

THE ADVOCATE

CROSSROADS

spring 2010

urban center

Homelessness on the rise

“May we all be the instrument for the tomorrow of a city that will not lack adequate humane shelter, food, and basic healthcare.”

These were the words of Rev. Eun-Sang Lee as he stood outside the Regis Hotel in March. Rev. Lee offered a blessing to the tenants of the Regis Hotel, who were being evicted that week.

He knew many of them could end up homeless.

Rev. Lee, pastor of First United Methodist Church, joined other Crossroads advocates and volunteers in drawing attention to the injustice being done to our neighbors.

The tenants of the Regis Hotel had relied on that building for affordable housing and a sense of community. Now that community was being disbanded. The building would be shut down.

At that time, there were 8,401 people on the waiting list for public housing or a voucher at the Housing Authority of Salt Lake City. Affordable housing options were scarce.

Crossroads staff frequently met with residents of the Regis Hotel to discuss how to prevent eviction, or at

least postpone it till warmer weather. We also continually kept the issue in the media. It is an issue that could have been swept under the rug, but we refused to let that happen.

Similarly, Crossroads tackled another problem that could easily be ignored: General Assistance (GA). GA helps low-income people with disabilities by providing \$261 per month, plus aid in filling out applica-

“May you be peaceful and happy. May you know how to look at yourself with the eyes of understanding and compassion. May you be safe from all harms.” –Rev. Eun-Sang Lee

tions for federal disability benefits.

This assistance often makes the difference between someone who becomes homeless and someone who is able to maintain shelter.

During the same time that Regis Hotel residents faced homelessness by being evicted, GA participants faced homelessness with the potential of major cuts to program funding. The Department of Workforce Services had already stopped accepting new applicants on January 1.

Later that month, the Utah State

Legislative Session began. Crossroads staff and volunteers spoke extensively with members of the legislature’s Executive Appropriations Committee about the importance of funding this program. In a huge victory during the last week of the legislative session, GA was given an additional \$2 million for fiscal year 2011.

Because Crossroads lifted up the needs of GA participants, those participants could not be overlooked.

As an organization that works with and for low-income people, we continue to highlight issues that easily get ignored. Our effort takes many forms. Perhaps

it’s fighting an ordinance that limits free speech and targets homeless panhandlers. Perhaps it’s working to start a jobs program with local employers. Perhaps it’s ensuring that childless adults can get food stamps for more than just three months out of 36 months.

In these and many other ways, Crossroads continues to address homelessness. We join with all our volunteers, supporters, and allies in striving to be “the instrument of a better tomorrow.”



March 8, 2010: Rev. Eun-Sang Lee, member of the Crossroads Board of Directors, offers a blessing to the residents of the Regis Hotel prior to their eviction. Also pictured, L to R: Jessica Tew, intern for the Coalition of Religious Communities; Sarah Martindell, US-2 missionary serving at Crossroads; Tim Funk, housing advocate at Crossroads. Photo by Keith Johnson of the Deseret News, reprinted with permission.

STATISTICS

3.2% Utah unemployment rate, Feb. 2008

7.1% Utah unemployment rate, Feb. 2010

source: U.S. Bureau of Labor

55,609 Utah households participating in food stamp program, Jan. 2008

99,469 Utah households participating in food stamp program, Jan. 2010

source: Utahns Against Hunger

Co-op expands, explores

by Bryce Anderson, Co-op IT/Communications Manager

What are we?

The Community Food Co-op of Utah, a project of Crossroads Urban Center, provides quality food each month at up to 50% savings. It began in 2006 with this simple idea: Provide quality, healthy food at substantial savings through cooperative purchasing, build a sense of community by bringing people together, and promote volunteer service.

Who do we serve?

As we like to say: "You eat? You qualify!" But our goal is to be an exceptional source of healthy, inexpensive food for working families on tight budgets.

To order from the Co-op or find out more, visit www.foodco-op.net

So what's new?

New options

To supplement our traditional program of monthly food ordering, we're preparing to roll out our Mobile Market program. Patterned after programs like Share Express in Wisconsin, the Mobile Market will be a traveling market that makes scheduled stops at locations around northern Utah.

Because the Mobile Market will be cash-and-carry, and because shoppers will be able to select the exact meat/produce they want, we expect this program to be more convenient for working families.

We'll have more information about this program in the coming months.

New walk-in cooler

We got a new freezer about two years ago, and since then it's been bugging us for a little brother. Soon we'll build a cooler to house our fruits and veggies. The new cooler will let us store produce for the Mobile Market and manage our inventory better during the summer months.

New staff

Since its inception, the Co-op has been supported by volunteers from the AmeriCorps VISTA program (Volunteers in Service to America). We've been blessed with many full-time volunteers who have used their time and talents to make our program a success.

Now that the term of VISTA support is winding down, the Co-op will be looking to replace some of these VISTAs with paid staff positions.

Word from the Board Chair

Here at Crossroads we know that those whom we are privileged to serve often live in harm's way, where one setback can cause their lives to collapse, dispatching them toward despair--and at times even death. It is a sober reality of their world that all too often they walk in peril, always close to stumbling.

Yet in this warming season there is reason--as always--to hope. Despite unprecedented demands on our resources, we continue to serve our friends in need. Of course, there is never enough in terms of total needs and what we would *like* to do. Yet through the caring and expertise of our great staff and volunteers, we persevere in our mission and hope for better times ahead.

As always, our ship's captain, Glenn Bailey, continues to steer a worthy course through choppy waters and unseen currents. And our Board in its excellent way continues to keep our enterprise functional, stable, and

creative. Recently we have added several dynamic new Board members, and look forward to their input and expertise. The editor for this edition of *The Advocate*, Sarah Martindell, will depart this summer after having completed two years of service with us as a US-2 United Methodist missionary. On behalf of everyone here, I'd like to thank Sarah and wish her well in the future.

In one of his famous novels, the author John Updike wrote that times are always desperate, albeit in different ways. Let us hope, as the weather slowly warms, that some of the burdens may be lifted from those we serve. And for those who remain burdened, may we continue to help in ways that fall within our purview: to lend a hand to those who seek our help, and to see in them the same dignity and worth we see in all our fellow citizens. Happy spring, everyone!

—Kris Koford, Chair

Crossroads Board of Directors



LETTER CARRIERS FOOD DRIVE

Don't forget to leave canned goods next to your mailbox on Saturday, May 8! Letter carriers will pick up donated food from all zipcodes, but only food from the following zipcodes will go directly to Crossroads: 84101, 84102, 84103, 84110, 84111, 84145.

Worker's Defense Committee

Each week, Crossroads will host a workshop on wage theft and rights in the workplace. Concerned with worker victimization, we will address abuse of low-income laborers. We want to ensure that all people receive fair wages for their labor. Aid will be available in English and Spanish. People can arrive at Crossroads anytime between 5-7 p.m., each Thursday from April 29 on.

For more information about this program, call Bill Tibbitts at 801-364-7765, ext. 131.

THE ADVOCATE

is a periodic publication of Crossroads Urban Center

our mission

Crossroads Urban Center is a nonprofit, grassroots organization that assists and organizes low-income, disabled, and minority Utahns to meet basic survival needs and to address problems affecting quality of life.

credits

Board Chair: Kris Koford
Executive Director: Glenn Bailey
Newsletter Editor: Sarah Martindell



ABOVE: Jessica Tew, CORC intern, poses with Representative Brian King. **TOP RIGHT,** L to R: Rev. Libby Hunter, Father Ed Howlett, Gail Kass, and Marge Tucker gather for Episcopal Day on the Hill. **NEAR RIGHT:** Marion Lloyd shakes the hand of Senator Allen Christensen as fellow constituent Carolyn Somer looks on during Ogden's Faith Day on the Hill. Photos courtesy of Jessica Tew.

Faith groups unite on Capitol Hill

by Jessica Tew, intern placed at Crossroads through the U's Hinckley Institute of Politics

As an intern from the University of Utah's College of Social Work I had the privilege of working with the Coalition of Religious Communities (CORC) during the 2010 legislative session.

CORC members represent numerous faith communities across the state. During the legislature, they come to the Capitol twice a week to participate in Faith Days on the Hill. It's remarkable to see so many diverse religions leave their differences behind and unite to advocate for social justice--truly a magnificent example of a multi-faith response to poverty!

For the past 15 years, CORC members have been a powerful presence at Utah's Capitol, representing those populations that are often marginalized and oppressed. Presbyterian CORC member Dick Wunder says, "In Presbyterian doctrine, one of the Six Great Ends of the Church is 'the promotion of social righteousness.' This is the one to which I'm particularly called. One of the strains that runs through all the Bible is God's command to attend to

the poor. This is especially [evident in] CORC's work, so it keeps me coming in spite of frustrations with the legislature. This year we seemed to be mostly concerned with damage control, with good success!"

During the 2010 state legislative session, CORC members tackled over 15 different bills. We were successful in fighting to avoid cuts to the General Assistance program and implementing new regulations on payday lenders. Best of all, through diligent pressure on legislators, we ensured that the sales tax on food will not be increased this year!

Long before the session began, CORC was mobilizing faith and community leaders to add their signatures to a letter urging lawmakers not to raise the sales tax on food. At the end of January, the sign-on letter contained 66 names and agencies from all over the state. We distributed the six-page letter to all 103 legislators. Our voice--*your* voice--was heard!

I truly believe that our efforts were a success because of CORC members' determination and commitment to constructive change.

Interested in getting involved in CORC's social justice efforts? We meet once a month to discuss ways to address poverty on a systemic level.

Salt Lake City area meetings:
3rd Thursday of each month
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
261 South 900 East

Ogden area meetings: 3rd Thursday of each month
11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Ogden UCC
3350 S. Harrison Blvd.

Questions? Contact CORC Director Linda Hilton:
linda@crossroads-u-c.org
801-364-7765, ext. 133

Become a fan of the Coalition of Religious Communities on Facebook! See page 4.

Crossroads calendar

Thursday, May 6

Annual Meeting of the Coalition of Religious Communities

5:30-6 p.m. registration/light dinner, 6 p.m. official start time

Dean's Hall of St. Mark's Cathedral, 231 E 100 S, SLC

Saturday, May 8

Letter Carriers Food Drive - Remember to set donations of canned goods by your mailbox (see page 2).

Wednesday, July 7

Annual Utah Poverty Partnership Barbecue - 6-8 p.m.

Liberty Park, Northeast corner

Saturday, August 21

Annual Utah Poverty Partnership Poverty Summit

registration at 8:30 a.m.

official time 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Dean's Hall of St. Mark's Cathedral, 231 E 100 S, SLC

For more details about any of these events, please call Sarah Martindell at 801-364-7765, ext. 130, or e-mail sarah@crossroads-u-c.org



Find us on Facebook!

Crossroads Urban Center and CORC each have their own fan page on Facebook! If you have a Facebook account, you can become our fan and see all our latest updates! Get the link by going to Crossroads' home page:

www.crossroads-u-c.org



PANTRY DONATIONS

347 South 400 East, SLC

Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

801-364-7765



THRIFT STORE DONATIONS

1385 W. Indiana Ave. (850 S.), SLC

Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

801-359-8837

Thank you for your generous contributions!

PANTRY NEEDS:

canned:

beans, chili, fruit, meat (chicken, corned beef, stew, tuna, Vienna sausage), milk, pasta, peanut butter, pork & beans, soup, tomatoes, vegetables

dry:

beans, boxed meals, cereal, mac & cheese, milk, pasta, rice, snacks (granola bars, saltine crackers, etc.)

miscellaneous needs:

all sizes of juice
hotel-size shampoo, lotion, soap, etc.
baby formula
baby diapers, pull-ups
razors
toothpaste
toothbrushes
toilet paper
deodorant
feminine hygiene products

THRIFT STORE NEEDS:

towels
kids' clothes
men's clothes
women's clothes (size 12 and larger)
pots/pans/ovenware
plates/bowls/silverware
blankets/bedding/sheets/pillows
new underwear and socks

The thrift store always needs items in the following categories to sell in order to help raise revenue and continue providing service:

- working TVs, radios, microwaves, telephones, or electronics of any kind
- any collectibles: china, dolls, glassware (including milkglass), silverplate, etc.
- books & small appliances or anything else that can be sold to help raise money!

No furniture, please.



Salt Lake City, UT 84111
347 South 400 East



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Salt Lake City, UT
Permit No. 2267