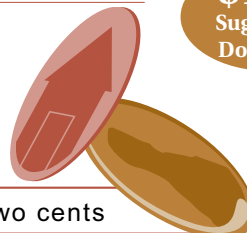


10-year-old Zach Bonner does his part to help the homeless, page 7



StreetSense



\$1.00
Suggested
Donation

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

February 20, 2008 – March 4, 2008 • Volume 5, Issue 8

www.streetsense.org

VETERANS

U.S. VETS Struggles to Find a New Home

By Brittany Aubin

Ignatia House, a U.S. VETS-run supportive housing program for formerly homeless veterans, will lose its lease at the end of March and as of publication has not located a new building to occupy, according to U.S. VETS regional director Stephanie Buckley.

The 51 former service members in the program, located on the grounds of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Ward 5, are "anxiety-ridden" over the precarious situation, she said.

Yet, while many governmental and nonprofit actors have become involved in the relocation process and negotiations since late January, it remains unclear how and why the situation deteriorated to this point.

U.S. VETS, a private nonprofit dedicated to helping homeless veterans, leases the 21,069 square foot Ignatia House from the AFRH, an independent federal agency. AFRH's master plan requires that the Ignatia House be closed down to make way for a mixed-use redevelopment featuring affordable housing, market-rate rental and condo units, a small grocery and other retail and office buildings, said Chris Black, a consultant for the AFRH. The site will also contain a new 100-bed facility for formerly homeless veterans, but it would likely be several years before the facility would be ready to open.

U.S. VETS knew this development plan would limit their time on the grounds when they first signed the lease, Black said, adding that U.S. VETS was "falling down on their responsibility" by not looking



COURTESY OF ISTOCKPHOTO

51 former service members may become homeless again if a new home isn't found for U.S. VETS by the end of March.

for a new location sooner.

Stephanie Buckley, the regional director of U.S. VETS, maintains that the AFRH did not notify them

about the displacement until Dec. 19, 2007, at which point the organization began lobbying for a lease extension and actively seeking new

locations for their program without any assistance from the Department of Defense or AFRH.

However, Black stated the AFRH has given repeated extensions and rental discounts, and "bent over backwards" to support the program. When U.S. VETS' lease expired in July 2007, AFRH offered a six-month extension due to a delay in the initial construction date, she said. However, it was clear that extension was temporary, she added.

"Why have they put the safety and security and comfort of their residents at risk by waiting until the eleventh hour?" asked Black.

In a Dec. 18 e-mail to U.S. VETS, a representative of the AFRH confirmed a 30-day extension of the lease, ending Feb. 28. "US Vets has been well aware that this has been coming, and we already granted an extension based on the delay in the process. This will be the final extension and we will not consider any further extensions," the message stated. Black provided the correspondence and copy of the lease. U.S. VETS has contracted legal counsel and could not provide collaborative documents. When asked, Buckley stood by her statement that they were given their first notice on Dec. 19.

Other organizations and city agencies began responding to the situation in January, with the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans sending out a press release seeking emergency assistance on Jan. 30. The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness has also stepped in to find

See **U.S. VETS** page 7

OUTSIDE VOICES

Number of Homeless Seniors in DC on the Rise

By David Dietz

As an intern social-worker at Franklin School Shelter several nights a week, I often notice 15 to 25 senior citizens check in for a bed on any given evening.

Franklin School Shelter, for those of you who may not know, is considered a "low-barrier" shelter. That means that on any given night, more than 250 beds may be filled with men who are unemployed, who may have a mental illness or who have prison records – the majority of whom are between 25 and 40 years old. It suffices to say that such an environment may not be conducive to the health and welfare of senior citizens, whether they are homeless or not.

In my opinion, Franklin Shelter's staff does an excellent job providing services to men of all ages and operates well with the resources it has available. However, I remain skeptical that such an environment is the most suitable one for senior citizens. This raises the question for Washington, D.C., and other urban cities and rural areas alike to ponder: How do we provide housing and services for homeless seniors, and what services should we be providing specifically for this demographic?

According to the May 2006 District of Columbia State Data Center Monthly Brief, 14% of District residents age 65 and over were living under the poverty level. According to the Annual Report to the People for Fiscal Year 2006 produced by the District of Columbia Office on Aging, there were 91,605 adults 60 years or older living in poverty in 2006, which signifies nearly a 37% increase since 2000. This data suggest two frightening conclusions: District officials do not know for

See **Voices**, page 13

Inside This Issue

PROFILE Philip Mangano: National Partnerships, Local Planning

A talk with the director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, page 3

POLITICS On the Hill

President Bush's budget plan includes millions of dollars in cuts to aid for the poor, page 6

FICTION Stacy from Malibu, part 2

Part 2 of Ivory Wilson's latest story about a private detective who gets more than he bargained for on his first case, page 8

EDITORIAL The Decline of America

Vendor Jeffery McNeil muses on illegal immigration, page 12

POETRY Gwen, at Miriam's Kitchen

David Harris paints a word picture of a woman who has touched his life, page 9

USICH: Cost Studies Support Rapid Re-Housing Strategy

By Robert Blair

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has evaluated the agency using a two-part assessment. First, if good intentions and well-meaning service programs were enough, the problem would already have been solved. Existing federal response to homelessness is only six full-time staff, and its budget authority is \$2 million. With such limited resources and such broad responsibilities, it would seem likely that USICH's reach greatly exceeds its budget.

However, USICH executive director Philip Mangano would disagree. He presents his agency's role in a perspective defined less by size, dollars and authority than by vision, research, and policy innovation. "Our mission," he said, "relates directly to our clients, the homeless. We work closely with every level of government, from the private sector, but include state and local governments in our work ending homelessness."

Mangano supports what are known as "rapid re-housing" efforts which include assisting tenants with the costs of appropriate housing, outreach to landlords, incentives to encourage renting to the homeless, as assistance with landlord/tenant issues that may arise, coordination with service providers once the client is permanently housed and periodic follow-up visits. Mangano also emphasized his point by citing "the cost studies." Mangano said, "We demonstrate that the status quo response to homelessness is irrelevant on emergency shel-

ters and social services] is more expensive and less effective than housing plus supportive services." Mangano said that the cost studies can be produced by considering the resources devoted to homelessness rather than as funding to address it. "You then have to ask," he said, "what's the return on that investment?"

A return-on-investment perspective, in turn, leads policy makers to rely less on government programs and more on private and greater emphasis on data-driven research, performance-based goals, and results-oriented programs.

One example Mangano cited is the importance of HUD's required point-in-time enumerations of the size of local homeless populations and their demographic makeup. The data, said Mangano, are the baseline for determining which policies and programs achieve the best results, and which emerging innovations show the most promise.

Mangano pointed out that, in HUD's recent report on the use of Housing First models for homeless individuals with serious mental illness, the 84% rate of retention for new clients was impressive evidence of success. Even if only 10% of the population were housed, after 12 months was a major accomplishment and strong start, he said.

Wellness Center is the Heart of N Street Village

By Diane Rusignola

Wandering down N Street, NW just below Logan Circle, you pass apartment building after apartment building in one of the District's most densely populated areas. You'll see professionals on their way to work or out with friends litter the streets, huddled up on the cold February air.

As you pass between Vermont Avenue and 14th Street, you're sure to notice Luther Place Memorial Church, but across the street from the church, a cozy courtyard appears to fit in unobtrusively with the rest of your surroundings. You'll see a few people sitting on the benches of The Washington Post 2006 Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management. A shelter-in-Logan Circle?

Yes, and a successful program, too. Including a day program and a night shelter, recovery housing, permanent group homes, case management, mental health, and wellness center. "We serve women with co-occurring addiction and mental illness," says Schroeder Stribling, director of programs at N Street Village.

The shelter was founded 35 years ago by Luther Place Memorial Church, and today its five stories are bustling daily with about 100 permanent, paid employees and many many volunteers ensuring that it all runs smoothly.



DIANE RUSIGNOLA/STREET SENSE

"The Wellness Center really started with the building, about 11 years ago," Stribling notes. And in 11 years, the center has grown an expansive facility with many services open to residents completely free of charge. Open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., and with just two paid employees and health and wellness services, the center is the Valley's only otherwise completely staffed by volunteers. Volunteer opportunities include: massage therapists, reiki practitioners, and yoga, dance, tai chi, aerobics, and continued education (health, lung, financial empowerment, anger management). The center even features a meditation class, conducted regularly by Ani (which is Tibetan for "sister") Tenzin Lhamo, who has been working with the N Street Village for about a year.

The Wellness Center is open to all residents of N Street Village in their many stages of healing and growth. To visit, visit www.nstreetvillage.org or to volunteer, contact Kjersten Priddy at kpriddy@nstreetvillage.org.

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

Meets 1st Wednesday of each month
Next Meeting: March 5 at 7 p.m.
Mary's Center (The Pink Building)
2355 Ontario Road, NW

ANC 1C Contact List
email: anc1c@yahoo.com
web: www.anc1c.org
phone: 202-332-2630
mail: P.O. Box 21009
Washington, DC 20009

ABC and Public Safety
Meets 2nd Wednesday each month
Next Meeting: March 10
Kalamora Park Recreation Center
Columbia Rd. and Belmont Rd., NW
(concurrent with PSA 303 meeting)

Planning, Zoning, and Transportation
Meets 4th Wednesday each month
Next Meeting: March 12
17th St and V St., NW (Snyder Room)

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

Foundry United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation
Invites you to worship on Sundays at 9:30 and 11:00 AM
Sign Interpretation at 11:00

Homesick Outreach
Hospitality Fridays 9 AM

Foundry United Methodist Church
1500 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 332-4010
www.foundryumc.org

Sign up for the Street Sense e-mail newsletter!
We'll deliver our top stories to your inbox. You can unsubscribe at any time.

Visit www.street-sense.org to join our list.

for your next event...

- Continental Breakfasts
- Lunches
- Hot Buffets
- Plated Dinners
- Cocktail Receptions
- Weddings
- Bar/Bat Mitzvahs
- Fundraisers

When you use Fresh Start, you help empower people. DC Central Kitchen trains formerly unemployed men and women for careers in the culinary industry. Fresh Start hires graduates of the Culinary Job Training program and gives them the chance to show their skills. Our revenue supports our mission to train even more people for success. By using Fresh Start, you not only serve great food, you serve your community.

freshstart@dccentralkitchen.org
202-234-0707

Mention this ad and receive a dozen free lemon bars!

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

Monthly ANC 1C Business Meeting

Meets 1st Wednesday of each month
Next Meeting: March 5 at 7 p.m.
Mary's Center (The Pink Building)
2355 Ontario Road, NW

ANC 1C Contact List
email: anc1c@yahoo.com
web: www.anc1c.org
phone: 202-332-2630
mail: P.O. Box 21009
Washington, DC 20009

ANC 1C Committee Meetings

ABC and Public Safety
Meets 2nd Wednesday each month
Next Meeting: March 10
Kalamora Park Recreation Center
Columbia Rd. and Belmont Rd., NW
(concurrent with PSA 303 meeting)

Planning, Zoning, and Transportation
Meets 4th Wednesday each month
Next Meeting: March 12
17th St and V St., NW (Snyder Room)

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

Street Politics

David S. Hammond



Homeless and At-Risk Veterans in the President's Budget. President Bush's proposed federal budget for 2009 poses a mixed bag for veterans' needs. There are signs that growing support may be paying off the streets—although the increased support comes amid fears that demand could outpace it.

The Department of Veterans Affairs reports that funding for the medical care it provides would grow to \$41.2 billion. That's up \$2.3 billion over fiscal 2008 but according to a statement by House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Robert Byrd (D-W.V.), the figure "barely covers the costs of VA health care and does not keep up with the ever-increasing demand for VA health care."

However, in an environment of cuts to human needs funding (see the On the Hill column on this page), the administration's budget proposal would also increase spending on several VA programs specifically aimed at preventing and combating homelessness among veterans.

According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, these include a 12% increase for transitional housing, outreach and associated programs for a total of \$137 million. Administrators' Grant and Per Diem program for a total of \$137 million.

Short- and long-term residential treatment beds for veterans with mental and physical health problems would receive a \$3.1 million increase, for a total of \$83.8 million under the domestic-illness care program.

Mental health and substance abuse programs, including programs for those suffering post-traumatic stress disorder, would see their funding grow to \$3.9 billion. And the USICH reports that all veterans, recently serving in combat would receive screening for traumatic brain injury (TBI), a common injury in Iraq which can be slow to appear and hard to diagnose.

... And on the National Agenda

A year ago, experts were predicting that the needs of homeless veterans would move up the national agenda. That has happened, and the reasons go beyond the increase in attention given veterans in general because of the war in Iraq and stories like the poor conditions at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

The higher profile comes after many advocates' hard work to raise awareness of the problem, and of solutions that have an impact. And that's important, because making progress demands not only creativity and focus, but

When the VA goes to Capitol Hill to talk about the budget, they're able to point to their estimate of a 25% reduction in the number of homeless veterans over the past decade, with some 196,000 now homeless on any given night.

Advocates like the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans are able to draw on their member organizations' front-line experience when they cite the Grant and Per Diem program's central role in helping veterans stay off the streets.

And the president's proposed budget would have a central impact by helping the VA provide more transitional beds and drop-in centers.

And the Circle of Friends for American Veterans, an awareness-raising group, recently wrapped up a ten-city tour with a rally at an American Legion post in Arlington. In events keyed to the presidential primaries, the group called for roughly doubling the money per bed available through the Grant and Per Diem program to \$80 a day, and making PTSD counseling services available at all of the VA Vet Centers, which offer help to combat veterans.

But the VA's grant program is a complex system, and it's hard to argue that their own need for care before getting help, has too often provided too little help, too late.

With veterans invoked regularly on the campaign trail, it will be interesting to see whether the national leadership follows through as the war enters its sixth year.

What's on your mind? E-mail: StreetPoliticsDC@aol.com.

ON THE HILL

Millions in Cuts to Aid Part of President's Budget Plan

By Street Sense staff

On Feb. 4, 2008, President Bush announced his proposed budget for fiscal year 2009, which, if adopted, could lead to significant funding cuts at some programs designed to help homeless and low-income men and women.

The \$3 trillion plan outlines how the president would like to see money divided to operate all areas of the federal government and government-sponsored programs.

The president's budget is not a law. It is a suggestion that members of Congress may use when deciding how to distribute federal government money through appropriate job-training and employment services, known as "appropriations."

Below is a look at how a few of the cuts in his budget recommendations could affect the homeless population living in poverty in Washington, D.C.

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program: Bush proposed cutting \$55 million, or a little more than a third of the funding of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Food and Shelter program. That program provides shelter, eviction prevention and food assistance to homeless people in case of an emergency.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): In the president's budget, funding for LIHEAP would be cut by \$570 million, a 22% drop from last year's levels.

LIHEAP provides money to low-income homeowners to help them pay for home heating and cooling costs.

Substance abuse and mental health services: The president's 2009 budget would cut funding \$19 million from mental health programs, including substance treatment and prevention programs.

Housing for the elderly and for persons with disabilities: These programs, which provide very low-income seniors and persons with disabilities with housing and other opportunities, would lose more than \$270 million under the president's plan.

Job training: The president's budget proposed cutting funding for employment and career centers from \$820 million in 2007 to just \$560 million in 2009. The budget also would reduce funding for job-training and employment services.

Medicaid: Under the proposed budget, Medicaid would be cut by \$14 billion, affecting 147,000 D.C. residents enrolled in Medicaid.

Housing programs: The president's budget proposes cutting public housing funds by \$415 million from last year's levels, including \$4.1 million from Washington, D.C., to help residents avoid homelessness. Bush also proposed a cut in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's very low-income housing program (known as Section 8) which could result in 500 families losing their homes in Washington, D.C.

Community Services Block Grant program: Bush's budget eliminates Community Services Block Grants, which provide funding for state and local education, employment, housing and health programs.

Want to help the homeless with your writing talents?

Then participate in the Street Sense Writes for Poverty fundraiser

What? Write an essay (600 to 1,000 words) in early April 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 upcoming issues of Street Sense. An award presentation will be held Thursday, May 1.

How? If you are interested please send an e-mail with the subject "Write for Poverty" to 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.

INTERVIEW

10-year-old Does His Part to Help the Homeless, One Wagon Load at a Time

By Mary Pat Abraham

A resident of Valrico, Fla., Zach Bommer is not your average 10-year-old boy. Just three years ago in 2005 he founded the Little Red Wagon Foundation Inc., a nonprofit organization that helps kids in distressed situations in ways that might not occur to adults.

Not only will members of the organization provide food and supplies for a kid, they will also provide a toy or a book.

Being still young himself, Zach understands that going beyond basic needs is what will really make the difference in a kid's life.

Zach first began volunteering at the age of 6, though, he said, he didn't really understand charity work then. "I just saw these people who were being helped. It all seemed like a good cause. I had a lot of toys and I wanted to give them to help other people." Zach said he ended up collecting 27 truckloads of canned items to help the victims.

Zach explained how his age can come in the way of his charity work, but, if anything, this just encourages him to do more to prove his doubters wrong.

"People find it hard to believe that a kid really wants to help ... once they get to know me though they see that I am really serious about it," Zach said. He has already done a number of actions, selling donated autographed photos from bands like The Backstreet Boys and other donations to The Little Red Wagon Foundation.

Zach has come up with many of his own ideas for his projects, such as the Karma Holiday Party, his 23-day, 280-mile fundraising walk from Tampa to Tallahassee and the 24 hours event.

The 24-hour event allows people 21 and under to come to the event and help raise money for the homeless. Zach said he raised awareness of the 1.3 million homeless kids there are today. The 24 hours event was started about three years ago and Zach hopes this year other parts of the country will host their own 24 hours events in their own communities.

He has also done a lot for the Hurricane Katrina victims by putting together the Hurricane Katrina Holiday Party.

For the past two years, Zach has hosted the Hurricane Katrina Party for kids in the largest of the FEMA trailer parks in Baton Rouge, La. The party is held every year and the kids there totaled 750 kids and the proceeds went to the Red Cross.

Each kid got their own goody bag containing school supplies, candy, toys, and a book. Also, each kid received a wrapped gift from Build-A-Bear or Virgin Records. Zach said he has also done a lot for the families there and in neighboring areas.

Zach also put together the idea for a 23-day, 280-mile fundraising walk. When most people think of walking 280 miles, tired and sore feet may come to mind, but for Zach, it was a different story. "I had other kids who were helping other homeless kids."

"When I found out Congress had made November National Homeless Youth Awareness month, I wanted to do something really big that would draw awareness to it," he said. Zach also used this walk to remind people that there are kids still undergoing the effects of Hurricane Katrina.

He averaged 11 miles a day and even celebrated his birthday on this walk. Zach is already planning his next birthday on this walk. Zach is already planning his next birthday on this walk. Zach is already planning his next birthday on this walk.

U.S. VETS, from page 1

leads, said policy analyst Darlene Matthews. It is unclear how and in what form such assistance might come. The mayor's office or the business community could offer a short-term solution, such as space in an institutional facility, said David D. Green, CEO of the Council on Aging.

After a potential site on 1st Place in Northwest Portland was ruled out, U.S. VETS continued the search for a new location but placed more emphasis on a lease extension, preferably of six months, Buckley said.

According to a story in the Feb. 12 issue of the Washington Post, the Feb. 28 deadline has been pushed to the end of the year. "I'm not a young buck now," said JP Jery, a 66-year-old U.S. Army veteran who entered the U.S. VETS program in July 2005. "I just want to feel secure."

"I'm not a young buck now," said JP Jery, a 66-year-old U.S. Army veteran who entered the U.S. VETS program in July 2005. "I just want to feel secure."

AFRI cannot legally provide direct care or housing to the 51 veterans, due to the different funding mechanisms. "I've seen U.S. VETS residents on Feb. 6, the veterans seemed to know few concrete details about the building's future.

A Maryland native and Army veteran, Jonathan Greene, 51, is looking for other housing in case the U.S. VETS programs closes. He wants to find a place at an equal or higher level than where he is. But with the proximity to the veterans, Affairs VETS location is difficult to match, he said.

Like Greene, many spoke of worry, fear and shock. "It's taken a toll on all of us," said one 57-year-old veteran who preferred to remain anonymous. "I'm not a young buck now," said JP Jery, a 66-year-old U.S. Army veteran who entered the U.S. VETS program in July 2005. "I just want to feel secure."

Quality Primary Care Services for D.C. Medically Underserved and Homeless Individuals.....



For information on medical services for homeless veterans call 202-555-3469. For an appointment at any of our community health centers call 1-866-364-0489

UNITY HEALTH CARE

Sign up for the Street Sense e-mail newsletter! We'll deliver our top stories to your inbox. Visit www.streetsense.org to join our list.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LITTLE RED WAGON FOUNDATION



Zach Bommer, 10, takes a break from his 280-mile fundraising walk for National Homeless Youth Awareness Month in November, to build a house for a homeless family.

Zach is also a finalist in the Volvo for life award, the winner of which will receive a \$25,000 scholarship.

As a finalist, Zach has already received \$10,000 for the Little Red Wagon Foundation and has big plans for the money.

"All 10 of the kids in the contest are really awesome. I have heard that some of them would hope that they could go together maybe on some projects."

Zach also put together the idea for a 23-day, 280-mile fundraising walk. When most people think of walking 280 miles, tired and sore feet may come to mind, but for Zach, it was a different story. "I had other kids who were helping other homeless kids."

"When I found out Congress had made November National Homeless Youth Awareness month, I wanted to do something really big that would draw awareness to it," he said. Zach also used this walk to remind people that there are kids still undergoing the effects of Hurricane Katrina.

He averaged 11 miles a day and even celebrated his birthday on this walk. Zach is already planning his next birthday on this walk. Zach is already planning his next birthday on this walk.

"People find it hard to believe that a kid really wants to help ... once they get to know me though they see that I am really into it."

- Zach Bommer

PRETTY RED'S FICTION *By Ivory Wilson*

Stacy from Malibu

— Part 2 —

It's morning and Stacy is cleaning blood off the walls when the door opens. Tamika walks in, drops her purse, grabs a rag and starts cleaning. "Oh Stacy, we've got to hurry before the police get here."

"Tamika, Tamika. Calm down. I didn't do this."

"Oh Stacy, you got people shooting at you. What you did?" Stacy asked her to make some coffee. My first case. A man and woman smoked. I'm off to a good start, he thought. Stacy took out a freshly pressed vest and got dressed. "Tamika, when I'm gone, lock the door, stay away from the window. Just answer the phone. And don't call Tyronn."

"Stacy, don't go get yourself killed because I want to introduce you to my girlfriend. She don't have a man yet, her baby daddy in prison."

"Thanks, but no thanks," he laughed. Stacy changed into his brown, pinstriped suit to head downtown. He told Tamika to call Rent-A-Car and let them know he is on his way to pick up his rental.

"And if I'm not back at 6 o'clock, I'll see you in the morning." Stacy picked up his rental car and drove to the Starbucks on 7th and E streets, hoping to pick up a few clues.

Stacy sat at a table by the window with his coffee, asking questions and showing people Fluffie's picture. He noticed a newspaper salesman on the corner selling a homeless paper. Stacy went outside to talk to him.

"I would like to buy a few papers." He gave the man \$100 and asked if he worked this corner every day. The paper salesman said yes.

"Would you mind if I showed you a few pictures? I need your help." Stacy showed him a picture of Fluffie and a picture of the two shot in his office. The paper salesman replied, "Yes. I seen a fine blonde with a tight dress and a white poodle with a thick black collar, look like it was too heavy for his neck." Stacy laughed. He thought of how the blonde lady didn't say Fluffie had a black collar and it wasn't in the picture.

"That woman is an ex-hooker and the man be dealing in diamonds," he added, referring to the other picture. Stacy said thanks and walked back to his car and drove away. Stacy pulled back in front of his office and got out, not knowing that he was being followed. A car turned, screeching, coming up fast and a burst of machinegun fire erupted as it went past. Stacy dove behind his car and pulled out his .45 and returned fire. The car turned the corner.

Stacy's rental car had been sprayed with bullets but he just walked into his office and fell asleep.

Stacy woke up to a knock at the door and looked at the clock. 3:30 in the morning. He grabbed his gun and cocked it and walked to the door and saw the shadow of a woman. He opened the door to a foxy redhead with big breasts wearing a tight dress.

"Mr. Stacy, I'm Sona."

"How can I help you?" He put his gun back in the holster and told her to come in. Sona asked if he always answered the door with a gun.

"In this office."

Sona looked around and saw bullet holes in the wall and laughed.

"What's a woman like you doing in the 'hood at this time of night?"

"I would like to hire you."

"Let me guess, to find Fluffie?"

"I will pay your price if you find that poodle." Sona walked up to Stacy.

"Why not go to the cops?" he asked. Sona grabbed Stacy



"Stacy woke up to a knock at the door and looked at the clock. 3:30 in the morning. He grabbed his gun and cocked it and walked to the door and saw the shadow of a woman. He opened the door to a foxy redhead ..."

and hugged him, her breasts pressing against his chest. With her head on his shoulder she kissed his neck and answered, "I'm scared." She held him tight and looked Stacy in the eyes. Sona said, "I'll do anything to get that poodle." She pressed her hot lips on his lips to kiss him and backed him up to his sofa. Taking off their clothes, Stacy proceeded to take her to peak after peak until she's so weak she falls asleep.

It's 9 in the morning when Tamika walks in. "Ohhh, you white people are nasty!"

Sona jumps up and grabs her clothes off the floor, runs to the bathroom and closes the door. "Tamika, make some coffee," Stacy said.

"Stacy, is that your car?" she asked. "It got bullet holes all over it."

"I know."

Sona comes out dressed and said, "I must have fell asleep. Mr. Stacy, here's an envelope with \$20,000. I will call you later." She walks out the door. Tamika laughed and said, "You and that thang put her to sleep."

Stacy thought it all through. *I've got four players in this poodle game. Barbar Brooks, the ex-hooker, the diamond*

dealer, all dead and Sona. Sona, why did the two of you come here and who knew you were coming here? Everything points back to that Barbar Brooks. Sona hired them two to steal Fluffie. Why for the collar and not for the poodle! Stacy, you got it. Diamonds in the collar! Barbar is dealing in hot diamonds! Sona is paying cash and pulls a doublecross.

Stacy looks at the picture of the two dead and thinks, *she had them steal the poodle without paying Barbar and had them gunned down. But why did they come here? I guess for me to make a deal with Barbar to sell the diamonds back. Barbar had them knocked off before they could make a deal. Stacy, you got great skills. And Sona don't have the poodle or the diamonds.*

Stacy rented another car and waited until it was late to drive to the waterfront, after the clubs closed.

Stacy walked the dock; it was a moonless night with no stars to shine bright. Stacy walked past some fishing boats and a large shrimp barge and noticed near Pier 1 a number of dog food cans in the trash. Stacy was still being followed. He walked back to the shrimp barge and looked in the windows and saw Fluffie in a cage.

Stacy shot the lock off, took Fluffie and was walking back to his car when he was grabbed from behind. He was held and punched in the face and stomach. Stacy took his left leg and put it behind the guy holding him. His left leg fell back and when they hit the ground, Stacy rose first and gave the guy a hard elbow in the face. Stacy jumped up and grabbed the guy's legs and dropped him on the hood of his rental car, breaking the windshield.

Stacy got back to his office with Fluffie and took off the collar, full of priceless raw and uncut diamonds. He turned on the TV to the late night news. He then heard that Sona Walker was found in the Anacostia River, shot. Stacy's street wits were working and he knew Barbar and her goons were on their way. He called over the two sharp detectives that investigated the shooting earlier. Stacy hoped they would get to him before Barbar Brooks. Stacy heard a knock at the door. It was the detectives.

"Guys, I'll have your killer or killers in a minute." One detective asked, "Say, isn't that the poodle?"

"Yes," Stacy answered and handed them the diamonds. "The diamonds came from the dog collar."

The phone rang. "Stacy Investigations."

"Mr. Stacy, I thought I would drop by. I have something to discuss with you. Can I come up?" It was Barbar. Stacy replied that the door was open. The detectives hid, one in the closet and the other in the bathroom. Barbar walked in with her goons. "Mr. Stacy you know why I'm here. Hand over my diamonds."

"Why did you have those two killed here?"

"They stole from me."

"Why did you kill Sona?" Stacy asked.

"That bitch tried to doublecross me."

"And me?"

"You know too much." The goons reached for their guns and Stacy turned out the lights. Shots were fired. The light came back on. The goons were dead. Barbar was still standing. The detective handcuffed her and took her away.

The next morning when Tamika walked in Stacy asked, "Would you like the day off with pay?" The phone rang.

"Stacy Investigations," she answered. The voice asked if Mr. Stacy was available.

Ivory Wilson has been a vendor for a year and has written dozens of short stories. You may find him selling Street Sense at the corner of 11th and E streets, NW.

Gwen, at Miriam's Kitchen

"She could be
a figure
in a Flemish painting"

says Joseph the poet,
and I envision her
on a stroll among wildflowers
on the banks of pure cold stream
before Rembrandt's easel.

Today she leads our rowdy
gang of poets
on a tour
through fields of color –
some wander
forests of dappled green
or blinding white
fields of snow
(I am lost
in gray mist)

I see her
only in the mornings
when the sky is painted
all roses & violets –
(a smile from her
paints my day
the hue of golden sun)

She was here
on bleak Christmas morning,
to hand me love
sent long distance
by a friend I've never seen.

The men here
like to pose & flirt
before her glow;
her response
is cool, is pure, is kind
she merely flows
like headwaters
of the Mississippi –
a thousand miles downstream
she will be
a majestic flood, carrying
the swollen earth
on her back

Scholarly
yet strangely chic
in her black spectacles
she settles down before us
and listens
as we pour our lifeblood
from stained pages.

—David Harris

Wrong Sight of a Young Black Man

If you could really see me
You would not be afraid of me
If you just open your eyes and see
You will not misjudge me
Yeah, I'm young, black, brave and bold
But that still don't give you the right
To misjudge my soul
I think that when you see me, that you're scared
Scared that I'll be something great or powerful
I can smell your fear
But don't be afraid of me
Encourage me
Encourage me to be a better person
That you're revealing to me
If you will really see me
You'll see the hunger
That I want to be better for me and my family
All that you see is what this environment made me be
But one day you'll see the best man that I strived hard to be

—J.P., age 17, an inmate at D.C. Jail

Uptown

A neighborhood I know very well
has changed my mind about life
It's a neighborhood where
everybody's mother is a crackhead
And if she isn't, she's doing some kind of drug
It's a neighborhood
that makes you think that life is all about
selling drugs, having sex with girls, doing drugs,
skipping school, busting hammers, beefing,
staying out all night and day,
fighting each other,
going to the go-go,
and most importantly...
getting money
I now know what life is really about
and this neighborhood makes me sick
I feel sorry for the little kids in this neighborhood
Because they're going to see all the things I seen

—D.L.

MY TURN AT THE TABLE *By Ivory Wilson and Eugene Versuyslen*

The Day the Steak Didn't Get Away

In January, I had the dining pleasure of eating at one of Washington D.C.'s fine restaurants, the District ChopHouse and Brewery. I went with Street Sense volunteer Eugene.

The restaurant is on the corner of 7th and E streets, NW — it so happens that I'm the salesman at 7th and E streets, so I know the corner like the back of my hand.

The restaurant was big and bright on the inside, just like the big skies of Texas. In the background they were playing soft rock-n-roll — there certainly wasn't any Liberace.

Being a Texan myself, I know beef and potatoes. And to my surprise, the meal was mighty tasty. It's like your taste buds, when you taste something delicious, they don't forget it. So, on that second bite, you have to let your body system know: "Through the cheeks, through the gums, look out stomach here she comes."

Wave the checkered flag, it's a winner.

I had the Angus Beef Steak well-done because that's the way it's done in Texas. When I ordered it well-done, the waitress brought it out well-done and not burnt.

Some restaurants you go in to and order steak well-done and when they bring it out to you, it comes looking like a Brill-O® pad. Also, if you don't get it well-done, then you know it's not cooked right.

I also ordered mashed potatoes and gravy, a giant order of onion rings and a chilled draft beer.

In terms of the waitress, she did everything right, from the way she took our order to the delivery of the food and beer. The service was on time, like a fine-tuned Swiss watch.

Being that it was my first time in a fine-dining restaurant as a homeless person, it didn't take me long to eat my food and get up out of there.

I was too full to get dessert, but Eugene stuck around for



PHOTO BY EUGENE VERSUYSLEN

Ivory Wilson finishes up his chilled draft beer at the District ChopHouse and Brewery.

it, although I don't know what he had.

When you're homeless, the beat goes on even if you have had a delicious meal. So I got out to the corner to sell my

papers, which was my way of working the meal off.

In the end, I would have to give the Chophouse two thumbs up. Wave the checkered flag, it's a winner.

The Real Cost to 'Be Your Own Boss'

By Emily Appel



Work at home! Be your own boss! Earn \$5,000 a month!

Every day, you're probably bombarded with offers like this — get-rich-quick schemes and loopholes in the system that claim to

earn you big bucks. Most of them you easily recognize as too good to be true, but some may catch you off-guard. When you're out of a job, you'd give almost anything a try to get a few bucks in your pocket. But fraudulent offers won't just fail to help you make money; they'll actually leave you poorer in the process.

How do you evaluate opportunities that are offered to you? Simply put, it takes work — work to investigate, and then work to fulfill the promise. As any successful small business owner can tell you, it is possible to "be your own boss," but it takes guts, sweat and smarts to make your business succeed. Anything promising less could be a scam.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, there are signs that can warn you if an advertised business opportunity may be a scam:

What type of business opportunity is being advertised? Fraud is most often associated with vending machine, display rack, pay phone, medical billing, work-at-home and some Internet-related business opportunities.

Where is the opportunity being advertised? Promotions for fraudulent business opportunities often appear in the classified pages of daily and weekly newspapers and magazines as well as online. They also may be marketed in television infomercials and commercials.

What are the ads offering you? Ads that offer large pay (say, \$160,000 a year) in a short period (weeks or months) for little effort or that trumpet an ideal work situation (the ability to set your own hours, be your own boss and work from home) could be warning signs of something that's too good to be true.

The good news is that there are powerful laws protecting your rights as a consumer. If the business opportunity costs more than \$500, the FTC Franchise Rule requires business opportunity promoters to give you information — in writing — about what previous purchasers are earning (and if that represents what they're all earning, most are earning or only one or two are earning).

If the investment to get in is less than \$500, you can still ask the promoter for this information, and a reputable firm would be able to provide it. In addition, a trustworthy promoter should give you the contact information of some of these previous purchasers, so that you can talk about their experience with the promoter and in the business. This is all part of the research — the work — that you should put in before making any investment.

If you've already bought into a business opportunity that has turned out to be less than it promised to be, there are agencies within the District government to help you and to

prevent others from falling into the same trap. These agencies are the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (202-442-4400, <http://dcra.dc.gov>) and the Office of the Attorney General (202-442-9828, <http://oag.dc.gov>).

If you have a great idea and think you have what it takes to start your own business, there are places that offer help to get you started. One of them is the Howard University Center for Urban Progress Business Development Division, located at the Reeves Center at 2000 14th St. NW, Suite 330 North (to set up an appointment, call 202-671-2828). There, you can meet one-on-one with an experienced business counselor to develop your business idea, write a business plan and get connected to free legal or accounting help. The Business Development Division also works with existing businesses looking to expand or improve operations.

Don't forget to get your taxes done for free!

The D.C. Earned Income Tax Credit (DC EITC) Campaign offers free tax preparation services at various sites around the city. Staffed by trained and IRS-certified volunteers, these sites can file your tax return electronically, meaning you'll get your refund fast! Visit www.dceitc.org to find a site near you, or call 202-419-1442 for more information about the Campaign.

This regular financial column is presented by Capital Area Asset Builders, 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.

MOVIE/DVD REVIEW *By Matthew Taylor*

Chocolate City



During the early 1970s some of Washington D.C.'s AM disc jockeys christened the District as "Chocolate City." The moniker, later popularized by the funk band Parliament on its 1975 album by the same name, spoke to the self-determination of the city's African-American community. More than three decades later a similar sense of self-determination permeates the documentary "Chocolate City" by fledgling filmmakers Ellie Walton and Sam Wild.

"Chocolate City" uses the voices of low-income residents from the Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg public housing project to examine the themes of exploitation and alienation among displaced members of gentrified communities.

Walton and Wild track the efforts of performance artist and community organizer Anu Yadav to develop her one-woman show about the dying neighborhood and empower residents in the process. Yadav's efforts give voice to the residents' affection for a community left behind in the pursuit of economic progress. The filmmakers began work on the project as graduate students in documentary filmmaking at The University of London's Goldsmith College.

"The film is really about the power of community and the possibility for people to advocate for themselves, to inspire people and to fight for a place they had been," Walton said. "Anu and the arts becomes a really important tool in the struggle to be heard."

Walton, a 26-year-old D.C. native, was shocked during her visits home by the changing landscape of the District. She decided to use her first traditional documentary to share the city's untold stories. After connecting with Yadav through the local "Spoken Resistance" political arts group, Walton found an entryway into the Arthur Cappers community.

"I was really interested in how art, music, poetry became an alternative platform

through which D.C. voices could be heard in the context of disenfranchisement," Walton said.

Displaced residents of the 'Capers, as the development is affectionately known, offer a series of passionate testimonials throughout the film that Yadav then captures in her compelling performance art. One of the documentary's great strengths is its use of these powerful stories to forge an emotional connection between the viewer and the community members. Occasional shifts in Yadav's role, from documentary subject to interviewer, distract from this relationship but ultimately do not diminish its power.

The first-person narratives are anchored by a collection of radio sound bites that highlight key themes in the film and offer a sense of continuity to the 45-minute documentary. The heavy radio presence in the film serves as a nod to Walton's past experience working at D.C.'s WPFW radio. The use of rhythmic spoken word pieces in the tradition of Gil Scott Heron add to the work's revolutionary spirit and heighten the film's authenticity.

Walton and Wild don't debate the merits of the HOPE VI program in "Chocolate City" and offer little detail about its history or purpose. The filmmakers instead give voice to a collection of female residents who offer damning accounts of how, contrary to its name, the program functions to steal their hope.

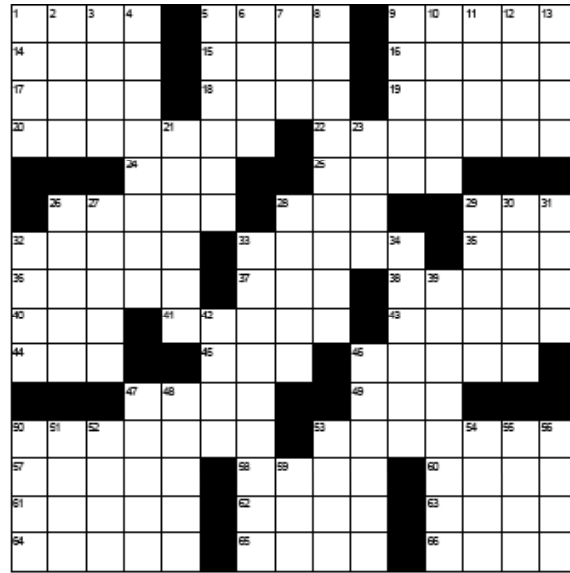
The Washington D.C. Housing Authority received a \$34.9 million federal HOPE VI grant in Oct. 2001 to revitalize the Arthur Cappers development. The project called for the demolition of existing buildings to create rental and home ownership units, office space, neighborhood retail space and a community center. The continuing effort represents "one of the most ambitious HOPE VI projects undertaken nationwide," according to the DCHA Web site.

"Chocolate City" offers an emotionally powerful accounting of one community's struggle for survival amidst a changing economic and cultural landscape. The film doesn't seek conclusions as much as it introduces otherwise unseen human faces to a complex debate.

"What art does and what film does is open a dialogue about issues," Walton said. "That's what I want to do with ['Chocolate City']."

"Chocolate City," which has been screened at George Washington University and Busboys & Poets, will be shown at E Street Cinemas, between 10th and 11th streets, on Feb. 28 at 7 p.m. as part of the Black History Month Film Series.

February Crossword



- Women's Christian Association
- 26 Belt leather
- 27 Santa's helpers
- 28 Little red**
- 29 Disney character
- 30 Squashed circles
- 31 House animals
- 32 Helen of ___
- 33 Highlights
- 34 Person aged 65+
- 39 Curbs
- 42 Gumbo
- 46 Sense**
- 47**
- Street**
- 48 Goats
- 50 Wind pointer
- 51 Flightless birds
- 52 Wrongdoing
- 53 Association (abbr.)
- 54 Whim
- 55 Bottoms
- 56 Smart person
- 59 Lager

ACROSS

- 1 Set down
- 5 Money-making scheme**
- 9 Molded salad
- 14 One time
- 15 Dog food brand
- 16 Board game
- 17 On top
- 18 Cold person's noise
- 19 1997 Madonna movie
- 20 Maneuver
- 22 Headache medicine
- 24 Downwind
- 25 Person 'at Miriam's Kitchen'**
- 26 Prophets
- 28 Western Athletic

Conference

- 29 Jazz
- 32 Oklahoma city
- 33 Soap operas
- 35 First woman
- 36 Celebrate
- 37 Gone by
- 38 Widely known
- 40 Lyric poem
- 41 Sorrow
- 43 Voids
- 44 Affirmative
- 45 Relation
- 46 Fathers
- 47 Confident
- 49 Toddler
- 50 Former military member**
- 53 Bring before court to answer charges**
- 57 Amid

58 Baggage

- 60 Lazy
- 61 Care for
- 62 Otherwise
- 63 Eye
- 64 Painter Richard
- 65 Mailed
- 66 Beach stuff

number

- 11 Agony
- 12 Towards
- 13 Fossile fuel
- 21 Vendor featured in the Post for his job search**
- 23 Young

DOWN

- 1 Tarry
- 2 Opposed
- 3 Computer "button"
- 4 From Nepal
- 5 Black furs
- 6 Indication
- 7 Rainy mo.
- 8 Property mortgager
- 9 White poplar
- 10 A small



PLACE YOUR AD HERE!

With Street Sense now coming out twice a month and reaching nearly 11,000 people each issue, now is the perfect time to promote your business with us.

DEMOGRAPHICS

And who your business will be reaching can't be beat. Our typical reader is a 35-year old woman who lives in D.C. and works for the government or a nonprofit earning \$70,000 a year.

RATES

Rates are about half the cost of the neighborhood monthlies and are as low as \$57 for a 1/16 page ad that runs multiple times.

DISCOUNTS

Discounts offered to nonprofits and to those that prepay for multiple ads.

Call Laura at 202-347-2006 or email info@streetsense.org for more information and to get a copy of our new advertising brochure. Or ask your local vendor, who can earn 20% commission from ads sales.

Sign up for the Street Sense e-mail newsletter!

We'll deliver our top stories to your inbox every two weeks.
You can unsubscribe at any time.
Visit www.streetsense.org to join our list.

The Decline of America

By Jeffery McNeil



I want to write this article because I think this is the most significant issue affecting poverty in the U.S. Illegal immigration and the corporations that hire illegal immigrants are costing Americans billions of dollars. In addition, it's causing a wave of poverty and unemployment not seen since the Great Depression.

I have been to many metropolitan areas in my lifetime and can't remember a time we've seen this many homeless people roaming our major cities.

What is even more disturbing is that many great corporations that once promoted diversity, like McDonald's and countless other fast food chains and customer-service related businesses now have immigrants, many of whom can't speak English, working while natural born citizens are sitting on the sidelines unemployed. I sometimes scratch my head in

bafflement when I go to a McDonald's or Burger King or any other fast food chain, and see groups of homeless and jobless people staying indoors from the cold.

What really makes me furious is that in my experience in these places, customer relations border on the ridiculous and comical. Nowadays, you are greeted by someone who can't take orders or understand the orders you want. God forbid you want something special or your food a certain way. I was so angry one day because of one of these encounters, I became curious and started doing research on illegal immigration.

First thing I'd like to state is I have no qualms about people who come to the U.S. through legal means to get their citizenship, work hard and achieve the American dream. However, what is really infuriating is how our future was sacrificed for corporate profits by hiring cheap illegal aliens. What's more disgusting is, through this repulsive practice you force the backbone of the labor force to take pay cuts in salary. Allow me to tell our readers who is suffering most in this new America: The poor, the homeless, and your children.

This is an election year and I know my vote will be sought by the candidates on both sides. I'll be wondering who is sup-

porting and funding these candidates. I would like to know who is talking out of one side of his or her mouth, while taking contributions from corporations that practice hiring illegal immigrants.

America is at a crossroads with terrorism, poverty and oppressive governments. This country was built on the backs of foreigners, and many have died so we can have great freedoms, but hiring cheap labor to please Wall Street investors is the biggest scam on the American people.

Who suffers? The backbone of America – the blue-collar worker, the traditional family. People should send a message to their legislators.

I hope we can find a leader who will stand up to the big and powerful and not let the sleaze of money cloud the interest of our candidates.

Immigration will be a very powerful topic in this election and I hope we can come to a solution and get some good results, because if we don't – the taxpayer will do all the suffering. Thank you for hearing my opinion.

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

Let's Talk Values and Class

By Rhonda Soto

African-Americans have broken two new barriers, according to the Pew Charitable Trust Economic Mobility Project's new report.

Almost half the children of middle-class blacks have fallen into the lowest income bracket in the last 30 years, the first generation in a century to lose so much ground.

And for the first time, a majority of African-Americans polled say that blacks are responsible for their own economic situations, and that the values of poor and middle-class blacks have become more different over the last generation.

Yeah, right, it's the values. Those middle-class African-Americans whose children are now in poverty: rotten parents, every one of them. While going out to work every day, they were obviously telling their children not to do the same.

The black unemployment rate in October was double white unemployment, 8.5% versus 4.2%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employers of all races, with their superior values, no doubt rejected those black pavement-pounders because they could see the poor work ethic a mile away. The quarter-million drop in the number of U.S. jobs in October, and all the offshore outsourcing of the last decade, must be "a poor black values thing."

It was poor black values that led neighborhoods of color to be targeted by predatory lenders. It wasn't the secondary mortgage industry that started the current tsunami of foreclosures now evicting people, disproportionately black and Latino people – it was the homeowners' bad values.

Higher interest rates charged to borrowers of color with identical credit ratings are obviously payback for their poor behavior. And the mostly white executives who made millions off discriminatory subprime lending? They deserved that reward for their exemplary moral characters.

The drop in unionization from 20% to 12% in the last

25 years wouldn't have happened, and the American labor force would not have lost 265,000 black union workers, if those workers' values had been better. The professional union-busting consulting firms, who advised companies how to illegally fire pro-union workers – they're role models of the American work ethic.

Same with the mostly white Congress members who since 1990 increased their own paychecks by \$50,000 while blocking an increase in the minimum wage for a record-breaking decade. And the mostly all-white billionaires on the Forbes 400 list of richest Americans who are \$290 billion richer than last year – they must have the finest values of all.

Prison sentences are longer for blacks and Latinos than whites convicted of the same crime because judges can just see the difference in moral fiber between defendants of different races. And of course employers and health insurance companies are not insuring 7.2 million black people because their moral failings have made them too sickly.

The resegregation of schools and the widening gap in class sizes and per-pupil spending between mostly white and mostly black schools? The rollback of affirmative action in higher education?

All due to the character flaws of African-American students.

Are values really the explanation for the racial income gap? Or do we too often assume that the American dream of equal opportunity is a reality? Do we overlook growing structural obstacles that block the path of some more than others? As long as we continue to only see the individual as responsible for all her success, we will also only see the individual as responsible for all her failures.

As a society we so identify with the people at the "top" that for a shot at "making it" we tolerate a ridiculous income and wealth gap. So the idea that blacks who don't "make it" aren't making it due to some personal individual flaw has great resonance.

The stereotype used to be "lazy" or "stupid"; the newest version is "bad values."

But what exactly are these values that are being suggested, and whose values are they anyway? Are they the same values that are embedded in our institutions, our media, our policies, laws, and workplaces?

Employed African-Americans, on average, work more hours per week than employed white people. Blacks are slightly less likely than whites to use illegal drugs. They are more likely to be affiliated with a religious congregation. Poll after poll shows no difference between races in attitudes towards education, paid work, or expectations for children's advancement. Where are these famous bad values?

As a former teacher I know that some young people have self-destructive attitudes and behaviors – some black and Latino youth, some white youth, and some youth of 30 years ago.

Far more young people have talent, ambition and a work ethic that go underutilized, especially working-class youth of color in this "haves and have-nots" economy.

We as people of color are used to noticing racism and putting it into words. We're less accustomed to naming classism – but it's rampant among middle-class people of color. Is this what racial progress has come to: more middle-class blacks taking up the previously white sport of blaming the victim?

Poll after poll shows no difference between races in attitudes towards education, paid work, or expectations for children's advancement. Where are these famous bad values?

Rhonda Soto is the Race/Class Intersections Project Coordinator at Class Action, a national nonprofit based in Hadley, Mass.

Reprinted from Real Change
© Street News Service: www.street-papers.org

Voices, from page 1

certain how many seniors are currently homeless within the District (below the poverty line does not indicate homelessness), and most significantly, that the senior population as a whole is growing at a rapid rate. The numbers are growing so quickly, in fact, that one might reasonably assume that in several years current community-based services may not suffice to serve not only homeless seniors, but also those classified as low-income or middle-income.

Let us look at several community-based service organizations to see how they are meeting current needs and ways we might be able to help everyone work more effectively.

Housing. The Dwelling Place Shelter for Abused Elderly, run by SOME (www.some.org), is an ideal refuge for those seniors who are abused or neglected. However, through no fault of its own, it simply does not possess enough bed capacity to meet the growing demand. More importantly, The Dwelling Place does not specifically cater to seniors who are neither abused nor neglected – and this is possibly a somewhat sizable group.

Health care services. Thanks to the DC Healthcare Alliance, thousands of homeless persons can now access health care providers at Upper Cardozo, Woodridge and Woodland Terrace. However, are any of these or other primary health centers equipped to, during a short 10 minute appointment, examine and diagnose seniors, many of whom may be suffering from multiple chronic illnesses such as arthritis, diabetes, congestive heart failure, those ravaged by poor nutrition, or those who suffer from a variety of physical disabilities and sensory impairments?

Other organizations that meet poor and homeless people's daily needs of food, clothing and health care, such as Bread for the City, Miriam's Closet and SOME, have generous programs – several in fact specifically geared to seniors. But are all social workers and case managers working within D.C. shelters and other housing units familiar with all

of the available programs and hours of operation for these organizations?

There are no easy answers to any of these questions; however there are many possible solutions to the problems faced by seniors in need. Would it be possible to consolidate seniors, or create designated "senior shelter housing" at pilot shelters? Is it possible for the D.C. government to create more grant or grant-matching programs to produce temporary-to-permanent senior citizen housing options?

Could primary health centers schedule specific operating hours on a weekly basis whereupon social workers and case managers could schedule appointments for seniors? Is it possible to form partnerships with area medical schools and public health entities (i.e. the Public Health Service) through which geriatric care needs could be met with little or no cost?

Could the District's Office on Aging and nonprofit entities work together to create a brief handbook outlining services and housing available to seniors within the District to be circulated among area social workers and case managers?

Could the Office on Aging work closely with area schools of social work to better inform their students of the dire need for more social workers dedicated to serving the senior community?

No system of care will be perfect. Washington D.C. and its service providers already provide many critical services for the homeless community, regardless of one's race, gender, ethnicity and age.

However, the rapid growth of the senior population in need, coupled with the lack of information we have concerning the number of homeless seniors who require service provision, is something all of us need to address as quickly as possible.

David Dietz is a Lieutenant Commander with the United States Public Health Service who is currently working as an analyst at the Administration on Aging. He is currently attending Howard University's School of Social Work to learn more about healthcare disparities and homelessness among older adults.

Could the District's Office on Aging and nonprofit entities work together to create a brief handbook outlining services and housing available to seniors?

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

Looking for the Prison Art insert?

The Prison Art insert will run in the March 5 issue.
Look for it each month in Street Sense.

Part II: The Mills Family

By Jo Ann Jackson

Being in MacFarland Jr. High was a big and beautiful experience for me. Peanut seemed to blend right in. I wasn't comfortable at first, because I really wasn't as popular as the other girls. Everyone knew a lot of boys and joked around all the time, but all I had was my brains and Peanut.



Reason: I was away from home and my uncle.

The years in MacFarland Jr. High seemed to go by fast, but I learned a lot, not only education, but a way to save myself from my uncle. I was growing up and understanding that what he was doing to me was wrong.

So, my years in junior high from 1957 to 1961 taught me a lot.

I didn't know that as I would learn and try to become a very good student that my life was going to change.

One young man in my class was very intelligent, so the other boys would pick on him also. I knew how he felt. It seemed like just because we wanted to learn and didn't know the latest dances or the newest songs, we were considered "NERDS."

"I'll be a NERD, because I don't like boys anyway, they're nasty little mice," I thought. I was judging them, because of my uncle, but eventually I would learn better.

Well, back to my education. My report cards always had excellent grades since I always got all As, maybe one B. My attendance was excellent, never absent or late.

My uncle would soon find out that my life and his life were getting ready for a real change.

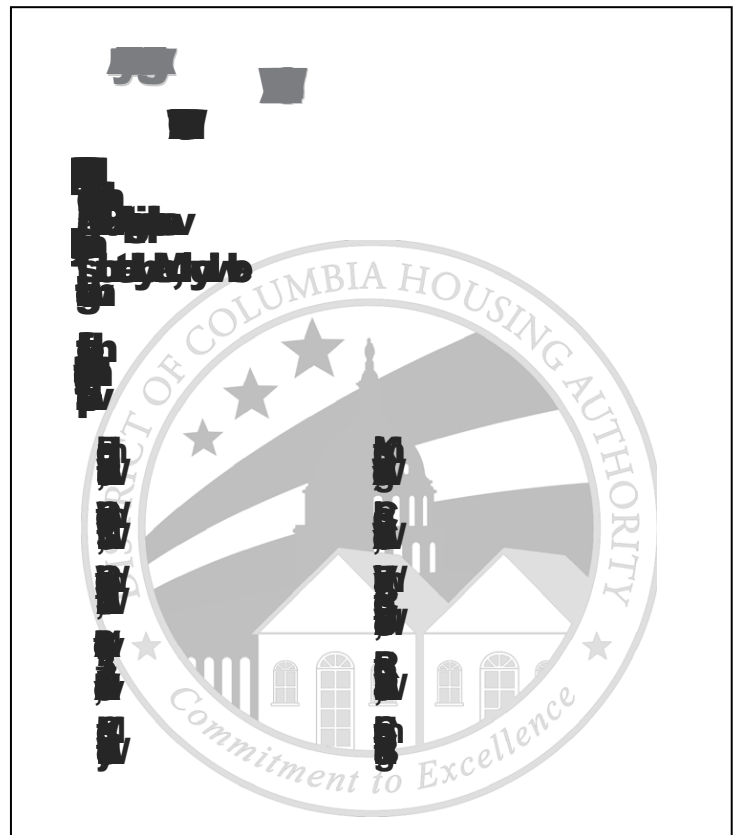
Well, MacFarland, it's time to say "good-bye."

It's 1961, so I'll graduate from MacFarland and walk across the street to be one of the first African Americans to integrate Roosevelt High.

Starting high school is where the fun began.

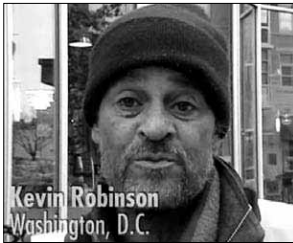
To be continued. In the next issue it's time for my uncle to feel some of the pain I've had for years.

Jo Ann Jackson is a vendor and proud grandmother.



VendorNotes

By Laura Thompson Osuri



Kevin Robinson
Washington, D.C.

Kevin on Love

To mark the Valentine's Day holiday, the Washington Post ran a feature in its Feb. 8, 2008 Weekend Section on love.

The paper included several man-on-the-street comments from all sorts of Washingtonians, including Street Sense's very own vendor Kevin Robinson.

The reporter said that Kevin's response to the question "What do you know – for sure – about love?" was very profound, so she had to run it. What did he say? Simply: "Love? L-O-V-E, love? It ain't promised to you."

You can watch a video of Kevin's and other people's responses at

www.washingtonpost.com.

Gerald's Job Search Made Public



... Speaking of the Washington Post, vendor Gerald Smith was featured in the newspaper in the middle of February in an article about a job fair for employment

at the new National's baseball stadium. (There was no mention of Street Sense, though.)

The story ran on the front page of the Metro Section on Sunday, Feb. 10, 2008. Gerald's experience is the lead anecdote for the article, which stated that he was dressed in a "neat tie, dark suit, spiffy trench coat, résumé under his arm. And, for extra luck, a Nationals baseball cap perched on his head." Gerald, who was one of 2,500 people at the job fair, said that he was looking for employment in the security sector.

A week later, Gerald reports that he

has not yet heard anything back from the stadium people.

But he said that he is hopeful that the Post's coverage of him will help him land a job somewhere.

Panhandler About-Face



In early February, one of the top vendors, Jeffery McNeil, reported being harassed by a panhandler in Dupont Circle. Jeffery said the panhandler kept trying to get in his way when he was

selling papers and that they nearly got into a fist fight.

But then a week later the panhandler came back and not only apologized profusely but also gave Jeffery \$20. "I was amazed," Jeffery said. "Maybe he was not such a bad guy after all." (Jeffery added that after the apology, he tried to recruit the panhandler as a vendor but he has yet to come to a training.)

FROM THE VENDOR MANAGER

A New Face in the Office

By Dr. Renee Rita Brunson

My name is Dr. Renee Rita Brunson and it is a pleasure to be part of the Street Sense family and community.

My primary position with Street Sense will be as the vendor manager.

My goals are to implement marketing campaigns and strategies to target new clientele

and to maintain positive working relations and high retention rates with current Street Sense vendors.

My educational background includes a Ph. D. in Education from the University of Southern California. Before coming to Street Sense, I worked as an outreach worker for military families, as an instructor and

as a youth director.

There are thousands of homeless people in the U.S., with no address, no vote, nameless and faceless, and yet there is almost no documentation (statistical or personal) made

My mission ...
is to put
an end to
homelessness.

by them or about them as a community or as individuals.

If we continue to accept this status quo of invisibility, an entire generation of homeless people will pass away without a trace.

My mission through Street Sense is to help put an end to homelessness.

I am always open to any suggestions or recommendations. I look forward to working with the vendors and support staff at Street Sense.

Vendors, tell us your news!
Tell Street Sense what's going on in the street, how sales are going, if you've gotten a mention in other media, gotten a new job or a place to live, or whatever your news might be.
E-mail Renee Rita Brunson at rita@streetsense.org and we'll publish your news in an upcoming issue of Street Sense.

HELP WANTED

Help the Homeless with Your Advertising Sales Skills

Job Title: Street Sense Advertising Director

Responsibility: • Generates ad sales, focusing on local and nonprofit accounts • Manages accounts receivable for advertisers • Work closely with editor and publisher to understand what features can be sold around.

Requirements: • Minimum of two years of sales experience, advertising sales is a definite plus • Excellent verbal and written communication skills with strong negotiating ability • Ability to organize and manage many different projects and information • Understanding of online advertising a plus.

Benefits: Flexible hours, great location (we are located at Metro Center), and the most rewarding advertising sales experience you will ever have. Salary will be mid-\$20,000 to lower \$30,000, plus competitive compensation and the option for health care benefits.

To apply: Please forward resume, cover letter to Laura Thompson Osuri at laura@streetsense.org. Call 202-347-2006 with any questions.

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 24 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

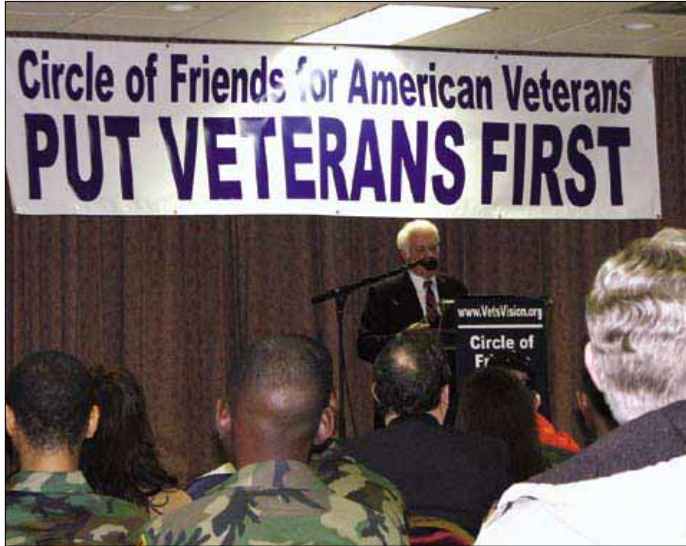
Legal Services of Northern Virginia
6066 Leesburg Pike, Ste. 500
(703) 778-6800
www.lsnv.org
civil legal services

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

PHOTO FINISH

Never Forget Their Service

Courtesy of Circle of Friends for American Veterans



Retired Army Maj. Brian Hampton addresses the crowd at a rally held by the Circle of Friends for American Veterans at an American Legion post in Arlington. The group called for roughly doubling the money per bed available through the Grant and Per Diem program to \$60 a day, and making PTSD counseling services available at all of the VA's Vet Centers. See page 6 for more.

StreetFact

There has been a nearly 37% increase in adults 60 years and older living in poverty since 2000. See story on page 1.

SOURCE: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

February 20 – March 4, 2008 • Volume 5 • Issue 8

Street Sense
1317 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Mail To:

Interested in a subscription? Go to page 14 for more information.

VENDOR PROFILE

Lorpu S. Borsay

By Jessica Elliott

Lorpu S. Borsay was born in Liberia, Africa on May 3, 1982. She spent much of her life in Liberia, where she was a student, highly involved in choir. Lorpu grew up with her mother, father and many brothers and sisters.

Lorpu described her mother as a businesswoman who sold radio dishes and clothing. Her father worked for Lonco Company, which ships iron to many countries around the world.

Lorpu came to the United States with some of her brothers and sisters on May 28, 1999, in order to escape the civil war taking place. Lorpu's father was killed during the war, even though he was not fighting. Her mother still resides in Liberia.

Although Lorpu moved here with several of her siblings, they did not stay together, and currently live in different states around the U.S. In order to earn money and pursue one of her interests, Lorpu worked as nursing assistant for 5 years.

Lorpu said she loved her job, but was fired after an incident involving the police took place outside of the White House. Lorpu was arrested and sent to court.

After her court hearing she was sent to St. Elizabeths for three months. After being released, having zero resources, Lorpu became homeless for the first time.

She is currently putting her résumé together and hopes to work again as a nursing assistant.



Why do you sell Street Sense?

It is the only way to survive and make money. I like working for Street Sense because it is helpful.

Where do you see yourself five years from now?

I see myself having a degree in business administration.

Your favorite music?

Gospel

Your favorite food?

Baked beans and hamburgers

Your favorite book?

The Bible

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

We Want Your Opinion.
Take the Street Sense Readers Survey Today!

Ask any vendor for a pre-stamped survey postcard or just go online to www.streetsense.org and click on the Readers Survey link.