i don’t expect to be patient
until there is HOUSING NOW for all

i fully intend to dream of happiness
and peace when I sleep...

food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education,
equality, greenspace, and peace for all...

and meanwhile, awake to live
as unacceptably, noncalmly, unpleasantly,
dislikeably, impatiently, loudly, disrespectfully
and disruptively, and as contagiously
collectively as I am able
as long as is necessary.
Dear Friends:

What do you take for granted? “Granted” is a weird word. It’s usually only used in fairy tales, “your wish is granted,” or as an insult, “you take me for granted.” In the fairy tales, granted is the giving of a gift. In a fight, granted means something you should be grateful for but no longer are because the person or thing is such a given, such an entitlement.

Until I started working at the Homeless Coalition, I took a lot of things for granted – drinking water, showers, my car, clean sheets, education, nutritious food, employment, warmth, safety, shelter. Most people do. These things are just a given in America, right? But for at least 1,300 people a night in Cincinnati, these things are not assumed. They are a struggle.

So now I take these things for granted, but in the fairy tale way where they’re a gift I’m lucky enough to receive. Our work continues at the Homeless Coalition to get Cincinnati to a place where all of our neighbors can take homes, jobs, safety and education for granted in the other sense: as obvious human rights that it just make sense for everyone to have.

The Homeless Coalition follows in the tradition of buddy gray and our founders in our assumption that housing is a right for everyone, so we work with the Affordable Housing Advocates to change policy. We assume that people should get paid for their labor and be treated with respect at work, so we formed the Day Labor Organizing Project. We assume that people deserve shelter, food, protection from abuse, and education programs, so we fought for continued city funding. And we assume that those who are comfortable will move to action for those who are suffering if they know the truth, so we educate.

And until we eradicate homelessness in Cincinnati once and for all, the one thing that homeless people can take for granted is that the Homeless Coalition will be a safe haven where progress happens and rights are preserved. Thank you for being a part of the Homeless Coalition, because it is only together that we can make change happen.

Sincerely,

Georgine Getty
Executive Director

BUDDY GRAY REMEMBERED

November 15th marked the 10th anniversary of the death of buddy gray: homeless advocate, local activist, and founder of the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless. He helped formulate the mission that still guides us today: eradication of homelessness.

This poem was read at our 2006 Annual Dinner to commemorate the occasion and remind us of the continuing struggle to end homelessness and poverty in our community.

“How Did It Happen?”
by buddy gray

i don’t know how it happened… many events, witnesses, years
…but more important – it has…

i don’t desire to be happy unless happiness is a universal right

i don’t care to be at peace when teenagers of the third world
must learn to shoot anti-aircraft guns at American invading planes

i don’t want to be acceptable as long as rape, racism/sexism,
multinational profit, C.I.A. destabilization of governments, joblessness,
homelessness are acceptable

i don’t intend to be calm, pleasant and likable
if the stink of injustice must be raised

i don’t expect to be patient until there is “Housing Now” for everyone

i don’t know how to be quiet when our voices may be the only counter
to the rich’s media controls, limits, inversions of the truth.

i don’t think about being respectful
hunger exists in the land of plenty
poverty exists in this nation of wealth
uneducation and ill health run rampant in this place of advanced
technology, toxic waste ravages this once beautiful country

i don’t plan to be non-disruptive
of the “order” around us

i don’t yet choose to be a carpenter, if nuclear bombs production
still steals the housing construction budget

As long as churches and synagogues and temples do reverent rituals for
rights and speak in pious platitudes of peace and take no angry action that
stops American Business as usual to end homelessness, imperialism

As long as business lunches still happen in the glass condos looking out over
the homeless and hungry on the cold streets 10 stories below

As long as the City Fathers can work 8 hours a week for $35,000 and do little
learn of the people’s problems over whom they rule

i fully intend to dream of happiness—and peace when i sleep—food, clothing,
shelter, medical care, education, equality, green space and peace for all

And meanwhile awake
to live as unacceptably, non-calmly, unpleasantly, dislikably, impatiently,
loudly, disrespectfully, and disruptively, and as contagiously collectively
as i am able,
as long as is necessary
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 allow for social service agencies, advocates, and homeless individuals alike to come together and address the problems of homelessness in our community.

GENERAL BODY MEETINGS
11 General Body Membership meetings were held in 2006. Topics included housing-first models, get out the vote efforts, day labor, homeless civil rights, housing sex offenders, social services and violence prevention, raising the minimum wage, Medicare, and the Benefit Bank (a program designed to help people access benefits such as Social Security). The March General Body meeting was the Annual Meeting, where member organizations gathered to elect board members, discuss the past year, and plan for the future.

STANDDOW
Standdown, an event aimed at helping homeless veterans and non-veterans, was held November 3rd at Mercy Franciscan at St. John in Over the Rhine. This year, 35 social service agencies provided services to over 600 individuals. Over 150 of them self-identified as veterans. Those visiting the event received services such as information about treatment for chemical addiction and mental health, blood sugar screening, blood pressure checks, flu shots, housing information, hair cuts, dental care, Social Security assistance, and legal help. Clothing, personal hygiene bags, and lunch were also available. Many participants and service providers commented that this had been the best Standdown in Cincinnati yet.

SHEET DRIVE
In April, P&G launched a sheet drive in which gently used sheets were donated from area hotels, laundered at Homewood Suites, and then transported by Goodwill Industries to GCCH. Over 500 sheets were collected and distributed to member agencies of GCCH for shelter and transitional housing programs.

OHIO COALITION OF HOMELESS ADVOCATES (OCHA)
GCCH has been working with Dayton’s The Other Place, the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless, the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless in Cleveland, the Mahoney County Homeless Coalition in Youngstown, and the Southeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless in Athens as a collaboration called the Ohio Coalition of Homeless Advocates (OCHA). This group meets bi-monthly to discuss events happening across the state, share information, and develop successful programs. One issue that has been found to be a significant barrier statewide is housing and employment for individuals exiting correctional institutions. A statewide conference to address the issue is planned for October 12, 2007, in Columbus.

HUMAN SERVICES FUNDING CUTS
For over 20 years, the City of Cincinnati has dedicated 1.5% of its General Fund to human services. This policy is governed by the Human Services Advisory Committee (HSAC), a group of dedicated volunteers who read grant applications, do site visits and evaluate each agency based on their measures of success. The agencies funded include food pantries, shelters, employment training programs, HIV/AIDS assistance, after-school and youth programs, literacy projects, and programs that help with mental health, addiction, and disabilities.

In 2004, Mayor Luken cut human services funding out of the budget completely, leaving agencies befuddled, frustrated, and scrambling for additional resources. City Council restored funding back to $2.4 million dollars, roughly .6% of the General Fund; a full 50% cut. The human services community mobilized and asked each candidate for council if they supported funding human services. They all said they did. Then in June of 2006, in an effort led by Councilmember Crowley, there was a unanimous vote by Council to make human service funding a top priority for the 2007 budget.

Shocking, this did not hold true. City Manager Dahoney’s 2007 budget recommended cutting human services down to roughly $1.3 million, or 22.3% of the general fund. GCCH kept the community informed, helping turn out between 300 and 600 people to each of the public forums on the budget to demand that this funding be restored. Supporters also generated thousands of calls and emails to City Council and the Mayor. Despite this incredible display of democracy in action, five council members (Berding, Bortz, Cole, Ghiz and Monzel) recommended further cutting human services to about $800,000.

On the other side of the fence were Councilmembers Cranley, Crowley, Tarbell, Thomas and Mayor Mallory who dug in and said that human services must be funded at least $2.6 million, or 6% of the General Fund. This issue, and this issue alone, resulted in the late-night marathon budgeting sessions on December 21 and 22, ultimately resulting in a compromise where human service funding was restored to $2.6 million.

The community of human service providers in Cincinnati is as courageous and kind as it is necessary. GCCH was proud to help in the worthy cause of helping to restore human service funding and plans to continue to be involved until all agencies are given the resources they need to end homelessness.
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.

EDUCATION PACKET
This past year saw the Education program grow with continued sales of the Education Packet. The “Teacher’s Guide to Homelessness,” an important resource from the Education Packet, is very popular with educators. Over 25 schools and organizations have purchased Teacher’s Guides since they became available. At the end of this past year the Education Packet was updated with new articles, statistics, and facts to help teachers continue to educate students on the issues of homelessness and poverty.

Also in 2006, the Education Packet was introduced to other Coalitions throughout Ohio, including Cleveland, Akron, Columbus, and Toledo. Columbus was able to adapt the Teacher’s Guide with their information and has begun piloting the Education Packet at Otterbein College. Toledo’s Cherry Street Mission has used their statistics and facts and has already implemented the Teacher’s Guide in area high schools.

STREETVIBES
Streetvibes continues to be a mainstay at GCCH. The paper has seen a growth in area writers and local articles. It is easily the most recognizable education tool that GCCH has to offer. Streetvibes vendors purchase papers for 25 cents and sell them to the public for a $1 donation, keeping the profit for themselves. Over 26,000 papers were sold in 2006 to the local public, and just over 16,000 papers were given away to schools and other organizations where GCCH was able to speak. 2006 also saw Streetvibes begin to reach a new population: vendors began selling Streetvibes after church services at local parishes around Cincinnati.

SPEAKER’S BUREAU
The “Voice of the Homeless” Speaker’s Bureau reached over 1,821 students and adults in 2006 while speaking to Elementary Schools, High Schools, Colleges, Churches and other organizations. We had 32 speaking engagements throughout the year. At most engagements, a homeless or formerly homeless member of the bureau shares his or her story, engaging the group and answering questions. The Education Coordinator also attends to talk about the Coalition and member organizations. GCCH gave 11 presentations by the Speaker’s Bureau at private high schools, reaching over 720 high school students; 4 presentations at public high schools, speaking to over 385 students; 10 presentations at churches or other organizations, reaching over 530 people; and 7 presentations at universities, reaching over 215 college age students.

GET INVOLVED
Is your place of worship interested in having a Streetvibes vendor sell papers after services once a month? Are you a teacher who would like to use the Teacher’s Guide to educate your students about homelessness? Does your class or group want a presentation from the Speaker’s Bureau? Give Andy Freeze, Education Coordinator, a call at 513.421.7803 x14 to discuss any of these great opportunities.

STREETVIBES VENDOR PROFILE:
Jon Darby
Jon Darby has been a Streetvibes vendor for over a year, most often selling them by the CVS at the corner of 7th and Walnut. He became homeless after going through a divorce, and he found his way to the Streetvibes vendor program through a friend who sells the paper.

After being homeless for “nine months, eighteen days, and four hours,” Jon got an apartment this past May through a housing program offered at the Freestore/Foodbank. He says that this time was more than long enough to realize the hardships that people who are homeless face on a daily basis.

At the beginning of February, Jon walked into the GCCH lobby and proclaimed that he had gotten a job after much persistence. He is now an employee at the WCET television studio as a computer and color graphics analyst.

Jon’s advice to people who are homeless is to “get all your paperwork in order because there are reputable agencies around here that will help you.” He remembers that having all of his paperwork – birth certificate, social security number, and photo identification – made getting an apartment and the services he needed easier.

Jon’s story is one you may not know because of his humble nature. His new goals include paying the gas and electric bill and moving into an apartment that is a little bigger. Jon used to sell Streetvibes out of necessity to afford his small, meager apartment. He now sells Streetvibes to meet and mingle with people.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVOCATES
The Affordable Housing Advocates (AHA) is a collaboration of housing providers, advocates and consumers dedicated to the goal of ensuring quality, safe, accessible, affordable housing for all people in the Cincinnati area, especially those with low and very low incomes. Over the course of the year, AHA implemented over 75% of its strategic plan which includes public education, resource sharing, and sustainable housing policy. On the advocacy front, AHA has been active in monitoring the so-called “Nuisance Ordinance” and ensuring that no abuses shall occur on the ordinance’s behalf. Following the November elections, AHA has asked political candidates to take pledges to not portray affordable housing in a negative light and manipulate fear of low-income people for political advantage in campaigns. AHA also launched its education and awareness campaign that produced a new website (www.ahacincy.org) and is working towards creating new brochures, informational handouts, and fact sheets.

GET OUT THE VOTE
From September 21st to October 10th, 2006, there was a window of time when people who did not have photo identification could register to vote and vote absentee. With help from the Coalition on Housing and Homelessness in Ohio (COHHIO), GCCH rented a van and transported people from local shelters to the Board of Elections so they could vote. One man was delighted to learn that his previous felony would not keep him from voting. A group of homeless youth, ranging in age from 19 to 23, voted for the first time, and promised to vote again in the future. In total, GCCH helped 40 people make it to the polls who would not otherwise have been able to vote due to lack of identification. Popular issues were the gubernatorial race, the jail tax, and the proposal to raise the minimum wage in Ohio.

JUSTICE CENTER RESEARCH
In 2006, GCCH recognized that many homeless individuals were constantly going in and out of jail. Through substantial research, we found 53 individuals who had been arrested six or more times between October 2005 and October 2006. They all had provided a social service agency as their address at least five times. In addition, close to 45% of their charges were minor misdemeanors, such as possession of an open flask or being in a park after hours. We concluded that these individuals are most likely to be chronically homeless. To help stop the “revolving door,” GCCH has developed a committee comprised of case managers, parole officers, outreach workers, and advocates. The committee has been meeting regularly and is currently discussing the next steps and possible solutions.

DAY LABOR ORGANIZING PROJECT
GCCH continues to collaborate with the Cincinnati Interfaith Worker Center to encourage day labor workers to advocate for improved working conditions and fair wages. Significant portions of homeless individuals work, but often the only jobs available to them are through day labor halls that provide low wages, inconsistent work, unsafe working conditions, and discriminatory and disrespectful working environments. In 2006, work began on city level legislation that would hold day labor halls accountable for their treatment of workers. Day labor workers began a speaker’s bureau so they can share their stories with legislators, schools, and faith groups. Further, several class action lawsuits that address failure to pay and dangerous working conditions were initiated. The group officially adopted the name the Day Labor Organizing Project (DLOP) and continues to meet regularly to address individual concerns as well as systemic change.

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

Helping homeless individuals advocate for themselves through local media.

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. (513) 921-1131, www.bethanyhouseservices.com.


Center for Independent Living Options provides vital resources and services to enable children and adults with disabilities, in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, to live and work independently in the community. (513) 241-2600, www.zilo.net.

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. (513) 381-6672, www.catsober.org.

Center for Respite Care provides housing for homeless individuals who are sick enough to be in the shelter, yet not sick enough to be hospitalized. (513) 621-1868.


City Gospel Mission provides daily meals, clothing days, overnight shelter, recovery programs, and other need-based services. (513) 241-5525, www.citygospelmission.com.

Drop Inn Center is a homeless shelter in Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. We provide treatment andhousing for low-income women and their children in a safe and supportive environment. (513) 961-4663, www.dropinn.org.


Franciscan Haircuts from the Heart restores dignity, self-respect and self-confidence to people who are homeless and poor through professional hair care. (513) 381-0111, www.haircutsfromheart.org.

Franciscan JPC Office works on supports and advocates for various social justice issues in Cincinnati. (513) 721-4700.

Green Place Catholic Worker House where women - with or without children - who are in transition from homelessness can find temporary residence in an atmosphere of hospitality and hope and receive the support they need to move forward and achieve their goals and dreams. (513) 681-2365

Greater Cincinnati Oral Health Council provides or arranges for dental disease prevention and treatment services for low-income or homeless individuals and other special needs populations. (513) 621-0248.

Hamilton County ADAS Beard plans, funds and monitors public alcohol and drug treatment, prevention and education services for the citizens of Hamilton County. (513) 621-7202, www.hamilton-co.org/adas.

Hamilton County Department of 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. (513) 946-4888, www.hamilton-co.org/commdev.

Hamilton County Tuberculosis Control provides services to prevent the spread of tuberculosis and treat persons who are infected. (513) 946-7610, www.hcph.hamilton-co.org.

Healing Connections provides quality employment and support for women seeking self-sufficiency and competent paraprofessional home care services to persons who are underserved by existing programs, especially the elderly poor. (513) 751-0600, www.healing-connection.org.

Health Resource Center offers adult urgent care medical services and full mental health treatment by appointment. The clinic serves as an access point for the homeless and those without health insurance. (513) 241-1064.


Interfaith Hospitality Network teams homeless families with volunteers from 50 area churches, 16 host congregations and 34 support congregations to provide food and shelter. (513) 427-1100, www.mtsдобхрхp organiseIH.html.

Joseph House for Homeless Veterans helps men and women recover from alcoholism and drug addiction by providing outreach, treatment, counseling and housing in a safe, supportive, abstinence-based environment. (513) 241-2965, www.josephhouse.net.


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. (513) 241-9400, www.lasci.org.

Lighthouse Youth Services provides comprehensive social services designed to encourage good citizenship, responsible behavior and self-reliance. (513) 961-4080, www.lys.org.

MAM 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 illnesses. (513) 948-3094, www.nami-hc.org.

Our Daily Bread provides a warm meal and supportive services in a safe place to all who come. (513) 621-6364, www.ourdailybread.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. (513) 381-1171, www.overtherhine.org.

Over the Rhine/Walnut Hills Soup Kitchen works to alleviate hunger and promote socialization among those living in poverty and homelessness and low income situations. (513) 961-1983.

Peaslee Neighborhood Center works to welcome and nurture the involvement of the neighborhood in building a stronger, healthier community. (513) 621-5514, www.overtherhine.org/peaslee/

People Working Cooperatively performs essential home repairs and services so that low-income homeowners can remain in their homes living independently in a safe, sound environment. (513) 351-7901, www.pwchomerepairs.org.

Project Connect Homeless Childrens Fund keeps children experiencing homelessness connected to their education by providing supplies, transportation, uniforms, and enrichment opportunities in summer, after-school, and shelter tutoring programs. (513) 242-0000, www.pcfund.org.

Rape Crisis and Abuse Center provides crisis intervention and support services for direct and indirect victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking. (513) 872-8359, www.racrisiscrisisabusecenter.org.

Salvation Army provides a wide range of supportive services, including emergency shelter, disaster relief, and outreach. (513) 762-5600, www.thesalvationarmy.org.

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. (513) 562-3884, www.svdpcincinnati.org.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a community of volunteers who are dedicated to feeding the hungry and providing dignified hospitality to the poor. (513) 381-4941.

Tender Mercies provides housing and individualized supportive services to homeless persons with histories of mental illness. (513) 721-8666, www.tendermerces.org.

Transitions, Inc. provides a variety of services for people in Northern Kentucky to help them overcome chemical dependency and stay clean and sober. (859) 491-4435, www.transitionsky.org.


Welcome House 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. (859) 431-8717, www.welcomehouseky.org/index.htm.

Unaudited figures for fiscal year ending December 31, 2006

GCCH contracts with the Affordable Housing Advocates to house and pay the AHA staff. AHA pays the staff through GCCH. Also, partners in the statewide VISTA agreement pay Americorps through GCCH. GCCH does not receive any City, State, or Federal Funding.

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.

Individual Members (at a minimum of a $50 donation) receive a one-year subscription to Streetvibes, and our quarterly newsletter.

If you are interested in an individual or organizational membership please contact the Coalition at 513.421.7803

Please consider making a contribution today!

Join the Fight to End Homelessness

The more support we have from the community, the further our efforts reach.

YES! I want to end homelessness in Cincinnati!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

☐ $25  ☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $150  ☐ Other $________

☐ Enclosed is my individual membership (minimum of $50 including a one-year subscription to Streetvibes.

I would like to receive more information about:

☐ Speaker’s Bureau  ☐ Action Alerts and Action Committees  ☐ National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project

Please fill out and return to:
Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless
117 E. 12th Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202

Thank you for giving generously!
i don’t expect to be patient until there is HOUSING NOW for all.
i fully intend to dream of happiness when I sleep...
food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, equality, greenspace, and peace for all...

and meanwhile, awake to live as unacceptably, noncalmly, unpleasantly, dislikeably, impatiently, loudly, disrespectfully, and disruptively, and as contagiously collectively as I am able as long as is necessary.

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.