

# Annual Report 2013

Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless

“Together We Can”



Photo: Jimmy Heath

The logo features the text "GREATER CINCINNATI" in a small, white, sans-serif font at the top. Below it, the words "HOMELESS" and "COALITION" are stacked vertically in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font, all contained within a red rectangular background.

GREATER CINCINNATI  
**HOMELESS  
COALITION**

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.





## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Colleges and Friends,

This year we celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Thirty years ago a small group of passionate people started our Coalition. This group represented the handful of existing shelters and service providers serving people experiencing homelessness. The “trickle-down economics” of the 1980’s forced exponential growth in homelessness- millions more people nationally. In Cincinnati/Hamilton County and across this country families with children, individuals that could no longer afford their housing and people who had lost employment were desperately seeking shelter. This founding group of people and organizations responded to this great need by establishing safe shelters for people to sustain life.

In 1984, these diligent people understood that life was getting worse for people experiencing poverty and the government was continuing its dis-investment in people with low-incomes. This small group of organizations decided that in order to end this systematic problem, they would have to combine their voices, hearts, feet and hands- they would have to coalesce their power and together make the system change.

This year is a celebration of the fortitude, mission, diligence, vision and camaraderie of our Coalition over the past three decades. We have stayed true to our mission. I am conflicted though because I am confident that when that small number of organizations formed us in a church basement in 1984 they did not believe we would still need to exist as a homeless coalition thirty years later. I believe they were convinced that we would end homelessness in the foreseeable future.

Our Coalition has grown to 53+ Member Organizations today. It is wonderful that we are all bonded together and we have been effective, and we know homelessness would be even worse if we did not exist. Still, today, our 53+ Member Organizations work against financial, political and social odds to keep people alive while experiencing homelessness that most for-profits could never muster the fortitude to endure. We must continue to work systematically, to push new policies and to end stereotyping is the fact that today, we need 53 organizations and probably even more than that. What was a phenomena in the 1980’s, the general public and the government believes has always been here. We must remind ourselves and those around us that together, we can eradicate homelessness. We are one of few institutions who, along with its many Members, share the goal of putting ourselves out of business.

Sincerely,

Josh Spring, LSW  
Executive Director

## Did you know?

In the 1990’s there were over 2,500 units of affordable housing in the Central Business District. Once the Anna Louise Inn moves there will be less than 150.



# The Courthouse

For many years a good number of people slept in front of the Hamilton County Courthouse. People chose this location over alleys because it is well-lit, has a protective wall surrounding it, is often patrolled and had room for safety in numbers. Two years ago, a group of teenagers attacked those sleeping at the courthouse with bricks. They were able to fend off the attackers and get police assistance because of their numbers.

In fall 2013 we were informed the Sheriff's Department planned to remove those sleeping at the courthouse at risk of arrest. We negotiated time for outreach workers to increase efforts. We pushed for the eviction to not take place because the courthouse steps are public land, people had relative safety, people who have learned to not trust the system would be less likely to take assistance if the system again marginalized them, the congregate group would be broken up into alleys, storefronts and under bridges; making it harder for workers to interact with them. Eventually we asked that no evictions take place until the Winter Shelter could open. We knew that the majority of people would go into the Winter Shelter, but would be less likely displaced. The Sheriff's Department moved forward with evictions.

Throughout this we remained in close contact with those sleeping at the courthouse. We organized this group of people, connected them with a lawyer and together they filed a federal lawsuit. In this situation, we sought to fully inform those being hurt and to empower them to make their own decision as to what to do next. In addition a number of people gained relationships with our direct-service organizations and entered shelter. The litigation continues. We continue to meet with those in the Department that run the Justice Center. As a result of this, we have seen this portion of the Department become more open and empathetic toward people experiencing homelessness

# Advocacy.

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## The Problem

When you ask the average Cincinnati what causes homelessness you will usually get one or both of the following responses: mental illness and addiction or poor choices. Many times this response will be followed by an explanation of who among people experiencing homelessness are "deserving" and who are not.

At GCCH we understand that homelessness is a systematic problem. Its roots can be traced to macro political and societal decisions, not micro personal decisions.

Over the last three decades Hamilton County has lost thousands of affordable homes. A short drive in our city will reveal many vacant industrial buildings that in another generation represented jobs and opportunity.

In 2013, in Cincinnati/Hamilton County 34% of adults in the shelter system suffered from mental illness. In our community we have very little accessibility for mental health treatment. We also have a severe shortage of detox opportunities for people without income suffering from addiction.

Until the 1980's, the face of homelessness was primarily people experiencing addiction and/or mental illness. In 2013 30% of people in the shelter system were children, 10% were under the age of 5. Currently so many families with children are without housing that our family shelters are only able to shelter a small percentage of the families that need shelter. We estimate that at least 10% of Cincinnati Public School children experience homelessness in a year.

## The Solution

Often as a city and county we get distracted from dealing with the systematic root causes of homelessness. Our direct-service Member Organizations will continue to serve people experiencing homelessness and do all they can to move people into housing and income. We will continue to meet people experiencing homelessness with dignity and respect, but this alone will not end homelessness. In order for homelessness to end, the general public must partner with us in working to advocate and organize efforts to change policies and remove the status quo. We must get back to basics.

As a community and government we must incentivize and invest in safe, affordable housing. We must prioritize housing development for people who do not have homes over new housing for people that already have homes. We need to rid ourselves of stereotypes and unnecessary fear. We need to incentivize the creation of employment opportunities that pay living wages, benefit our community and give those laboring control. We need to re-envision a city in which we shop from our neighborhood grocer because our neighbors benefit. And we need to invest in mental health treatment and addiction treatment that is not contingent on income. We need to reach a point as a people where we act on the belief that women, men and children spending their lives trying to avoid homelessness or exit homelessness is not okay. We need to reach a point in which we act on the belief that people dying because of homelessness is not okay.

This is why we organize and advocate. Organizing involves empowering those experiencing a problem to stand together to change it. Advocacy involves bringing in those who may not directly experience the problem but care. Together we can make our home sustainable.

**“Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice, and lying and greed. If people all over the world would do this, it would change the Earth.” -William Faulkner**

# Lee's Story

I was in a place where I knew I needed to change my life. So I tried something new – Streetvibes and I stuck with it. It has been a blessing in disguise.

When I first started selling Streetvibes, I actually started to quit the first day. Boy, am I glad I am not a quitter. Because I can boast now that I have sold over 6,600 papers in a year.

Streetvibes has given me an opportunity for my voice to be heard. I write articles for the paper. Something I always wanted to do was to write. One day, I hope to publish my own book, a collection of all of my articles.

Streetvibes has also given me the opportunity to meet all kinds of people of all different walks of life. It has been very enlightening. When I first started selling Streetvibes when someone said “no,” I was hurt. I felt like I wasn't trying my best. Then I came to realize that people had the right to say “no.” So now, I do not let “no” bother me, I just look for the next “yes.”

When People say “yes,” and actually have the time to have a conversation – it's not about the paper or the \$1.50. It's actually about the people. That was surprising to me. It makes me feel worthwhile, like I really count. Those are feelings I really haven't had in quite a while. So I am going to continue to sell Streetvibes and meet people.



# Streetvibes

Providing Opportunities.

## The Program

Streetvibes is a social justice newspaper that is a part of the International Street Newspaper Movement. The paper focuses on homelessness, social justice and international news issues; telling the stories of poverty not printed in traditional newspapers. The papers are sold by individuals who have experienced homelessness as a way for them to earn a supplemental income. Streetvibes also features articles, poetry, jokes, art and photographs submitted by individuals who have experienced homelessness.

## Did You Know?

In 2013

- **34,316** total papers were sold
- 56 active distributors sold 10-417 papers a week
- The average net income was **\$617/distributor**
- Top sellers made an average of **\$400/month**

## New This Year

This year, Streetvibes elected a Distributor Council, made up of individuals selling Streetvibes. The council was formed in order to put some of the decision making power into the hands of the distributors.

We also:

- Started a monthly writing workshop
- Expanded the program to have a distributor in Covington, Hyde Park, Delhi, College Hill, and Clifton Heights



# Lauren's Story

My name is Lauren Lovett and my life started off fairly normal. I had a mom, dad, two older brothers, and eventually I had a little sister. I was raised in the suburbs of Cincinnati, primarily the North College Hill/Finneytown area. Everybody thought that we had the normal Brady Bunch, Cosby family, it really wasn't like that. Once everybody left and the laughter stopped it was a crazy place to live. I had an abusive father, there were drugs used in the household.

In 2006, shortly after I started attending Hughes high, my family lost the home that I had grown up in, due to job loss and foreclosure. That's when I became homeless the first time. During those years I couch surfed around for a while. I ended up at the Drop in Center December 9<sup>th</sup> 2008, was my first day at the Drop Inn Center, it was a Tuesday. I stayed there that Wednesday night, on Thursday night I stayed at a friend's house. That Friday, I received news that I was accepted into the Women's Program at the Drop in Center.





# Raising Awareness

# Education.

The Coalition's Education and Outreach programs are designed to breakdown harmful stereotypes about homelessness in our community and engage participants in our mission to eradicate homelessness. The Coalition believes that an educated public is a compassionate public willing to dedicate time and energy towards solutions. The Education programs include Voice of the Homeless Speakers' Bureau, Citywide Shantytown, and Cincinnati Urban Experience.

## The Programs

**Voice of the Homeless Speakers' Bureau** is made up of formerly homeless individuals who share their personal story and put a face to homelessness. In 2013, the program held over 100 events and reached over 2,500 participants.

### City Wide Shantytown

Over 33 schools and 750 students participated in Citywide Shantytown during Homeless and Hunger Awareness Month. Over 18 schools hosted overnight sleep outs outside on school property in make shift shanties using cardboard boxes and duct tape

### Cincinnati Urban Experience (CUE)

Is an urban plunge program designed to give participants a combined mix of meaningful service experiences and social justice education and is part of a growing movement of alternative breaks around the country. Groups live in Over-the-Rhine or the West End and stay an average of five to seven days. In 2013, six schools participated in CUE with a total of over 75

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." -Nelson Mandela*

# A Reason to Join...

Where would we be without a strong voice at city hall, a watchdog for the actions of the police, an organization that can mobilize and file lawsuits when the civil rights of our constituents are violated, an organization that is independent of the rest of us yet can speak for us all?

Now more than ever, we need an organization to help keep us focused on our common goals, especially as funding becomes increasingly competitive. We need a common purpose and a sense of unity now more than ever.

In spite of the federal goal to end homelessness, we know we are facing a complex problem with no easy solution. Our strength is our common purpose, our unity, our voice. Thank you to the Coalition for serving as the glue that holds us together as a community.

The Coalition activities constantly remind us of our common mission and the role we all play in the fabric of that mission. We are interconnected. We are interdependent. Ending homeless is only partially about resources and political will. In the end, it's about community and a common purpose.

-Linda Seiter *Executive Director of Caracole*



# Coordination of Services

Working together to end homelessness

The founders of the Coalition understood that ending homelessness would only be possible with a strong alliance of individuals, service providers and community groups working together to create positive systematic change. Since 1984, we have provided a space for collaboration and information sharing to address timely issues and create strong bonds that benefit the collective whole. On the third Thursday of each month we hold a membership meeting, as an opportunity to gather to discuss common issues that our membership organizations are facing, and to provide an opportunity to work with other organizations to focus on the systematic root causes of homelessness.

## 2013 Member Organizations

- Applied Information Resources
- Bellermine Chapel
- Mary Berry
- Bethany House Services
- Boys and Girls Club
- Caracole
- Catholic Health Partners
- CDC Association of Cincinnati
- Christopher Chatfield
- Charlie's ¾ House
- Christ Church Cathedral
- Christ Hospital- Social Work
- Church of the Redeemer
- Center for Chemical Addictions Treatment
- Center for Independent Living Options
- Cincinnati Health Network
- Cincinnati Union Bethel
- Cincy Smiles Foundation
- Desales Marianist Community
- Drop Inn Center
- Faces Without Places
- Franciscan Haircuts from the Heart
- Franciscan JPIC Office
- Hamilton County TB Control
- Hamilton County Community Development
- Anthony Hubbard
- Michael Hurysz
- Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center
- Bill and Suzanne Joiner
- Joseph House
- Joe Kay
- Jennifer Kinsley
- Cecelia and Tom Kloecker
- Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati
- League of Women Voters
- Lighthouse Youth Services
- Lincoln Heights Missionary Baptist Group
- Lydia's House
- Madisonville Education Assistance Center
- Mary Magdalene House
- Mary Carol Melton
- Bob Moore
- National Church Residences
- NAMI of Hamilton County
- Our Daily Bread
- Over the Rhine Community Housing
- Over the Rhine-Walnut Hills Kitchen
- Peaslee Neighborhood Center
- Prospect House
- Richard and Teresa Riegel
- Southwestern Ohio Nurses Association
- St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House
- St. Joseph Catholic Church
- Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
- Alice Skirtz
- Society of St. Vincent DePaul
- Stop Aids
- Tender Mercies
- Volunteers of America
- YWCA of Greater Cincinnati

*"Alone, we can do so little. Together we can do so much."  
- Helen Keller*

# Additional

# Programs



## Day by Day Calendar Project

The Day by Day Calendar is a collaborative project created in conjunction with Prairie, Inc. and the Mayerson Foundation. This social justice calendar features 12 photographs taken by *Streetvibes* Distributors & local high school students during a week-long workshop where students learn about the Over-the-Rhine community, & homelessness through speaking engagements, writing prompts, and visual poetry.

When the calendar is completed, *Streetvibes* Distributors purchase the calendar for \$5 and sell them for \$10. In 2013, these calendars were also sold online & in stores: at Joseph-Beth Book Sellers & the Booksellers on Fountain Square.

From November – December in 2013

- 562 calendars were sold
- \$2,916 in net supplemental income were earned for distributors
- 23 *Streetvibes* Distributors made, on average, \$200 each from selling the calendar.

*"This week, I learned that there is great dignity in listening to another person's story."*

*-Day by Day Calendar Student Participant*

## Front Lobby Services

Though our focus is not on direct service, many individuals come into our front lobby. We have a free, public telephone people can use to conduct business. We offer cold water and coffee. We provide a microwave for individuals to utilize. In addition, we provide mailing services for individuals who do not have a home address by allowing them to use our address. Currently 1700 individuals receive mail at the Homeless Coalition.

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## Winter Shelter

The mission of the Winter Shelter is that no one freeze to death on the city streets during our cold winters. Generously hosted at the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and managed by the Staff of the Drop Inn Center, the Winter Shelter hosted 600 individuals in 2012/2013 and 717 in the winter of 2013/2014. The majority of the individuals who slept at the Cold shelter would have slept outside. This again shows that we have a housing and job crisis. We must work for the prevention of homelessness so that people are no longer in need of a place to keep them from freezing to death. For years the Homeless Coalition has been integrally involved in the existence and sustainability of the Winter Shelter.



## Anna Louise Inn



After years of litigation, the owners of the Anna Louise Inn signed a purchase agreement with Western and Southern. For more than two years Cincinnati Union Bethel fought the multi-million dollar corporation in order to maintain their own property and the safe and affordable housing that the Anna Louise Inn provides for Women. The Homeless Coalition organized a major

public response to Western and Southern's advances. The Inn will eventually move to a new location in a new building. However, we know without the enormous pressure of Cincinnati's that gathered in support of the Inn, that John Barrett would never have made a deal in the amount that he did. We must continue to work for a city of equal opportunity not dictated by cash reserves.

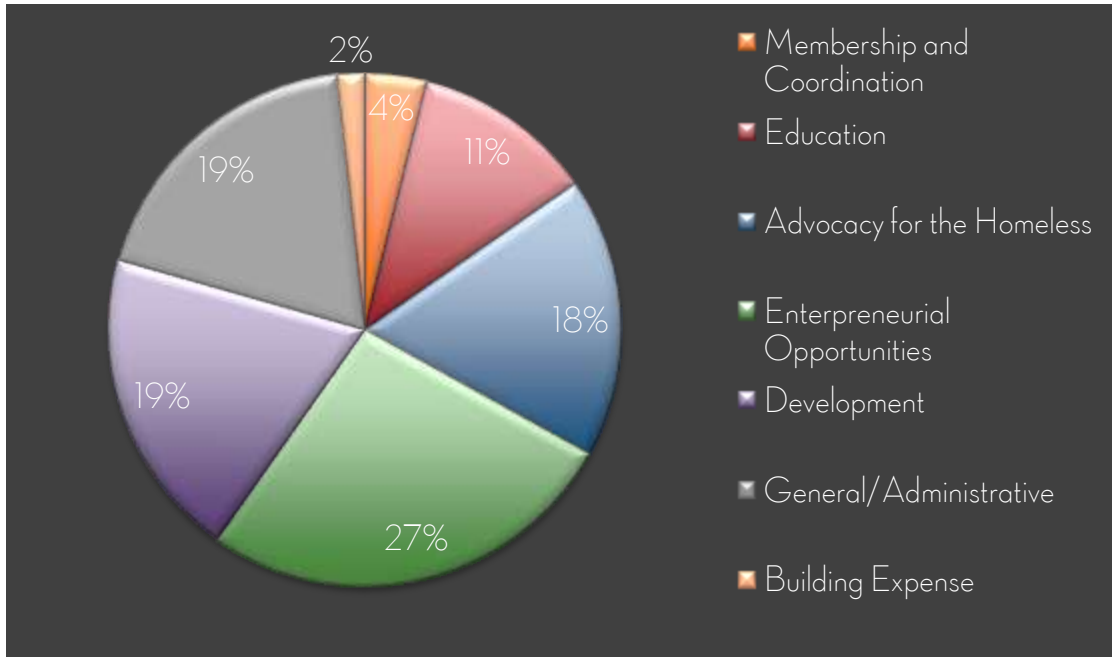
*"I fully intend to dream of happiness and peace when I sleep... food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, equality, green space for all."*

*-buddy gray*

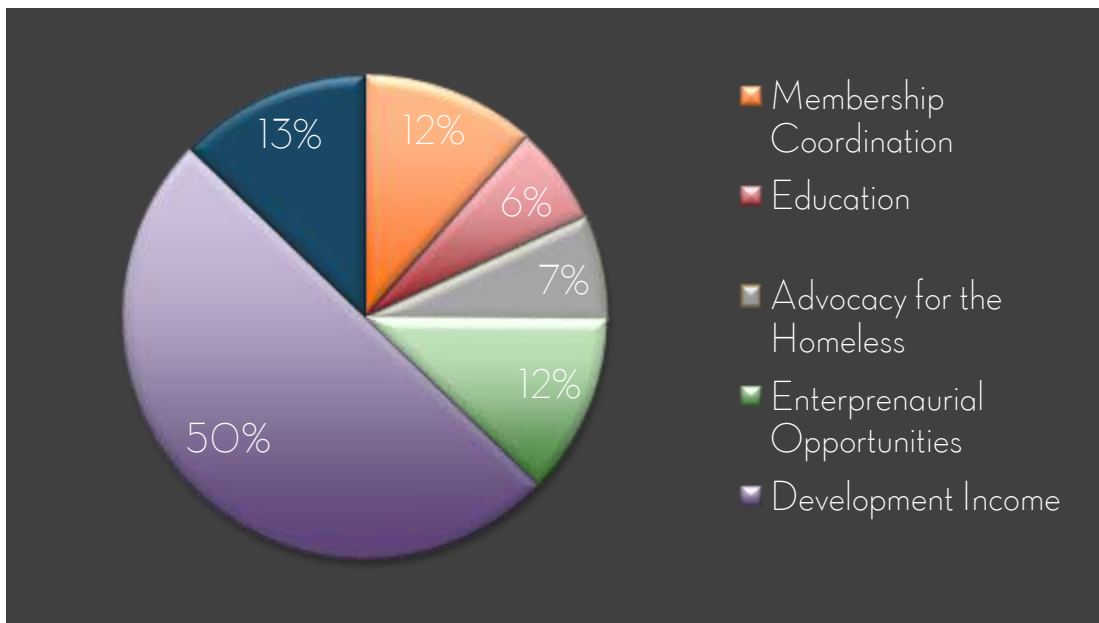
# Finances

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## Expenditures



## Income



# Contact Us

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Follow us on Pinterest at [www.pinterest.com/homlesscoal/](http://www.pinterest.com/homlesscoal/)

Visit our website [www.cincihomeless.org](http://www.cincihomeless.org)

## Staff

Josh Spring- Executive Director

Leslie Moorhead- Director of Development

Anna Worpenberg- Streetvibes Distributor  
Program Manager

Justin Jeffre- Streetvibes Editor

Monica Pepple- Director of Education

Jeni Jenkins- Streetvibes Layout  
Director of Education and Outreach (Jan-  
March)

Chris Fowler, Receptionist

Rubey Goode, Receptionist

Steve Reams, Receptionist

Clarence Daniels, Receptionist

Charles Carpenter- Receptionist

Pete Roper- Custodian

## Board of Trustees

Fanni Johnson- Co- Chair through Nov. 2013

Steve Gibbs- Co- Chair

Virginia Tallent- Co-Chair

John Dovich- through Nov. 2013

David Knoll

Kate Bennett

Bob Moore

William Joiner

Christopher Wilkey

Stephanie Cornnett- joined Nov. 2013

Jennifer Kinsley- joined Nov. 2013

Alice Skirtz- joined Nov. 2013

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