



# *the* ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCATE

Brought to you by the Anti-Hunger Action Committee

June 2005

## AHAC Launches Open Arts Program



During the month of May the Anti-Hunger Action Committee launched a new program that we are calling, "Open Arts". The goal of Open Arts is to create a space where people who enjoy creating art but currently do not have supplies or space can gather to make art. This project was made possible by the generosity of private donors who helped AHAC obtain art supplies and the good people at First United Methodist Church who have graciously agreed to allow us to use the basement in their church.

During the coming months this newsletter will feature artwork created during Open Arts. We hope to host an auction of Open Arts artwork during the month of September, with half the money going to the artist and half the money going to buy new supplies and support Open Arts. If you are interested in learning more about Open Arts come join us this Tuesday between 1:30 and 4:30 in the basement of First United Methodist Church, on the corner of 200 East and 200 South.

### Do you ride the bus?

Are you interested in getting more involved in AHAC's efforts to make UTA work better for low income people?

Then you should come to  
**AHAC's Six Month  
UTA Strategy Session**  
June 13 at 5 PM  
at Crossroads Urban Center

For more information about this strategy session contact Bill Germundson at 364-7765 extension 130



# Cuts to the Federal Budget Will Hurt Utah's Low Income Citizens!

by Laine Gardinier

The recent cuts to the Federal budget involving Medicaid coverage will cost us-- not just as individuals but as a society in general. We need to impress upon our elected officials that their help and attention is needed here, and now!

While we pay dollars for pills that cost a few cents to produce, drug companies are finding lucrative ways to take advantage of tax "holidays"-periods of time granted them to pay lower taxes on overseas business- and charging the consumers more for the drugs than in almost all other industrialized nations. Over 60% of the drug companies total (global) profits are from sales in the United States. We are padding the wallets of these giant corporations, our government is paving the way and now our most vulnerable citizens are at higher risk than ever.

Please do your part to call or write to these leaders, and also please help when a larger scale action takes place, if you can. Everyone will make a valuable contribution and a difference! Here is what we could tell them: Telling Senator Hatch we believe drug companies should decide not take these tax holidays, instead lowering drug prices, and that they could also save us money by advertising their drugs to doctors, not us, the consumers. We support Senator Bennett, and want to see President Bush's idea of cutting farm subsidies as a way to fill the budget gap that endangers our food stamp programs.



**Medicaid faces \$10 billion in cuts. AHAC and other community groups have begun collecting signatures on postcards to Senator Hatch asking him to protect people, not drug companies, when deciding where to make cuts. Rudy Roca has pledged to collect signatures on more than 300 postcards and is well on the way to reaching his goal.**



**Artwork by Rose Shorty**

# AHAC MEMBERS URGE SENATOR BENNETT TO FIGHT HUNGER, PROTECT FOOD STAMPS

by Lou Anne Stevenson

I am one of the many people living in Utah who receive food stamps or some other form of government assistance. All of our situations may vary, but regardless of our circumstances we all share one thing in common. We either have no income or incomes are too low to be able to cover all of the most basic needs of for food, shelter and medical care.

Studies have shown Utah to rank in the top five in the nation to have people at risk for hunger. This means that almost 350,000 Utahns are going without food or some other crucial need all or at least part of the time. There are many factors which play into this. The main ones, I believe, are that for one thing Utah is a right to work state and pays some of the lowest wages in the country, combined with the tradition in the local culture to have larger than average families.

Larger families and good healthcare brings about a larger population of elderly and retired people, and also add to the growing number of people with disabilities. The cost of living in Utah is one of the highest when compared with average household income, though it may appear lower when compared to prices in some other states.

## Jokes of the Month

by: Douglas Cotant

Know why the Elephant crossed the road?

Cause the chicken retired!



Putting all these factors together definitely makes Utah a welfare state. Unless or until these factors change, many Utah people will need to be on some sort of assistance to make ends meet. Who knows, maybe with the war and the economy the way it is, who else will be out of work and also needing assistance.

Right now, Congress is deciding whether to cut food stamps or farm subsidies. I am a member of the Anti-Hunger Action Committee and we want to work hard to stomp out hunger. Since hunger is an issue that we all face, we urge you to join in the fight against hunger by calling Senator Bennett and asking him not to cut food stamps but to cut farm subsidies instead. Our lives and futures hang in the balance. Thank you for joining us in the fight against hunger, and may we all live long and prosperous lives.

Save the date!  
**The Third Annual AHAC Barbecue**  
will take place on Tuesday July 12  
at Liberty Park

To learn more this BBQ call AHAC at  
364-7765.



It's not too late to get your **AHAC t-shirt!** We still have plenty of shirts left and you'll want to be sure you have one for our next action! They are \$5 and available in the office.



# IS ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT?



On May 26 Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson hosted a forum that asked the question, "Is access to healthcare a basic human right?" Several AHAC members were present at this forum. Two AHAC members, Cassandra Condor and Darla Ball spoke during the open microphone portion of this event. AHAC organizer, Bill Germundson was one of the featured panelists. Bill spoke about the cuts that the Medicaid Program is facing at the federal level and his hope that Utah's Senator Hatch will protect people, not drug companies when deciding where to cut money from the Medicaid budget. This forum was broadcast live on KCPW.



**The *Anti-Hunger Advocate*** is a monthly newsletter of the Anti-Hunger Action Committee (AHAC).

**Our Mission:** The Anti-Hunger Action Committee is a membership organization composed of and led by food pantry clients and their friends.

- We unite many different kinds of people served by food pantries in order to increase community involvement of low income Utahns.
- We educate Salt Lake County residents about available resources and issues facing food pantry clients.
- We organize food pantry clients and their friends to take action on their own behalf.
- We promote solutions to problems that cause hunger and poverty in the lives of our members.

**Our Supporters:** AHAC receives funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the United Methodist Church's Domestic Hunger and Poverty Program, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Hunger Grant Program, the United Church of Christ Hunger Action Fund, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger and the Crossroads Urban Center.

**Submissions:** To submit an item to the newsletter, please contact AHAC at Crossroads Urban Center, 364-7765.

Previous issues of the newsletter are available either at Crossroads, or on-line at: [www.crossroads-u-c.org](http://www.crossroads-u-c.org)