

redrawing community

**IN THE
ZONE**

2008-09 ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009

**Greater
Cincinnati
Coalition For
The Homeless** 
25 Years of Service and Advocacy
1984 - 2008

Photo by Almie Willhoite



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear supporters of GCCH,

Yet another year has passed. In fact, May marked the beginning of the Coalition's 25th year of service. Usually when speaking of anniversaries, we refer to them as celebrations. So should we celebrate 25 years of the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless?

In some ways, yes, we should. 25 years ago wise people who wanted and planned to end homelessness started bringing us together. For 25 years we have struggled against homelessness. For 25 years we have stood together and been Cincinnati's homeless conscience. We have grown. We now have fewer gaps in services than we used to. All of this and the sense of camaraderie the Coalition has built are very much worth celebrating. Our people and ourselves, especially our team are worthy of grand celebration.

But beyond these things, should we celebrate 25 years of GCCH? The answer is "no." The truth is that when the Coalition was founded, we did not dream it would still be needed 25 years later. In 1984 the mass cutting of social services and affordable housing was in its early stages and modern-day homelessness had just been created.

Years later, after more cuts and loss of affordable housing we are still here. We are still here and we are still fighting old battles. In the past year we've fought and sued over a city resolution that calls for stopping social services from locating in Over-the-Rhine. We spent countless hours struggling against major changes to zoning meant only to zone our people and us out. We overcame the close-call of an almost \$700,000 cut to human services. We fought the proposed withdrawal of homelessness as a city funding priority.

Fighting old battles certainly does not mean we have not made progress. If not for our Coalition, homelessness in our area would have captured many, many more people. We have worked hard, and there is life and success all around us to prove it.

We are strong, we are a force. We must remove every barrier in the way of ending homelessness. We must not only remove the barriers, but make it such that they can never be resurrected. We must change minds. We must change policies. We must change this system that not only allows homelessness to exist but makes it more difficult to overcome.

We know that we know we can end homelessness. We know the truth. We must allow our love of people mixed with our knowledge of the truth, drive us with an absolute, relentless courage and passion to bring homelessness to its knees, gasp its last breath and never harm us again. We will do this.

With Hope,

Josh Spring, LSW
Executive Director

STAFF

Josh Spring, LSW,
Executive Director
(May 09 - present)

Georgine Getty,
Executive Director
(2008 through May 09)

Lynne Ausman,
Administrative Coordinator

Jeni Jenkins,
Education Coordinator
(January - present)

Andy Freeze,
Education Coordinator
(2008 through December 08)

Gregory Flannery,
Streetvibes Editor

Rob Goeller,
Civil Rights Outreach Coordinator

Della Woolens,
Receptionist

Melvin Williams,
Receptionist

Greater Cincinnati Coalition For The Homeless 

25 Years of Service and Advocacy
1984 - 2008

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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COORDINATION OF SERVICES

The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless provides a space for collaboration and information-sharing for the homeless community and social service providers. Our Coordination of services activities allows for social service agencies, advocates and homeless individuals alike to come together and address the problems of homelessness in our community.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / GENERAL BODY MEETINGS

One of the primary and most important roles of the Coalition is to ensure that we are all working together. In the past year we changed the format for our monthly general body meetings. Every third Thursday of the month at 1:30, p.m. we gather to get on the same page. Each month we alternate between a meeting for the Coalition General Body and a meeting for Coalition Executive Directors.

This past year these meetings have served to bring major issues that affect us all to the forefront. They have served to plot solutions. These meetings have served to not only keep us informed but also to create forward motion.

HUMAN SERVICE FUNDING

Historically, 1.5% of the General Fund of the city budget was allocated to a whole host of important Human Services. In recent years, despite much struggle, this percentage has been cut to between .6 and .7 percent of the general fund.

This past year city council changed the process for the allocation of these funds. Among other changes, they changed the fiscal year, resulting in a nearly \$700,000 gap in funding. The citizen advisory group that was involved with decision-making was not notified or consulted on this. They were brought together for a short meeting where they were asked to support the cuts. The citizen committee declined to support the cuts because they were not given the proper information or time to make an informed decision.

In addition, two council members attempted to remove homelessness as a funding priority. Funded agencies learned their funding would be cut the very next day following the notifying letter. GCCH stood strong and proclaimed through the voices of many that these cuts would not be allowed. Soon after our show of strength and determination, funding was restored and homelessness was placed back onto the list of funding priorities.

ADVOCACY

At the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, we realize the importance of addressing systemic and root causes of homelessness in order to institute lasting and permanent change. To this end, GCCH works with police, city officials, community groups, and social service agencies to support homeless people in advocating on their own behalf.

ZONING

Zoning is meant to zone buildings, not people. This past year 32 amendments were proposed for the Cincinnati zoning code. These amendments were born out of a long struggle strongly based in the desire for segregation spurred on by fear.

If passed, these amendments would require that any new shelter or expansion could not be within 1,000 feet of a school. New or expanded shelters also could not be within close distance of an area with single-family dwellings. In addition, many parts of the city would not be available to new or expanded services. Also, many new services would not be allowed to locate within 1,000 feet of another service. These rules would be targeted primarily at groups working with people who are homeless, agencies doing job training, addiction treatment, serving or giving food, financial classes, etc.

GCCH struggled against this proposed legislation and others like it. In fact GCCH still has a pending lawsuit against the city because of a resolution passed by Council that called for stopping social services from locating in Over-the-Rhine without city definable cause.

Due to the Coalition's efforts, because we packed City Hall in large numbers and because many people boldly stood strong or spoke, the amendments have not passed. They have been sent back to staff.

The truth is that they still exist, perhaps in an ever-so-slightly edited fashion on the desks of city staffers. They most certainly still exist in the heads and plans of those who started the backwards process. Therefore we will be constantly prepared to defeat these plans. We are winning thus far and will continue to do so. We will stay in the zone.

TENANTS UNITED FOR TRUTH

The eradication and prevention of homelessness can only be accomplished by addressing and advocating for our nation's need for affordable housing. This year, GCCH sought to meet this need by forming an affordable housing group called Tenants United for Truth (TUT).

Run by tenants of affordable housing, TUT formed as a response to an article published in the Cincinnati Enquirer in the Fall of 2008. The article detailed the reactions of many long-term suburban residents in response to an influx of families enrolled in the Housing Choice Voucher program moving into neighborhoods such as Colerain and Springfield. The article highlighted a troubling degree of negative stereotypes of affordable housing tenants as held by suburban residents. Other residents of Cincinnati chose to post comments on the Enquirer Web site that were even more disturbing. Some citizens suggested pink license plates to identify recipients of government subsidy. Others claimed that sterilization was the key. Tenants United for Truth seeks to dispel these appalling perceptions through public education.

In March, representatives of TUT urged the appointment of an affordable housing tenant to Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority's board, as well as made recommendations to their annual plan. Most recently, representatives joined residents of the Fay Apartments in advocating for the city's finance committee to approve much needed funding that would allow important renovations to take place in the Fay Apartments. TUT contacted council members in support of this renovation; and by the end of the week, the funding was approved.

EDUCATION

There are many stereotypes and myths regarding homelessness in our community. We seek to eradicate this misinformation by portraying a more accurate and holistic picture of homelessness in Cincinnati. An educated public is a compassionate public willing to dedicate time and talent to creative solutions to homelessness.

CINCINNATI URBAN EXPERIENCE

Our Cincinnati Urban Experience program aims at engaging college students from around the country in service-learning. Instead of sand and surf on the beaches of Florida or Mexico, we invite students to Cincinnati, Ohio, where they spend their mornings engaging in meaningful service work and their afternoons and evenings learning more about homelessness, poverty and other urban issues. This year we hosted five colleges, totaling 46 students, from around the country. 94% of participants expressed interest in volunteering in their home community.



Three students after preparing meals at Our Daily Bread. Photo by Aimie Willhoite.

“VOICE OF THE HOMELESS”

SPEAKER’S BUREAU

The Speaker’s Bureau reached approximately 4,000 students and adults. We had 126 speaking engagements between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009. At most speaking engagements, a speaker from the bureau attended and shared his or her life story and experiences being homeless. The Education Coordinator also attends speaking engagements to provide factual information about homelessness and poverty in Cincinnati and to speak about the Coalition and our member agencies. The Speaker’s Bureau currently has four speakers: Grady Cook, Sam Jackson, Riccardo Taylor and Tommy Thompson.



Riccardo and Grady spoke with students about homelessness and being Streetvibes vendors one afternoon in Downtown Cincinnati. Photo by Jeni Jenkins.

SHANTYTOWN

“A shantytown event is an educational opportunity for students to learn about homelessness. This event prepares students to engage in other service-learning experiences such as volunteering at a shelter, organizing a food drive, or participating in an advocacy initiative. By linking a shantytown event with a service experience, students will be able to serve others with a better understanding of the issues and the solutions facing those who struggle from a lack of affordable housing.” - Steve Elliot, Program Director of the Mayerson High School Service Learning Program



This year we helped students organize a city-wide shantytown. During the weekend of October 16, 2008, high school students set up over 20 shantytowns in the Cincinnati area on their school campuses and spent the night outside to increase empathy and raise awareness about the homeless men and women who sleep outside in our community.



STREETVIBES VENDOR PROFILE

LEONARD JACKSON

Getting off the streets and into stable housing is a huge step for a homeless person. After being homeless for three years, Streetvibes vendor Leonard Jackson now lives in Section 8 housing in Winton Terrace.

“I’m not trying to brag about it,” he says. “I’m just really thankful to have it.” Jackson expressed gratitude to organizations in Cincinnati such as the Salvation Army and the Drop Inn Center that provide the homeless and disadvantaged with food, housing assistance and bus fare to seek employment.

Jackson has been a Streetvibes vendor since 1997, when the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, which publishes the newspaper, had its office on Elm Street, he says. His route spans from Walnut and Race streets in Over-the-Rhine to Knowlton’s Corner and Chase Avenue in Northside, he says.

“(Streetvibes) helps pay the bills and keeps bus fare in your pocket,” he says. “It lets people know what’s going on with the homeless, it tells the truth and it reports better than the other newspapers.”

Jackson says he is one of the few Streetvibes vendors who venture across the Ohio River to sell the newspaper in Covington and Newport. Patrons have told Jackson that both Kentucky cities need more vendors like him, he says.

STREETVIBES

Streetvibes is an activist newspaper, advocating justice and building community. Streetvibes reports on economic issues, civil rights, the environment, the peace movement, spirituality and the struggle against homelessness and poverty. Distributed by people who are or once were homeless, in exchange for a \$1 donation, Streetvibes is published twice a month.

THE NEWSPAPER

Streetvibes has enjoyed tremendous growth in the past year – so much so that we decided to double its production schedule. The hard work by vendors selling Streetvibes and the generosity of contributing writers and photographers resulted in a huge growth in the paper's circulation. Faced with growing demand from readers last year, the Coalition initially raised the print run from 4,000 copies per month to 6,000. Then, after vendors repeatedly sold all available copies, the decision was made to make Streetvibes a bi-weekly paper, printing 4,000 copies every two weeks.

The Homeless Coalition's goal in going bi-weekly is twofold. First, publishing the paper more often will mean more sales, increasing our vendors' income. Vendors earn 75 cents on each \$1 copy of the paper that they sell. Second, by publishing more often, Streetvibes has twice as many opportunities to educate the public about the reality of homelessness and to advocate for affordable housing for everyone.



Riccardo Taylor is a veteran vendor and a member of the "Voice of the Homeless" Speaker's Bureau.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF STREET PAPERS

Streetvibes now has an international reputation for journalistic excellence. On May 14, 2009, the International Network of Street Newspapers (INSP) bestowed its Best Feature Story Award on Streetvibes for an investigative report published in 2008, "We Are Their Slaves."

Among the judges for the competition were some of the most prestigious names in contemporary journalism, including David Schlesinger, editor-in-chief of Reuters.

At a ceremony in Bergen, Norway, INSP presented the award to Streetvibes Editor Gregory Flannery, accompanied by this statement:

"This feature highlights an appalling case of the mistreatment of immigrant Puerto Rican workers in Cincinnati. Uncovering a shocking scheme of calculated exploitation and severe social control, the article resulted in a groundswell of outrage and a federal investigation of the company in question."

"We Are Their Slaves" has since been re-printed in street newspapers around the world. More important, the story led to an investigation by the FBI into allegations of possible human trafficking and other violations, and workers began taking steps to organize for collective bargaining. The story points to the power that a small, aggressive newspaper can have in exposing injustice and generating a constructive response.

The awards ceremony in Norway was part of the annual INSP conference, drawing 100 delegates from street papers in 29 countries. Streetvibes is part of a global movement

empowering homeless people and reporting news and issues that the corporate media have ignored. But, as the INSP award shows, street papers aren't second-best in quality when compared to the larger media. Streetvibes, for example, regularly features the work of professional Cincinnati journalists such as Margo Pierce, a 2009 Peter Jennings Fellow; Lew Moores, retired from a career as one of the best daily-newspaper reporters in Cincinnati; and Stephanie Dunlap, recipient of awards from the Society of Professional Journalists.



Gregory Flannery accepts the "Best Feature Award" for the article "We Are Their Slaves." Photo courtesy of INSP.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Bethany House Services provides a full range of housing, education and assistance programs to homeless and low-income women and children in the Greater Cincinnati area. www.bethanyhouseservices.com

Caracole, Inc. provides affordable housing and supportive services to persons living with HIV/AIDS. www.caracole.org

Catholics United for the Poor is a coalition of non-profit organizations and is committed to educating the public about poverty, raising funds and awareness for members, and to facilitate collaboration among member agencies. www.cupcincy.org

Center for Chemical Addictions Treatment provides a wide range of quality treatment services for alcoholism and other chemical addictions to adults in the Greater Cincinnati area without regard to financial status. www.catsober.org

Center for Independent Living Options provides services to individuals who have physical, sensory, cognitive, and/or psychological disabilities. www.cilo.net

Center for Respite Care, Inc. provides housing for individuals who are too sick to be in the shelter, yet not sick enough to be hospitalized. www.homelessrespite.org

Charlie's 3/4 House, Inc. provides affordable transitional housing for newly recovering alcoholics. www.charlies3-4.org

Churches Active in Northside is a collaborative ministry of neighborhood churches that feeds bodies and souls, cares for children and builds community. www.cainministry.org

Cincinnati Health Network provides support services for community health centers in Hamilton County, Ohio. This includes a comprehensive Health Care for the Homeless Program.

Cincinnati Union Bethel provides supportive services and education programs that assist urban women, children, families and communities to reach their greatest potential. www.cinunionbethel.org

CincySmiles Foundation provides or arranges dental disease prevention and treatment services for low-income or homeless individuals and other special-needs populations. www.cincysmiles.org

City Gospel Mission provides daily meals, clothing, safe overnight shelter, recovery programs and other need-based services www.citygospelmission.com

Drop Inn Center is a shelter that provides essential services to people experiencing homelessness and empowers people to move from homelessness to housing. www.dropinn.org

Emanuel Community Center is a resource for a cohesive community, providing education and shared neighborhood experiences that connect all residents of Over-the-Rhine. www.emmanuelcenter.org

Faces Without Places/Project Connect keeps children experiencing homelessness connected to their education by providing supplies, transportation, uniforms and enrichment opportunities in summer, after-school, and shelter tutoring programs. www.faceswithoutplaces.org

First Step Home offers long-term drug and alcohol treatment and housing for low-income women and their children in a safe and supportive environment. www.firststephome.org

Franciscans Haircuts from the Heart restores dignity, self-respect and self-confidence to the homeless and poor through professional hair care. www.haircutsfromtheheart.org

Franciscan JIPC works on, supports and advocates for various social justice issues in Cincinnati. www.franciscan.org

FreeStore/FoodBank provides food, products and services to help people overcome barriers to their basic survival needs and further self-reliance. www.freestorefoodbank.org

Grace Place Catholic Worker House provides temporary residences to women with or without children as they transition from homelessness. home.fuse.net/graceplacecw/index.htm

Habitat for Humanity of Cincinnati seeks to eliminate substandard housing by building simple, decent, affordable home to sell to low-income families in need. www.cincinnati-habitat.org

Hamilton County Community Development fosters development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing, suitable living environments and expanded economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. www.hamilton-co.org

Health Resource Center of Cincinnati, Inc. serves homeless and at-risk individuals who are in need of psychiatric, medical or social services and whose needs are not being met by other agencies. www.hrcci.org

Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center is a coalition of faith-based organizations and individuals who work together to address concerns focusing on economic justice, women's issues, human rights, racial equality, peace and the environment. www.ijpc-cincinnati.org

Interfaith Hospitality network teams homeless families with volunteers from 50 area churches, 16 host congregations, and 34 support congregations to provide needed food and shelter. www.ihcincinnati.org

Joseph House serves homeless veterans of our community. Services include outreach, shelter and housing to both men and women. www.josephhouse.com

Justice Watch provides transitional housing for men returning to the community from incarceration. www.justicewatchinc.org

League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government work to increase understanding of major political issues and influences policy through education and advocacy. www.lwvcincinnati.org

Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati works to resolve serious legal problems of low-income people, to promote economic and family stability and to reduce poverty through effective legal assistance. www.lascinti.org

Lighthouse Youth Services provides comprehensive social services designed to encourage good citizenship, responsible behavior and self-reliance. www.lys.org

Madisonville Education and Assistance Center provides vital assistance – including food, clothing, rent and utility assistance – to individuals and families living in Fairfax and Madison Place, Madisonville, and Mariemont. www.meaconline.org

Mary Magdalen House provides a safe place for persons in need to shower, shave, brush their teeth, use a toilet, have clothes laundered, have use of a phone and have a place to receive messages and mail. www.marymagdalenhouse.org

NAMI of Hamilton County works to offer hope and help to all affected by mental illness through educational programs, support groups and phone support and advocating for better services, legislative changes and increased research on mental illness. www.nami-hc.org

Our Daily Bread provides a warm meal and supportive services in a safe place to all who come. www.ourdailybread.us

Over-the-Rhine and Walnut Hills Kitchen and Pantry provides meals to the area's homeless, low income, and working poor. www.overtherhinekitchen.org

Over-the-Rhine Community Housing provides decent, safe, racially integrated, low-income housing in Over-the-Rhine, especially for homeless or chemically dependent persons. Its co-op structure enhances self-determination. www.otrch.org

Peaslee Neighborhood Center works to welcome and nurture the involvement of the neighborhood in building a stronger, healthier community. www.peasleecenter.org

Prospect House provides long-term residential drug and alcohol treatment to men. www.prospect-house.org

Salvation Army provides a wide range of supportive services, including emergency shelter, disaster relief and outreach. www.thesalvationarmycincinnati.org

Sober Living, Inc. provides a safe, affordable, sober housing and structural living environment to individuals recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. www.soberlivingohio.com

Society of St. Vincent DePaul provides a unique style of personal assistance with food, clothing, rent, utilities, transportation and companionship to people facing economic, emotional or spiritual crises. www.svdpcincinnati.org

St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House is a community of volunteers who are dedicated to feeding the hungry and providing dignified hospitality to the poor. www.catholicworkerincincinnati.org

Stop AIDS provides services, prevention, education and housing assistance to homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS in Cincinnati. www.stopaidsincincinnati.com

Talbert House provides services in mental health, criminal justice and substance abuse in order to improve social behavior and enhance personal recovery and growth. www.talberthouse.org

Tender Mercies, Inc. provides housing and individualized supportive services to homeless persons with histories of mental illness. www.tendermerciesinc.org

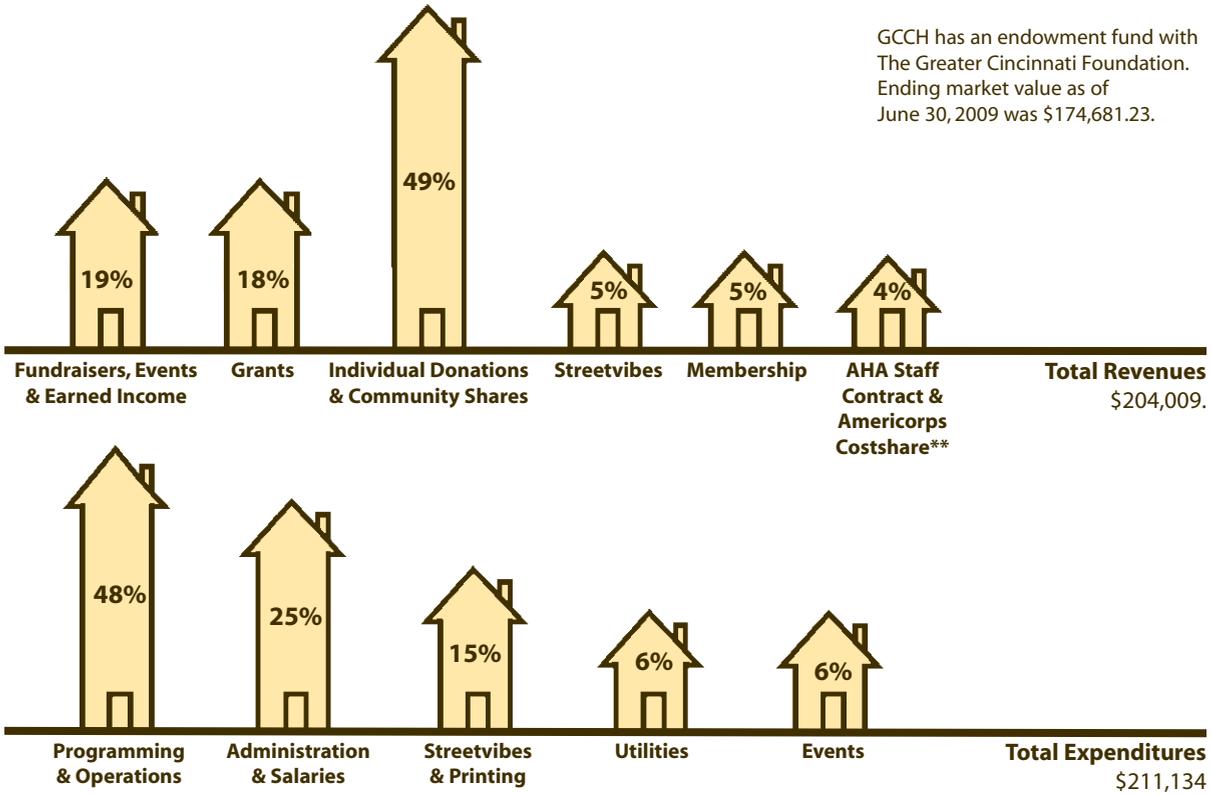
Tom Geiger House assists women and their children to move toward independent living by providing them with safe housing and effective support services. www.tomgeigerguesthouse.com

Volunteers of America provides case management and housing to formerly homeless individuals. www.voa-ov.org

Welcome House of Northern Kentucky collaborates with the community to provide a continuum of quality services for individuals and families who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to eradicate homelessness, foster stability and promote a just society. www.welcomehouseky.org

FINANCES

GCCH has an endowment fund with The Greater Cincinnati Foundation. Ending market value as of June 30, 2009 was \$174,681.23.



*Unaudited figures for fiscal year ending June 30, 2009.

**GCCH contracts with the Affordable Housing Advocates to house and pay the AHA staff. AHA pays GCCH a supervision stipend.

Also, GCCH partners in the statewide AmeriCorps*VISTA

***GCCH does not receive city, state, or federal funding.

JOIN THE FIGHT TO END HOMELESSNESS

The more support we have from the community, the further our efforts reach. GCCH's work is possible only with the help from member organizations and generous individual gifts.

Organization Members Our members may receive: voting rights at our General Body meetings, Streetvibes subscriptions, Speaker's Bureau engagements, discounted printing services, and more depending on membership type.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact the Coalition at (513) 421-7803.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

YES! I want to end homelessness in Cincinnati!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$150 Other \$ _____

I would like to receive more information about:

Speaker's Bureau Cincinnati Urban Experience Education Packet

Tenants United for Truth Streetvibes



Please fill out and return to:

Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless
117 E. 12th Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202

Thank you for giving generously!

**Greater
Cincinnati
Coalition For
The Homeless**



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www.CinciHomeless.org

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**Greater
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The Homeless**



25 Years of Service and Advocacy
1984 - 2008

The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless is a unified social action agency, fully committed to its ultimate goal: the eradication of homelessness with respect for the dignity and diversity of its membership, the homeless and the community. The Coalition works towards this goal by coordinating services, educating the public, and engaging in grassroots organizing and advocacy.