
Awards Presentation and Reception: TBA

**How:** If you are interested or need more information please send an email with the subject "Write for Poverty" to [info@streetsense.org](mailto:info@streetsense.org) or call Laura at 202-347-2006.

*\*\*All proceeds from this fundraiser will support Street Sense, a nonprofit 501(c)3, and its mission to help empower the homeless men and women who sell the paper and improve their lives.*

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## Moving from Military to Civilian World Is Complex Process

Transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce is an extended and complex process, according to women veterans responding to a recent survey by Business and Professional Women's Foundation (BPW Foundation).

"As the number of women veterans in the U.S. population increases (1.1 million to 1.7 million between 1980 and 2007) effectively engaging this highly-skilled segment of workers into the civilian workforce assumes greater economic importance," explained Deborah L. Frett, CEO of BPW Foundation and Business and Professional Women/USA, whose Women Joining Forces (WJF) program is focused on supporting transitioning women veterans.

While the official physical separation from the military occurs within a specific window of time, results from BPW Foundation's 2007 survey\* of 1,600 women veterans, shows that the psychological transition takes place over a longer time period even among those who successfully secured post-military employment.

When asked how long it took to feel completely adjusted to the civilian workplace, 21 percent of women veterans surveyed said "as soon as they found a job," 28 percent said "only after they'd been on the job for some time" and 44 percent said they "still did not feel completely adjusted." Women veterans surveyed had been out of service an average of seven years. Women veterans surveyed were more likely to report being satisfied with their first post-military position if they:

- Began looking for a job before they left the military
- Participated in the Transition Assistance Employment Workshop (TAP) before leaving the military
- Felt high-levels of comfort with job skills learned in the military
- Worked with a mentor during the during the job search
- Took classes to improve job-specific skills
- Took in person or online classes on job search skills
- Attended job fairs
- Found a job in the government or nonprofit sector
- Found an employer who displayed a high-level of appreciation for their military service

To increase the potential for successful transitions from the military, BPW Foundation and BPW/USA through the Women Joining Forces Program ([www.womenjoiningforces.com](http://www.womenjoiningforces.com)) have undertaken a series of programming, research and policy initiatives. BPW Foundation is:

- Including more veterans in the pilot research project through focus groups, phone interviews and surveys
- Operating a media/public policy e-mail alert system for veterans interested in speaking to the press

or to policy makers  
Partnering with like-minded organizations to raise awareness and support employers with promising practices  
Offering a limited number of scholarships to its webinars, policy events and workshops to veterans  
For more information about a veteran scholarship to a BPW event, contact [www.bpwfoundation.org](http://www.bpwfoundation.org)

BPW/USA's WJF program began in 2005 to address the unique needs of women veterans transitioning into civilian careers. BPW/USA is:

- Providing free or discounted membership, free seminars and resources to assist women veterans in successfully transitioning
- Offering career workshops and coaching on job search skills
- Supporting online resources include a clearinghouse of organizations and agencies, legislative issues and articles and reports specifically geared towards veterans
- Providing the BPW/USA Career Center, the only online job board highlighting both women and veteran-friendly employers
- Working with various agencies and organizations to increase awareness and encourage similar program development

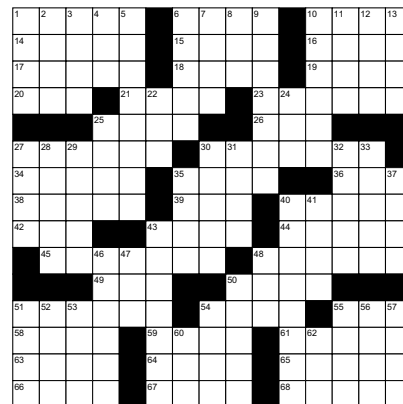
On February 13-15, 2008, 200 advocates will meet at the 2008 BPW/USA Policy and Action Conference to support legislation that impacts all working women including women veterans such as the HEART for Women Act, Fair Pay Restoration Act and the Family Leave Insurance Act. Information on issues impacting women veterans will be featured during BPW Foundation's luncheon held during the event. A limited number of scholarships are available to women veterans to attend. Contact [foundation@bpwfoundation.org](mailto:foundation@bpwfoundation.org) for more information. General registration is also still open at <http://www.bpwusa.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4774>.

In March 2008, Street Sense Newspaper, BPW/USA's Women Joining Forces program and BPW Foundation are also co-sponsoring a Veterans' Knowledge Fair to be held Washington, DC. Check the BPW/USA Women Joining Forces website in February for more details.

\*Methodology: Data for this study comes from an internet-based opt-in survey of women veterans with known e-mail addresses obtained from various non-governmental sources. Therefore, the researchers caution readers to consider the extent to which the full population of women veterans might be different from those invited to participate in this study as they form opinions about the research conclusions.

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## January Crossword



www.CrosswordWeaver.com

ACROSS

- 1 Examine
- 6 Fizz
- 10 Iraq's neighbor
- 14 Bad picture
- 15 Cycle
- 16 De \_\_\_ (anew)
- 17 Crouch
- 18 Soon
- 19 Gyrate
- 20 Neither's partner
- 21 Ball player \_\_\_ Aaron
- 23 Steal
- 25 U.S. President
- 26 Beret
- 27 What children attend
- 30 Offspring
- 34 Constellation
- 35 Carol
- 36 Congressional vote
- 38 Happy cat sounds
- 39 Wrath
- 40 Type of tooth
- 42 South southeast
- 43 Musical treble \_\_\_
- 44 End
- 45 Destroyed
- 48 Slim
- 49 Environmental protection agency (abbr)
- 50 Formal "you"

- 51 Repair shed
- 54 Territory held in fee
- 55 Pigpen
- 58 Double-reed instrument
- 59 Actor Alda
- 61 City
- 63 Plateau
- 64 Doorbell sound
- 65 Similar to oak
- 66 Adam's garden
- 67 Lip
- 68 Expiring

DOWN

- 1 Association (abbr.)
- 2 To
- 3 Green \_\_\_\_, the organization on page 3
- 4 The other half of Jima
- 5 Tropical cyclones
- 6 The vendor profiled on the back page
- 7 Squeal
- 8 Hoopla
- 9 Alcohol type
- 10 The Vancouver facility where you can take illegal drugs under supervision, page 7
- 11 Leash

- 12 Tel \_\_\_
- 13 Not any
- 22 Entire
- 24 Frump
- 25 Not rich
- 27 Drenches
- 28 Earth's \_\_\_
- 29 Employer
- 30 Read over
- 31 Shallow area
- 32 Synthetic fiber
- 33 Hanker
- 35 African river
- 37 Chichi
- 40 Cook (2 wds.)
- 41 Off-Broadway award
- 43 Act
- 46 Large body of water
- 47 Resort hotel
- 48 Her
- 50 Dye
- 51 Is where the heart is
- 52 Bedroom furniture (2 wds.)
- 53 Pry
- 54 Snakes inject their venom through a \_\_\_
- 55 Rice wine
- 56 Past
- 57 Yin's partner
- 60 Topper
- 62 Can

### January's Answer Key



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# What African-Americans See in This Election

By Jeffery McNeil



If I could write a letter to one of the candidates, it would be Hillary Clinton.

I was watching Tim Russert interview Clinton when she suggested that Barack Obama shouldn't speak about race in this upcoming election.

But I would like to raise a question to Clinton. If race is not a main issue, then why are so many Democrats scrambling to get endorsements from prominent blacks? Oprah for Obama, Robert Johnson stumping for Hillary Clinton, John Edwards all over the south getting pictures with black churches – but as a nearly 40-year-old African-American, I have seen deteriorating conditions in many minority communities. Teenagers who have children out of wedlock, black-on-black violence, inferior schools, crime-ridden communities with inadequate police protection, drugs, too many African-Americans in the prison system – and many of the young people have no choice but to go and fight in a war in Iraq.

Through the eyes of a black male, the future does not look brighter, no matter who gets in the White House. We see blue-collar jobs being taken by immigrants, and as someone who has slept in shelters, it seems the only ones in the shelters are African-Americans. And I have never seen any politicians try to get our opinions on anything. The truth is, I have never seen a politician try to change anything about the poor and homeless.

This might be a historic election, with a woman and an African-American running for the highest office. So it seems like America is progressing, but in reality far too many are not participating in this equality. The fact is, there have only been two African-American governors and three senators, and only a handful of African-Americans have cracked the Fortune 500. We still lag far behind in politics, science, medicine and corporate boardrooms.

I wonder if these politicians really care about what African-Americans really think. You need to look no further than the inner cities. Southeast Washington, D.C., is one of the most depressing areas I have ever seen. And the many homeless shelters in the nation's capital give an indication of how bad poverty is right in front of the White House.

To many minorities, voting is like voting for the lesser of two evils. To minorities, Republicans do not seem to reflect the views of minorities: very few women or minorities, and the suppression of differences, whether religious, sexual or ethnic. So why elect a Republican? Their cabinet won't look like America, diverse and different.

And the Democrats, in their push to be like the center, alienate the poor and the blue-collar people who face losing their jobs to illegal immigrants and overseas competition, so what hope is there for the poor and homeless who are suffering? Who speaks for the poor and homeless working blue-collar people, who try to raise families in crime-ridden, drug-infested areas, where their children have to compete in inadequate schools with inferior teachers?

I would like to state that when you vote, you would like to see a White House that represents the same values you have. Many African-Americans loved Bill Clinton because his cabinet had many diverse people – Republican, Democratic, African-American, people of different religions and genders.

For America to go forward we need to have a White House that reflects the melting pot of America. That's why so many people see Obama as refreshing. He might not share the same views I have but you know his cabinet wouldn't look like the administration we have today. There would be many diverse people.

So to Hillary, race will play a big part in this election. And I hope to see many of the candidates go to the people who are not gaining in this new economy, because they are the ones who are being left behind. For America to be competitive, we need to rearm them with the tools for this coming century.

*Jeffery McNeil regularly puts on a suit to sell Street Sense.*

do in a day treatment program.

The voices grow louder and more vicious. They are yelling obscenities, commands, belittling criticisms at me now. "Look what you've done! You're stupid. You're shit. You're worthless!" the voices say.

My agitation increases with the intensity of the voices. Plus I can't read the instruction sheet to make shapes with the toothpicks. Are those numbers or letters on the paper? Is it me or are the instructions illegible? (Logan later tells us that the instructions are intentionally illegible to evoke a reaction.)

I feel frustrated and a little paranoid. I worry that everyone will think I'm incompetent, even though I'm not sure who "everyone" is.

Meanwhile, the voices continue mercilessly. "You stink! Everyone can smell you. They're

# Part I: The Mills Family

By Jo Ann Jackson



I met the Mills family in the 1950s. After my mother passed I had to live with my mother's sister and her husband. I was only 10 years old and very

to read it as a punishment.

Well, it was time for school to open and I was glad. Naturally, my uncle was the one who took me shopping for school supplies and clothes. The memories of that day would stay with me for the rest of my life. I'm 60 years old and the pain is still there.

Before we went into McBride's on 8th and H streets, my uncle took me to an abandoned house and sexually molested me.

At the age of 10, I was hurt, ashamed and afraid to tell anyone because he said the police would take me away and I would never see my aunt again. So I never told her. She died without knowing.

I thought that he wouldn't do it again, but I was wrong. It continued for eight miserably years.

Then I met a sweet little girl by the name of Esparita Mills. We became very close. She saved me from my uncle many times and didn't even know how she was helping me. My aunt immediately took a liking to her. When she asked if I could come out and play, the answer was always yes. This is one time that my aunt stood her ground.

Esparita was really the only person I felt comfortable with. I started calling her my sister because she was so kind and sweet to me. We started McFarland Junior High together. I was glad she was my friend because she knew a lot of people and would introduce me to them, but I still felt like an alien. I felt this way because my clothes and hair were different from theirs. I looked like someone who had just come back from the Roaring '20s.

I started calling Rita "Peanut." She was lovable, beautiful and kind, so I wanted to have my own name for her. I promised myself that I would beat up anyone who bothered her. She was my little sister. No one was going to mistreat Peanut as long as I was around.

To be continued.

*Jo Ann Jackson is a vendor and proud grandmother.*

shy. I kept to myself and didn't like to talk. My aunt had one leg and was depressed most of the time because her son had recently been killed while trying to save a friend. Plus, my mother had just passed and they were very close. Next, my grandfather passed, and my aunt just seemed altogether different from how I remembered her. She used to always have something funny to say, loved to dance, and was a school teacher in Georgia. It hurt me to see her like this, and her husband was no help.

When he started to drink he was very mean to both of us. After having me there for a while, my aunt started to brighten up. She showed me how to make quilts, read me stories, and told me about my family's history. I enjoyed this very much, but my uncle would find some way to ruin my joy. He was so negative. I would cry when he argued with her because she seemed so unhappy and helpless.

If Aunt Fannie told me I could go outside, he would say no. In order to make her angry, whatever she said I could do, he would make me do something else. He wouldn't let her give me permission to do anything. I had to ask him, but I was stubborn so I never asked for his permission.

I just read books and tried to write about how I felt and then hide it, but when he found my papers he would tear them up and make me get the Bible. I had to start with Genesis and learn five verses by heart every day. I didn't mind reading the Bible, but it was wrong for me to have

laughing at you now and talking about you. You better run away from them. Run and hide yourself. Hide yourself under the bed."

I want to turn off the recording. I move on to the mental health evaluation. This simulates what a patient might be administered in an emergency room.

The voices are quiet now, but I'm nervous about answering questions.

The interviewer seems detached. She has a blank expression and she is asking me pointless questions:

"Who were the last four U.S. presidents? What is the point of your visit today? Remember these words and repeat them at the end of the interview: umbrella, apple, bicycle."

The voices drown her out. I have to ask her to repeat the questions.

"Please spell 'world' backwards. Repeat the following numbers in the correct order: 64-53-12-24. What were the words you were asked to remember?" she asks.

She puts a yellow sticker on my evaluation. What does that mean? Did I pass or fail? I don't ask. I go to my seat to do a crossword puzzle until the rest of the class finishes.

The voices have returned. They're telling me I'm stupid. I don't complete a single answer on the puzzle.

Finally, Logan tells us to turn off the voice player to discuss the experience.

The group appears relieved. Many say the voices left them bewildered, depressed, anxious, even exhausted and nauseated. I agree. I leave the workshop with some perspective on what it's like to live with a mental illness.

## Voices, from page 1

Logan tells us we will read an article and answer questions, perform a task with toothpicks and take a mental health evaluation.

I begin the article and the voices on the recording start to whisper.

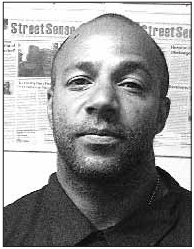
I'm a little distracted but calm. Then I start to have trouble focusing. My stress level rises as I worry about performing well on the test.

Logan reviews the test orally. The voices make it hard to hear her but I know I did poorly. At least I'm not the only one. Out of 10 questions, the majority of the class gets about three correct.

I tell myself I'll rebound on the toothpick activity. This activity shows what a patient might

# Motivating Myself

By Moyo Onibuje



**M**ost of my articles for Street Sense are about my personal growth. For some time, I have been wondering why solving my problems, including finding

housing and a job, is going so slowly for me.

As I look into the issue of motivation, I find that many of the issues plaguing me are similar to those of others like me. What I am doing here is relearning to motivate myself. In order for me to make a living, I need to be healthy and have the right mental attitude.

I understand that my motivation is based on my behavior. Good behavior increases motivation. What I am really interested in at this stage of my life is true motivation, the kind that lasts forever and ever. Did my problems occur as a result of random events or chaos? Will order eventually prevail? For how many homeless people is order only a pipe dream?

Beyond the concern for my basic survival needs, I know that motivation will uncover my true destiny, which will in turn uncover my true identity. And my true identity comes from improving myself by helping others.

I also understand that when society fails to work through its problem of homelessness, it creates laws, but these are a poor substitute for tackling the causes of homelessness.

I have been guilty to some extent of a false sense of self. Inspiration is not hard to find, I've always been good with words, but my failure has been a higher form of purpose called sincere sacrifice. Addiction and other issues definitely affect clear thinking. How can one be motivated if one can't think straight?

I think the most important thing is goal clarification. Every day when I wake up I try to identify five things that are healthy for me, and five things that are good for me.

The first step must be an honest and open-minded evaluation of the problem. It's essential to collect as much material as possible about the problem. Becoming aware of one's physiological processes can impact motivation. Am I eating right? Is my stamina what it should be? Mental deficiency as a result of physiological deficiency causes failure.

We bring up our children by telling them homelessness is a result of bad behavior. So when they become homeless, they say it is because I'm bad, but really sometimes this isn't true. We have got to be on the lookout for negative conditioning.

Motivation does not end with a specific goal being achieved, like a home. It should also lead to employment, growth, education, improved mental and physical health, social acceptance and family ties.

I need to personally avoid self-defeating thoughts. How can I hunt for success in whatever time I might have left in this life, if I am too busy averting feelings of worthlessness that I perceive from society around me? Often, our environment is not conducive to staying motivated. The way people look at you, the level of rejection in terms of verbal comments, and in some cases even physical abuse.

I always remembered, when I was young, telling myself that "pain is the great motivator," but it gets to the stage that no matter how much pain, incarceration, poverty, dereliction etc. there is, motivation fails to be forthcoming. So essentially for me to remain motivated I have to thrive on hope.

Validating the steps I am taking and affirming positive thoughts are also a great help to me in remaining motivated. I refuse to believe that my sex or race is responsible for me being unmotivated. I refuse to believe that I was born unmotivated and that there is nothing that I can do that will improve things.

At one time not everybody's case was hopeless. I don't care who they are. At one time, effort was made on the part of individuals, but no results were forthcoming.

Continual discouragement meant the individual stopped trying and then once we got on in age, the energy was not there anymore.

Some of the reasons for the failure to deal with homeless issues stem from dealing with the problem from the perspective of competition rather than collaboration. I have been contributing in regards to providing solutions to the homeless problem in the District by selling and talking about Street Sense.

In the real motivational world, a victory is not really a victory but a chance to return to the first steps that gave us our original purpose so we can maintain momentum.

*Street Sense vendor Moyo Onibuje grew up in Nigeria and England and loves to read.*

Your thoughts and editorials are welcome.  
Please e-mail content to [editor@streetsense.org](mailto:editor@streetsense.org) or mail to  
1317 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

## ROUNDTABLE ON POVERTY

# Health Care Woes

By Eric Sheptock



**W**hile poverty is a many-faceted issue, one area of concern that stands out is health care. My experiences with insufficient medical practices, under-funded health care facilities

and medical coverage being terminated without notice could happen to anyone. I've worked hard and have nothing to show for it but deteriorating health.

I suffered a head injury at the hands of my biological parents when I was 8 months old. I therefore don't drive. My feet and legs are therefore of great importance to me. Due to much walking as well as hard work, I've sustained gradual injuries, including two torn menisci in my right knee, three hernias and an undiagnosed problem in my left knee. These injuries have occurred over long periods of time, so I can't hold an employer responsible or require him to pay some or all of my health care costs.

Lack of adequate transportation is a huge part of the problem. I began seeking care for my right knee in November 2005. It was operated on June 1, 2006. However, I had to walk two to three miles to various appointments throughout this six-month period. I had no income. I was not given free bus tokens. On at least one occasion, I walked about four miles to an appointment. After being discharged from Christ House nine days after surgery, I had to walk from 1717 Columbia Road to Franklin Shelter at 13th and K streets, NW.

It was crazy that I had to walk considerable distances to appointments about my bad knee and hernias. Although tokens are sometimes given to the homeless, the rules for issuing them are too stringent. I recently heard that the tokens which are given to the homeless might be eliminated altogether. Clearly, we need more bus tokens – not fewer.

Timeliness of physical therapy is also a problem. My first physical therapy appointment was for 26 days after my surgery. When I arrived at Howard for my appointment, I was informed that my appointment had been moved to July 17, which was 1.5 months after my operation. Needless to say, I told Howard not to bother with the physical therapy. Who needs it that long after the operation?

Finding a place to stay after an operation can be extremely difficult for the homeless or poor. Several hours after an operation to remove three hernias in April, I was told by the surgeon and a nurse to make arrangements to return to Christ House.

A Christ House employee, who by no means represents the majority of their employees, let me know rather rudely that there weren't any more beds. The combination of drugs that I was under and her rudeness and unwillingness to hear me out actually caused me to cry, which I haven't done since. (I am a proud man. It took a lot to admit that I cried. Anesthesia is the only thing that has caused me to cry outside of the bathroom in a long time.) The surgeon arranged for me to remain overnight.

In addition, the homeless must have access to occupational therapy. For multiple reasons, it may prove to be unrealistic to think that I could ever do a clerical job. I've always done manual labor. If I can't return to doing manual labor, that would essentially render me disabled.

My medical saga unfortunately is not over. I woke up on Dec. 29, experiencing excruciating pain in my left knee. I limped up to Christ House on Jan. 4. They gave me pain meds and a couple of referrals. I took the referrals to Howard on the 7th and sought care. I was told by admissions that I was no longer covered – and I don't yet know why.

I can tell you with certainty that it would be catastrophic if my coverage weren't restored. I'm presently in need of glasses and experiencing recurring chest pains. With all of our medical advances, poverty should not be a cause of death. For everyone's sake, let's hope that I wasn't

dropped for lack of payment. I'm indigent.

It is imperative that the D.C. government understand that free, medically sound health care is an absolute necessity. Either a person can stand in line for free health care and then return to work or the system can care for them indefinitely by giving them monthly checks for years to come. Which one seems wiser and more economical to you?

The following are medical care issues of concern to the homeless:

- Under-funded health care facilities.
- Loss of medical coverage for the indigent (without notification).
- Lack of suitable transportation for those with mobility issues.
- Lack of clarity regarding medical coverage for gradual injuries – who pays?
- Need for timely physical therapy.
- Need for occupational therapy.
- Need for greater sensitivity on the part of medical staff to the issue of poverty.
- Need for frugality within the health care system.

*Drawn from testimony given by Eric to the D.C. Council's Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs on Jan. 17.*

*Eric is an advocate for homeless people and lives at Franklin School Shelter. He can be reached at [ericshoptock@yahoo.com](mailto:ericshoptock@yahoo.com).*

*"With all of our medical advances, poverty should not be a cause of death."*

# VendorNotes

By Laura Thompson Osuri



Vendor Allen, volunteer Kellie, vendor Mark and volunteer Jenn take a break in the Street Sense office after a morning of selling the paper.

### Superstar Students

I'd like to give a special thanks to **Kellie Marsh** and **Jenn Dunseith** from the **College of St. Rose** in Albany, N.Y., who came and volunteered in our office during the second week in January.

Not only were they a huge help at doing last-minute tasks to get the Jan. 9 issue out, they were key in getting our office organize and updated for the new year. Kellie and Jenn updated the story archive lists, sorted the donors list for 2007, and organized our archive of past issues.

And for one afternoon they went out and sold papers with vendor **Mark Jones** all about town. And while they said it was a struggle to sell the first few issues, in the end they said they had a great time.

### New Interns

And speaking of help from college students, I would like to welcome our interns for the winter/spring semester. We have **Brittany Aubin**, a senior at **American University** with a double major in international studies and print journalism; **Jessica Elliott**, a junior at **Lafayette College** who is in D.C. for the **Washington Semester at American University**; and **Mary Pat**

**Abraham**, a high school senior at the **Howard Gardner School**.

Brittany is in Wednesdays and Fridays helping with the editorial work, Jessica helps out Mondays and Tuesdays on the vendor side of things, and Mary Pat is in on Fridays doing a little of both.

### Lee in the Kitchen

After 16 long weeks in the **D.C. Central Kitchen culinary arts training program**, vendor **Lee Mayse** graduated Jan. 22. Just a few days before graduation, he accepted a job offer at **D.C. Public Schools**.

Lee will be cooking at a cafeteria at one of the schools, though he does not know which one yet. Lee said the job offer was a true blessing from God, and that he is thrilled to start working as soon as possible.

### Big-spending Customers

**Jeffery McNeil** wanted to thank a well-dressed male customer near Metro Center who gave him a card the other day, which held a big surprise. "I couldn't believe it!" Jeffery said. "I opened the card later and there was a \$50 bill."

And our newest vendor **Frank Reddick** wanted to thank two customers yesterday who separately gave him \$100 bills.

Frank got these donations during his first day at Street Sense while he was selling near **Dupont Circle**. He came back the next day ecstatic and anxious to get his new badge. And by the end of the day he was vendor #168 and had already sold 40 papers. See the back page for more on Frank.

### Our Oldest Vendor

On Feb. 3, our oldest vendor **Charlie Mayfield** gets a little older, turning 74. We wanted congratulate Charlie on reaching this milestone while still going strong selling papers. You can often find Charlie selling at **Union Station**. He does not look a day over 60!



## INTERN INSIGHT by Brittany Aubin

# Coffee Break



Undoubtedly, some poor intern in this city is just now embarking on a semester-long affair with the office copy machine. For many young people, the allure of prestigious ID badges and K Street commutes almost eclipses the annoyance of days spent running coffee

and crunching numbers.

It was partly an effort to avoid such a dreaded coupling that brought me to this position in Street Sense's humble church office. For me, a senior majoring in international development and print journalism at American University, Street Sense seemed the perfect chance to combine news writing, social justice and empowerment.

While I have worked with homeless communities before, much of my knowledge comes from volunteerism, both in D.C. and as an exchange student in Chile. These opportunities were rewarding, but did little to address the deep-seated issues surrounding homelessness.

Seeing the advertisement for Street Sense online, I saw a chance to take my involvement one step further.

All of that brought me to this morning, my first day at Street Sense. Wedged between fellow commuters on the Metro bus, I fantasized of soon-to-come undercover features, intimate interviews and daring adventures as intrepid gumshoe reporter.

Only an hour in, I decided this job would be anything but predictable. Set up at my own little computer – complete with lime-green keyboard and mouse – I already had a list of tasks ahead of me. With stories to cover, photos to find and sources to track, a bit of mindless photocopying actually started to sound relaxing. Between e-mails and phone calls, I had a chance to meet some of the paper's vendors, who drifted in and out of the office to buy more issues, attend meetings and just chat. Everyone seemed genuinely happy to welcome me to the team.

By noon, every stereotype I might have had about the homeless was gone and I was floored by the diversity of personality, race, gender and background that made up this little office. The roles of vendor, volunteer and friend seemed merged, with many vendors helping out and basically everyone knowing more about the paper's operations than me. In fact, everyone seemed to know a little more about life than me. With conversations jumping from the origins of Valentine's Day to what kind of root goes into root beer, I wondered how it was that anyone got any work done here at Street Sense.

But work I did. By the end of the day, I realized how different this internship would be from others I had in the past. Putting the finishing touches on the vendor survey charts for this issue, I knew that the numbers corresponded to the many new faces I had met today. Although quite used to sobering statistics, I couldn't shake the fact that over half of our vendors were 51 or older. And even my math-challenged mind understood about 30% of vendors had been homeless for four years or more – about one-fifth of my 21-year-old life.

Making the abstract personal is an uncomfortable feeling. Returning with other tired commuters Friday evening, I may have appeared just another Red Line undergrad, dressed in freshly-bought business casual, departing at the Tenleytown stop. Returning to a comfy apartment with heat and well-stocked shelves.

And a newfound understanding of the inequalities of this city. It sure beats running coffee.

*Brittany Aubin is a senior at American University and an intern with Street Sense through the spring.*

## Get Twice as Much Street Sense Each Month Delivered Right to Your Door!

Do you want to continue to support Street Sense throughout the year?  
Order a subscription today.

Not only will you receive 26 issues packed with all our latest news, poetry and photography, you will also help raise awareness about poverty in the D.C. area.

- YES!** I want to subscribe to Street Sense for just \$40 a year for 24 issues.
- YES!** I want to give half of the cost of a subscription to my favorite vendor: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Street Sense.  
 Mail to: **Street Sense, 1317 G St. NW, Washington, DC 20005.**

Thanks for your support!

# Community Service Index

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

### SHELTER

Calvary Women's Services  
928 5th Street, NW  
(202) 783-6651  
www.calvaryservices.org

Central Union Mission (Men)  
1350 R Street, NW  
(202) 745-7118  
www.missiondc.org

CCNV (Men and Women)  
425 2nd Street, NW  
(202) 393-1909  
users.erols.com/ccnv/

Community of Hope (Family)  
1413 Girard Street, NW  
(202) 232-7356  
www.communityofhopedc.org

DC Village (Family)  
2-A DC Village Lane, SW  
(202) 561-8090  
www.dccfh.org/DCVillage.html

Franklin School (Men)  
13th and K streets, NW  
(202) 638-7424

Gospel Rescue Ministries (Men)  
810 5th Street, NW  
(202) 842-1731  
www.grm.org

John Young Center (Women)  
117 D Street, NW  
(202) 639-8469  
http://www.ccs-dc.org/find/services/

La Casa Bilingual Shelter (Men)  
1436 Irving Street, NW  
(202) 673-3592

N Street Village (Women)  
1333 N Street, NW  
(202) 939-2060  
www.nstreetvillage.org

801 East, St. Elizabeth Hospital (Men)  
2700 MLK Avenue, SE  
(202) 561-4014

New York Ave Shelter (Men)  
1355-57 New York Avenue, NE  
(202) 832-2359

Open Door Shelter (Women)  
425 Mitch Snyder Place, NW  
(202) 639-8093

### FOOD

Charlie's Place  
1830 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
(202) 232-3066  
www.stmargaretsdc.org/charliesplace

Church of the Pilgrims  
2201 P Street, NW  
(202) 387-6612  
www.churchofthepilgrims.org

Dinner Program for Homeless Women  
AND the "9:30 Club" Breakfast  
309 E Street, NW  
(202) 737-9311  
www.dphw.org

Father McKenna Center  
19 Eye Street, NW  
(202) 842-1112

Food and Friends  
219 Riggs Road, NE  
(202) 269-2277  
www.foodandfriends.org

Miriam's Kitchen  
2401 Virginia Avenue, NW  
(202) 452-8926  
www.miriamskitchen.org

The Welcome Table  
Church of the Epiphany  
1317 G Street, NW  
(202) 347-2635  
http://www.epiphanydc.org/ministry/welcometbl.htm

### MEDICAL RESOURCES

Christ House  
1717 Columbia Road, NW  
(202) 328-1100  
www.christhouse.org

Unity Health Care, Inc.  
3020 14th Street, NW  
(202) 745-4300  
www.unityhealthcare.org

Whitman-Walker Clinic  
1407 S Street, NW  
(202) 797-3500  
www.wwc.org

### OUTREACH CENTERS

Bread for the City  
1525 Seventh Street, NW  
(202) 265-2400 AND  
1640 Good Hope Road, SE  
(202) 561-8587  
www.breadforthecity.org  
food pantry, clothing, legal and social services, medical clinic

Community Council for the Homeless  
at Friendship Place  
4713 Wisconsin Avenue NW  
(202) 364-1419  
www.cchfp.org  
housing, medical and psych care, substance abuse and job counseling

Bethany Women's Center  
1333 N Street, NW  
(202) 939-2060  
http://www.nstreetvillage.org  
meals, hygiene, laundry, social activities, substance abuse treatment

Green Door  
(202) 464-9200  
1221 Taylor Street NW  
www.greendoor.org  
housing, job training, supportive mental health services

Friendship House  
619 D Street, SE  
(202) 675-9050  
www.friendshiphouse.net  
counseling and mentoring, education, youth services, clothing

Georgetown Ministry Center  
1041 Wisconsin Avenue, NW  
(202) 338-8301  
www.georgetownministrycenter.org  
laundry, counseling, psych care

Martha's Table  
2114 14th Street, NW  
(202) 328-6608

www.marthastable.org  
dinner, education, recreation, clothing, child and family services

Rachel's Women's Center  
1222 11th Street, NW  
(202) 682-1005  
http://www.ccdsd.org/howorwc.php  
hygiene, laundry, lunch, phone and mail, clothing, social activities

Sasha Bruce Youthwork  
741 8th Street, SE  
(202) 675-9340  
www.sashabruce.org  
counseling, housing, family services

So Others Might Eat (SOME)  
71 "O" Street, NW  
(202) 797-8806  
www.some.org  
lunch, medical and dental, job and housing counseling

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Bright Beginnings Inc.  
128 M Street NW, Suite 150  
Washington DC 20001  
(202) 842-9090  
www.brightbeginningsinc.org  
Child care, family services

Catholic Community Services of D.C.  
924 G Street, NW  
(202) 772-4300  
www.ccs-dc.org  
umbrella for a variety of services

D.C. Coalition for the Homeless  
1234 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
(202) 347-8870  
www.dccfh.org  
housing, substance abuse treatment, employment assistance

Community Family Life Services  
305 E Street, NW  
(202) 347-0511  
www.cflsdc.org  
housing, job and substance abuse counseling, clothes closet

Foundry Methodist Church  
1500 16th Street, NW  
(202) 332-4010  
www.foundrymc.org  
ESL, lunch, clothing, IDs

Hermano Pedro Day Center  
3211 Sacred Heart Way, NW  
(202) 332-2874  
http://www.ccs-dc.org/find/services/  
meals, hygiene, laundry, clothing

JHP, Inc.  
1526 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  
(202) 544-9126  
www.jobshavepriority.org  
training and employment

Jubilee Jobs  
1640 Columbia Road, NW  
(202) 667-8970  
www.jubileejobs.org  
job preparation and placement

National Coalition for the Homeless  
2201 P Street, NW  
(202) 462-4822  
www.nationalhomeless.org  
activists, speakers bureau available

## Shelter Hotline: 1-800-535-7252

Samaritan Ministry  
1345 U Street, SE, AND  
1516 Hamilton Street, NW  
(202)889-7702  
www.samaritanministry.org  
HIV support, employment, drug/alcohol addiction, healthcare

St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
1514 15th Street, NW  
(202) 667-4394  
http://stlukesdc.edow.org  
food, counseling

St. Matthew's Cathedral  
1725 Rhode Island Avenue, NW  
(202) 347-3215 ext. 552  
breakfast, clothing, hygiene

Travelers Aid, Union Station  
50 Mass. Avenue, NE  
(202) 371-1937  
www.travelersaid.org/ta/dc.html  
national emergency travel assistance

Wash. Legal Clinic for the Homeless  
1200 U Street, NW  
(202) 328-5500  
www.legalclinic.org  
legal services

## MARYLAND

### SHELTER

Comm. Ministry of Montgomery Co.  
114 W. Montgomery Avenue, Rockville  
(301) 762-8682  
www.communityministrymc.org

The Samaritan Group  
P.O. Box 934, Chestertown  
(443) 480-3564

Warm Night Shelter  
311 68th Place, Seat Pleasant  
(301) 499-2319  
www.cmpgc.org

### FOOD

Bethesda Cares  
7728 Woodmont Church, Bethesda  
(301) 907-9244  
www.bethesdacares.com

Community Place Café  
311 68th Place, Seat Pleasant  
(301) 499-2319  
www.cmpgc.org

Manna Food Center  
614-618 Lofstrand Lane, Rockville  
(301) 424-1130  
www.mannafood.org

### MEDICAL RESOURCES

Community Clinic, Inc.  
8210 Colonial Lane, Silver Spring  
(301) 585-1250  
www.ccweb.org

Mobile Medical Care, Inc.  
9309 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda  
(301) 493-8553  
www.mobilemedicalcare.org

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Catholic Charities, Maryland  
12247 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring  
(301) 942-1790  
www.catholiccharitiesdc.org

shelter, substance abuse treatment, variety of other services

Mission of Love  
6180 Old Central Avenue  
Capitol Heights  
(301)333-4440  
www.molinc.org  
life skills classes, clothing, housewares

Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless  
600-B East Gude Drive, Rockville  
(301) 217-0314  
www.mcch.net  
emergency shelter, transitional housing, and supportiveservices

## VIRGINIA

### SHELTER

Alexandria Community Shelter  
2355 B Mill Road, Alexandria  
(703) 838-4239

Carpenter's Shelter  
930 N. Henry Street, Alexandria  
(703) 548-7500  
www.carpentersshelter.org

Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless  
3103 Ninth Road North, Arlington  
(703) 525-7177  
www.aachhomeless.org

### FOOD

Alive, Inc.  
2723 King Street, Alexandria  
(703) 836-2723  
www.alive-inc.org

Our Daily Bread  
10777 Main Street, Ste. 320, Fairfax  
(703) 273-8829  
www.our-daily-bread.org

### MEDICAL RESOURCES

Arlington Free Clinic  
3833 N Fairfax Drive, #400, Arlington  
(703) 979-1400  
www.arlingtonfreeclinic.org

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Abundant Life Christian Outreach,  
5154 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria  
(703) 823-4100  
www.anchor-of-hope.net  
food, clothing, youth development, and medicines

David's Place Day Shelter  
930 North Henry Street, Alexandria  
(703) 548-7500  
www.carpentersshelter.org  
laundry, shower, workshops, hypothermia shelter

Legal Services of Northern Virginia  
6066 Leesburg Pike, Ste. 500  
(703) 778-6800  
www.lsnv.org  
civil legal services

Samaritan Ministry  
2924 Columbia Pike, Arlington  
(703) 271-0938  
www.samaritanministry.com  
social services, employment services, HIV/AIDS services

PHOTO FINISH

# Getting the Dirt Out

By Melanie Lidman



A \$6.5 million renovation of the Center for Creative Non-Violence shelter in northwest Washington includes repairing the roof, replacing all windows, updating the lobby and fixing the rotting bathrooms to make them handicapped accessible. Renovations are slated for completion in March. Here, a former resident and current volunteer shows off the new washing machines. See page 1 for details.

## Frank Reddick

### VENDOR PROFILE

By Jessica Elliott

Frank Reddick was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., on Aug. 12, 1988. Frank spent the first ten years of his life in Pittsburgh, with his mother and two younger siblings. However, all that changed when Frank's mother died in 1998. Her death was extremely hard for Frank, and left him with only one option at the time, moving to Washington, D.C., to live with his father. This move was especially difficult because Frank was moving away from his brother and sister, with whom he was extremely close.

When Frank moved in with his father, it was not what he expected. His father was very abusive. When Frank had had enough, he decided he was better off moving out. With nowhere to go, Frank did what he saw as his last option, and he moved himself into a shelter.

Frank is a graduate of Ballou High School in Washington, D.C. Throughout high school, Frank worked three different jobs and says he "loves to get the job done on time, and has a passion for working." Frank worked at Safeway for two years, Popeye's for four months, and worked for his uncle at Washrite power-washing cars.

Going through the experience of losing his mother has made it hard for Frank to stay positive, but he continues to be hopeful that one day he will be married with kids. He never wanted to see himself on the streets, but felt it was his only option after moving out of his father's house. Frank loves working and is currently looking for a job and the chance to prove what he can do.



JANE CAPE/STREET SENSE

#### How did you become homeless?

After my mom died, I moved to D.C. to live with my father where I was physically abused. I felt my last option was to move out of his house and into a shelter.

#### Why do you sell Street Sense?

Selling Street Sense keeps me occupied and keeps me away from panhandling. Pan-handling made me look bad. I thank God that I found Street Sense and that I have some money in my pockets.

#### Where do you see yourself in five years?

I see myself in a house with a family, taking care of my kids and just living life.

#### Your favorite music?

I like rap, R&B, go-go, and a little bit of oldies. My favorite artist is Lil' Wayne.

#### Your favorite food?

Macaroni and cheese, fried chicken, and pizza

#### Favorite movie?

"Baby Boy"

#### Favorite book?

"To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee

Frank reminds customers to only buy from badged vendors and not to give to those panhandling with one paper.

## StreetFact

More than half of all Street Sense vendors went to college. More than 16% have a college degree. Surprised? See page 8 for more.

SOURCE: STREET SENSE SURVEY OF 50 VENDORS, 2007

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Street Sense  
1317 G Street, NW  
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Ask any vendor for a pre-stamped survey postcard or just go online to [www.streetsense.org](http://www.streetsense.org) and click on the Readers Survey link.