The truth is that there is never a dull year in the life of the Coalition, to be even more truthful, there is never a dull day in the life of the Coalition. As a collective body we are constantly at work in a variety of situations, both positive and negative. With our Education, Coordination of Services and Grassroots Advocacy and Organizing we stretch all over the region. We are constantly out there inviting regular folk to join in the struggle for housing, employment, health care; basic human rights— an end to homelessness. We are always working internally along-side our member—organizations to find the best ways to improve life around us: examples this year include the Family Homelessness and Housing Stability study and policy recommendation process and organized work to get the cold shelter open every night of winter. We round all of this out by having a never-relenting line drawn between right and wrong, justice and injustice. We demand that those organizations, business, developers, politicians, etc. causing and sustaining homelessness, stop! We do more than demand however, we organize and we take our struggle to the People at large, we garner support through our other efforts and create needed change.

Fiscal year 2011 marked significant growth for the Homeless Coalition. We supported the Metropole Tenant Association in winning the first monetary settlement in favor of Tenants displaced, ever in Cincinnati history. We established Cincinnati’s first Homeless Congress. We pushed and won in the campaign to have a dignified place for folks in Over-the-Rhine to use the restroom. We broke ground on our effort to have people surrounding a particular project, hired to work in that project. We strengthened partnerships with unions, the faith community, universities and more. We distributed 77,817 copies of Streetvibes, expanding sales to suburban neighborhoods. We collaborated with the Mayerson Foundation and Faces Without Places to lead 25 schools in the City-Wide Shanty Town sleep-out. We led our first Homeless Awareness March/Walk with about 150 people, who told us how much they learned from the experience. We hosted 10 Cincinnati Urban Experience groups from around the country. We educated at 146 different Speakers Bureau events. We increased the financial stability of the organization through changing efforts for changing economic times. We saw very valued key staff move on to other opportunities and the joining of committed, and extremely able staff. We took in new member-organizations. In collaboration with the Miami University Center for Community Engagement we began a much needed renovation at the Homeless Coalition office and more.

A Coalition is People coalesced together, pushing, struggling, moving in the same direction with the same goal. Our goal is to end and prevent homelessness. We are so very thankful for all of the People and organizations that are joined to create this Coalition. We are thankful for the ideas, discussions, plans and actions. We are thankful for the commitment and passion for human life through all situations. We are the organization that draws a line in the sand, never willing to quiet the Truth and always working to bring everyone into the Movement- to a home.

With Deep Gratitude,

Josh Spring, LSW
Executive Director
COORDINATION OF SERVICES

THE HOMELESS COALITION 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 UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS ALIKE TO COME TOGETHER AND ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF HOMELESSNESS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

GENERAL BODY

A Coalition is a group of people moving collectively in the same direction, working to achieve the same goals. People and organizations cannot be a Coalition without coming together and working together. Every third Thursday of the month at 1:30pm, the heart and soul of the Coalition, General Body, gathers. Throughout this past year, our Member-organizations sent representatives each month. Together we were able to discover common issues we were all facing and create collective strategies to reach solutions.

General Body served as a place to be heard, create and lead to action. We made decisions about how to restore funding and how to support social services under attack. We worked on defending the rights of Tenants, the struggle for jobs and demanding deserved opportunity for families and children facing homelessness. We strategized how to push new policies all focused on our mission to eradicate and prevent homelessness. We grew in our knowledge of how to stand together and push forward.

FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

Over the last couple of years at the Coalition office we have noticed a significant increase in families calling or coming in seeking shelter or housing assistance. In response, we asked our member organizations if they felt the same need. Recognizing that family homelessness was on the rise, we launched an effort to produce an up to date study of family housing instability and homelessness in Hamilton County.

During the past year several committees were formed to address the issue of family homelessness. Committees included representation from the faith community, shelters, government agencies and housing advocates. Additionally, committees included academics and experts in the fields of healthcare and education. Most importantly, the voices of families experiencing homelessness or on the edge of homelessness were included.

We completed focus groups with dozens of families through-out the region and conducted interviews with area leaders. This qualitative data will be combined with quantitative demographic data we are currently collecting and in early 2012 we will release an in-depth study that accurately depicts the experiences of many families in Hamilton County. Following the public release of the study, our committees will move into a phase of policy development and recommendations for effective advocacy. We are striving for a system with more resources that helps people get back on their feet and prevents family homelessness.

COLD SHELTER

For years the Cold Shelter was mandated by City Council, but funds were not allocated to it. The Health Department and Recreation Commission did the best they could with what little funds they had available. As a result, the Cold Shelter only opened at zero degrees wind-chill or lower. Several years ago we advocated and the Cold Shelter began opening at below 10 degrees wind-chill. Two years ago after the Recreation Commission ran out of money to fund the shelter, because Council would invest none, we stepped in and private dollars were given to keep it open. In 2010 with a collective group of organizations, we were able to raise enough dollars to have, for the first time, trained shelter workers, supervised by the Drop Inn Center, at the Cold Shelter. This year with this growing collective group, we raised enough support to have the Cold Shelter, now called the Winter Shelter, open for 90 nights in a row, starting December 5, 2011. No longer will people have to wonder if they can be warm at night. Cincinnati has now moved from being categorized as the largest metropolitan city with the worst response to winter in the state to representing a model of growth.
The Coalition recognizes the importance of addressing systemic and root causes of homelessness in order to institute lasting and permanent change. The Coalition works with local officials, community groups and people who are homeless or who have experienced homelessness to prevent homelessness, ensure that the rights of homeless persons are preserved, that the trend of criminalization of homelessness is reversed and that just social policy is enacted to end homelessness.

Right to Home, Space, Land - This past year the Coalition has stood with both small and large groups of people struggling to not be forced out. We have taken stances on the forced removal of Tenants with low-incomes, as well as organizations like the Drop Inn Center and Anna Louise Inn. We believe it is wrong to force one out of home for political/economic reasons. We believe dollars should be spent on life-saving housing, jobs, services, etc. We will continue to stand with our organizations as politicians and developers try to erase us. We are confident in our morality and strength.

A group of displaced Tenants received a monetary settlement in their favor, setting Federal precedent. This decision demonstrates that the court did not agree with how Tenants were treated.

We stand on the shoulders of those that struggled before us, getting as far as they could and next time we will start with this new precedent and get even further until eventually we triumph completely for the right of home.

Affordable Housing: Metropole

Starting in 2009 we began working with those residing in the Metropole Apartments at 609 Walnut Street. 3CDC planned to purchase the building, remove everyone and convert their homes into the rooms of a boutique hotel for tourists. After a long struggle, in August 2010 a solidified body of Tenants sued 3CDC, Model Management, the City of Cincinnati, Showe Properties, and HUD. For the past year Tenants and the Coalition have worked with the generous lawyers Jennifer Kinsley and Terrance Brennan. Tenants were in negotiations with the defendants for most of 2011 as the judge continued to take the Tenants’ case seriously.

After nearly two-and-a-half years and the loss of nearly 230 affordable housing units in the Downtown, the Metropole Tenant Association settled with 3CDC forcing 3CDC to pay $80,000 to Tenants and to meet with the Association, the Homeless Coalition and others over the next year regarding 3CDCs planned future actions. Though we did not save the units downtown, Tenants were successful in forcing HUD to issue one voucher for every unit, a win for regional housing numbers and for the first time in Cincinnati history.

Anna Louise Inn & City Gospel Mission

It must be noted that two of our member organizations have been the victims of misunderstanding, fear and in some cases hate. Two well respected organizations working decades to serve people have been sued for simply trying to better complete their work, all because businesses and people with money are afraid of people without money. We have stood with our Members and will continue to do so, until we collectively triumph.

Homeless Congress

This year through the vision of the Coalition and the efforts of Riccardo Taylor, our Civil Rights Outreach Coordinator, as well as committed fighters who are experiencing homelessness, we established Cincinnati’s first Homeless Congress. This is a growing body of people experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness in the past. The Congress is in the process of creating avenues to include more voices of people experiencing homelessness, taking stances on issues and advocating and organizing for basic human rights. This year the Congress fought hard for replacement restrooms by Washington Park, organizing the support of area business. The Congress also took many trips to Columbus, Ohio to fight proposed law requiring one to show an ID to vote.

Human Services

Again in winter 2010, the Coalition stood up for the many people that benefit from city human services dollars. Yet again, $850,000 was cut, still not as much as was proposed before our advocacy efforts that included testimony to council, meetings, press conferences and more. We must continue this struggle until Human Services is restored to its historically set amount: 1.5% of the City’s General Fund. The Coalition is committed to this struggle to hold city council responsible.

Civil Rights

We all remember when Joann Burton was run over by a Cincinnati Police car, driven through the grass in Washington Park. Ms. Burton lost her life to this reckless and out-of-protocol behavior. The Coalition challenged the system that allowed an action like this to occur and the fact that the action went without legal consequence. We stood beside the community and family, organized a vigil to maintain constructive and peaceful honor and protest as well as a funeral. We led the family to sue the city. This year we also sued the City of Cincinnati after City Council passed a motion requiring shelters to provide punishment to those staying in their shelter who have panhandled in the city via the platform of Shelter Standards. We believe that this motion is unconstitutional and a breach of the Coalition’s previous settlement with the City regarding panhandling. The suit was dismissed because the new standard had not yet been enforced. If enforced, we plan to sue again.
PEOPLES PLATFORM FOR EQUALITY & JUSTICE:

THIS YEAR, INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS PARTNERED WITH THE COALITION. TOGETHER WE DEVELOPED A 10-POINT PLATFORM WITH THIS PREMISE FROM ACTIVIST NANNIE HINKSTON: "WE WANT TO SEE DEVELOPMENT, BUT WE DON’T WANT TO BE PUSHED OUT." THE PLATFORM ADDRESSES THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, LIVING WAGE JOBS, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVING BUSINESSES, AGENCIES TO BE WOVEN IN AS INTRICATE TO THE COMMUNITY. LEGISLATION THAT PROVIDES FOR THESE RIGHTS AND AN END TO THE DISPLACEMENT AND ASSAULT ON PEOPLE EXPERIENCING POVERTY. FROM THIS PLATFORM, INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN JOINING IN, PLANNING STRATEGY AND TAKING ACTION. WE MEET EVERY FRIDAY AT NOON AT PEREGLEE.

Art: Seth Tobocman, line drawing, 2011, created for the Peoples’ Platform

Photo: Catie Dargue, Everyone Poops Campaign

EVERYONE POOPS

A s a part of their re-development of Washington Park 3CDC closed the public restrooms. We demanded that they put in place temporary port-o-lets during construction, lest people be forced to use the restroom in public, in front of homes and business with people experiencing homelessness to blame. 3CDC said they would do so. Then later in the year, 3CDC said no way. A neighborhood without a public restroom and the subsequent mess would give 3CDC a stronger argument to say the neighborhood needs to be “cleaned up.” The People’s Platform and the Homeless Congress pushed hard to make this a main issue in the press, and forced 3CDC to respond. After a long struggle Nast Trinity Church donated their land for space to house the port-o-lets, agreed to pay for half and 3CDC is paying for the other half. People will have a humane way to use the restroom.

3 CDC is spending $47 million in the two square blocks of Washington Park. We have voiced that priorities are out of order as we currently still have many people without housing. However, we have pushed over the last year that if so much money is being spent, people in the downtown, if qualified, including people in shelters and on the edge of homelessness should be pursued for hire for work in the park. We pushed through a variety of tactics with little success. Eventually after media campaigns, rallies and protests, 3CDC began meeting with us and a team we put together to find qualified people in the area. We are also joined by area Contractors and Sub-Contractors. We are creating a new model that is inclusive. Companies that claim to benefit the community they are working in should hire accordingly. We are creating an argument that successful hire like this prevents homelessness. We are taking this message beyond Washington Park to other projects and eventually city-wide.

Photo: Jeni Jenkins, 2010 Homeless Awareness March

"WE WANT TO SEE DEVELOPMENT, BUT WE DON’T WANT TO BE PUSHED OUT."

-NANNIE HINKSTON

OUR GRASSROOTS RUN DEEP
WE LIVE IN A CULTURE WHERE THE TERM "HOMELESS" HAS A NEGATIVE PERCEPTION AND STEREOTYPES AND MYTHS FEED INTO A CULTURE OF FEAR AND HATE IN OUR COMMUNITIES. THE COALITION’S EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO BREAKDOWN THESE STEREOTYPES AND ERADICATE THIS MISINFORMATION. OUR EDUCATION AND SERVICE PROGRAMS PORTRAY A MORE ACCURTATE AND HOLISTIC PICTURE OF HOMELESSNESS IN CINCINNATI. WE BELIEVE AN EDUCATED PUBLIC IS A COMPASSIONATE PUBLIC WILLING TO DEDICATE TIME AND EFFORT TOWARDS CREATING SOLUTIONS TO HOMELESSNESS.

VOICE OF THE HOMELESS SPEAKERS BUREAU:

The Voice of the Homeless Speaker’s Bureau is the most successful of our education programs. Made up of individuals currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness who share their stories, the program is designed to put a face on homelessness and raise awareness about those struggling in our community. The Director of Education & Outreach also attends speaking engagements providing factual information to the public about homelessness locally and nationally. In 2010-2011 the public education programs reached approximately 4,619 students and adults through 146 educational engagements. We are the second largest speaker’s bureau in the country, second to the National Coalition for the Homeless.

Art: Woodcut by South African artist, Dina Cormick

CINCINNATI URBAN EXPERIENCE:

The Cincinnati Urban Experience (CUE) is designed to provide participants with a combined experience of meaningful service and social justice education that will motivate them to become active in the fight to end poverty and homelessness.

CUE is part of growing movement of alternative break programs around the country. We offer a way for high school and college students to get involved and delve into serious issues such as gentrification, economic disparity and the importance of political advocacy.

GCCH arranges for service opportunities at many of its 50 member agencies. Mornings during CUE are spent volunteering at local homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and other agencies that provide services for Cincinnati's experiencing homelessness. In the afternoon GCCH provides educational activities so participants can learn about the root causes of homelessness and poverty. All participants will have the opportunity to hear from speakers, participate in team building activities, and reflect on how they can get involved in dispelling myths and creating empathy rather than apathy.

Groups live in Over the Rhine while here and stay from 2-7 days. Between July 2010 and June 2011, GCCH hosted 10 groups totaling 181 students from around the country.

AMERICORPS VISTA PROFILE

This last year GCCH was lucky to have Riccardo Taylor as the Civil Rights Outreach Coordinator. This position provided the opportunity for individuals to speak to someone if they felt they had suffered an injustice. Riccardo is more than a familiar face at the Coalition as he is a former Streetvibes distributor, a current writer for the paper and has been visiting the Coalition for years as both a volunteer and a patron.

Many times Riccardo is able to mediate a situation between individuals or an individual and an organization to reach a satisfactory conclusion. He was able to offer helpful suggestions for avoiding conflict and what to do if serious action is needed. Mostly he was an ear that could listen to whatever was going on for many people, that’s all that’s needed is a place to sit down and tell someone what’s going on.

Photo: Aimee Willhoite

Riccardo successfully implemented the first ever Homeless Congress here in Cincinnati. It’s a group of members who are predominantly without homes and represent a number of locations. Modeled after a similar group in Cleveland, this group has helped advocate for the much needed public bathrooms in Washington Park and has connected recently homeless individuals in the area to help them get the services they need.
DAY BY DAY CALENDAR PROJECT:

In 2010 we partnered with Prairie Inc. to create The Day by Day Calendar project, a pilot program designed as an effort to provide individuals experiencing financial poverty with the opportunity to portray Cincinnati through their own eyes as well as provide an additional economic opportunity for all Streetvibes Distributors. During the summer of 2010, Photographer and professor David Rosenthal of Prairie lead a six class photography course. A selection of these images were compiled into a wall calendar that was sold by Streetvibes distributors for the first time in fall 2010. Distributors purchased the calendars from the Homeless Coalition for $2.50 and sold them on the street for $5. In total, 25 distributors sold nearly 1000 calendars.

HOMELESS AWARENESS WEEK:

In 2010 GCCH collaborated with Faces Without Places and the Mayerson Foundation to coordinate Homeless Awareness Week October 15-24, 2010 in the Greater Cincinnati area.

This week was our local version of the larger National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week November 12-20, organized by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger & Homelessness. These and other groups all over the country mobilized to educate, raise awareness and motivate people to get involved in the fight to end homelessness.

2010 activities in Cincinnati included our first Homeless Awareness March, as well as a Homeless Awareness Kick Off Event and fundraiser. Additionally, we worked to coordinate area schools in participating in their own homeless awareness events on their campuses, including the City-Wide Shantytown Sleep-out.

CITY WIDE SHANTYTOWN SLEEP-OUT:

Thinking Outside the Box, City-Wide Shantytown sleep-out is the main event during Homeless Awareness week. The goal is to raise awareness of poverty and homelessness through a "one night without a home" awareness sleep out. The phrase "Thinking Outside the Box" is to encourage participants to think differently, creatively and from a new perspective. For years, many high schools, both public and private, hosted individual Shantytown events throughout the school year. In 2008 we began working with the Mayerson Foundation Service-Learning Program in an effort to increase the numbers of schools by collaborating on one common weekend or week. In 2010 we collaborated again, this time with Faces Without Places. Through student meetings, sharing and the creation of a Homeless Awareness Week Planning Guide, nearly 550 students at 25 schools in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky participated in raising awareness of the struggles facing our homeless neighbors.
Streetvibes is an alternative newspaper and part of the International Street Newspaper Movement. Focusing on homelessness and social justice issues, Streetvibes reports the often-invisible story of poverty in our community. Streetvibes is also proud to include creative writing, poetry, articles, photography and interviews written by individuals who currently or formerly experienced homelessness. As a progressive news source, Streetvibes serves an educational function, and also provides a forum for dialogue for those others try to silence.

Streetvibes celebrates

The 200th Edition

1997-2011

providing a source of income
reporting untold stories
advocating for the people
raising awareness
challenging the status quo
documenting oppression
empowering movement
changing lives


Streetvibes Distributor Program

Streetvibes Distributors buy the paper for 25 cents per copy and sell it for one dollar. They keep the profit that they have earned. This program has helped hundreds of people find and maintain housing. Streetvibes is open to individuals seeking supplemental income to become self-sufficient. Becoming a Streetvibes Distributor is a unique entrepreneurial opportunity as well as a great way to network and meet people in the community. In 2010, 69 distributors purchased 49,672 newspapers with the potential profit of $37,254.00.

RECENT CHANGES

Streetvibes saw a lot of changes in this fiscal year, however we are still here and going strong. Between 2010 and 2011, 77,817 total newspapers were distributed through the community, this is an increase from 76,630 in FY 2010 and an increase from 57,655 from FY 2009. After doubling the production schedule to twice a month in 2009, we decided to change the distribution to an every other Friday release, resulting in two extra editions each year. On average 45 Streetvibes Distributors distribute approximately 3200 papers every two weeks. The improvements in sales can be attributed both to the Distributors and the staff who worked on improving layout and content, as well as to the amazing team of volunteer writers and photographers contributing each issue. Additionally, some sales increases are due to our increased presence in suburban neighborhoods through our Streetvibes Expansion Program designed to give Distributors the opportunity to go to areas outside of downtown and Over the Rhine. Each month a select number of Streetvibes Distributors received free bus cards that gave them easier access to expand their distribution routes.

Volunteer Profile:

Stephen came to the Coalition in need of help and ended up helping the Coalition out in the end. He has devoted about twenty to thirty hours a week sitting in at the front reception desk to fill in or help out the receptionist, has been a great helper in putting together our annual mailings and bimonthly Streetvibes subscriptions as well as writing for Streetvibes and becoming a regular Advocate in the community.

His time and support has been an invaluable service to the Coalition and we are thankful to have him. While volunteering he has been able to move from a shelter to assisted living to his own apartment and we couldn’t be happier for him. The best part about Mr. Gentry is his positive attitude towards life and passion to help where he can. As he becomes more familiar with our services he’s been able to help a number of people seeking shelter, food, and other assistance. He has become a friendly face that both staff and clients look forward to seeing on a daily basis.
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.

www.cincihomeless.org