

the

# Anti-Hunger Advocate

brought to you by the Anti-Hunger Action Committee

December 2008

## AHAC members rock the web



ABOVE: Dennis Keating (L) and Lou Anne Stevenson (R) harmonize on Dennis' original song "Basic Healthcare is Not a Luxury."

LEFT: AHAC members join the chorus to record Dennis' song for the web. See story on page 2.

## Medicaid cuts benefit roads, not clients

by Doug Cotant, AHAC member

Several weeks ago, I received a letter from Medicaid, informing me that "due to budget cutbacks," Medicaid will no longer cover vision (eye exams and glasses). This letter, I believe, was the result of our state legislators pecking away at the healthcare budget—for example, cutting Medicaid and other healthcare services from the state budget—while turning around and putting \$20 million into a plan for the expansion of Legacy Parkway.

Friends! Neighbors! Legislators! Lend me your ears! Listen carefully to what I say! Why would you folks want to take money away from an important need like healthcare...then turn around

and put that money into roads? How stupid! How dumb! And how absent-minded can you get? You know full well that these healthcare services are needed.

Now let me ask you a question: How do you think our motorists would react

**"Why would you want to take money away from an important need like healthcare...then turn around and put that money into roads?"**

if they found out that the Legacy Parkway could not be finished because those people who are building it got sick and needed a doctor, or had an infected tooth, or needed eye surgery—only to learn that their health benefits, as well

as the health for their aging parents, were cut off? What if their bosses received phone calls saying, "Sorry, can't work today. My parents lost their health insurance, so I have to stay home and care for them, and pay their medical bills out of my pocket"?

Did you hear the story about the man whose leg was severed and needed to be reattached? Well, he went to see his doctor, but the doctor said, "Sorry, you have no health insurance money, and the state of Utah won't cover the payments. I can't help you."

SCARY, ISN'T IT?

Any questions? E-mail me at: [dlcotant1947@msn.com](mailto:dlcotant1947@msn.com)

# YouTube gets a taste of AHAC

by Sarah Martindell, social justice advocate at Crossroads

AHAC's members have shown their capabilities in many realms, including protesting social injustice and talking to their legislators. Now they prove they can star in their own music videos.

At the November AHAC meeting, members performed the chorus of a song entitled "Basic Healthcare is Not a Luxury," with music and lyrics written by Dennis Keating. The song pleads with legislators to make the right decisions.

Dennis' back-up singers (and dancers) included Darla Ball, Doug Cotant, David Hughes, Don Reifsnider, Faina Raik, Lou Anne Stevenson, and Margo Westley. Thanks to all who participated in the production!

Dennis wasn't the only AHAC member whose talents were highlighted online this month. Doug Cotant, author of the newsletter "joke of the month,"

You can find these videos on the AHAC blog:

<http://www.communitysolutions.blogspot.com/>

If you want the YouTube link to the music video, here's the first take:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdepcBryDNw&feature=email>

The second take, with umbrellas:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdepcBryDNw&feature=email>

To find Doug's joke, go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-gzdPQihUU>

Stay tuned for more videos from the culture committee of AHAC!

*Basic healthcare is not a luxury  
People are dying in the land of the free  
Those decisions that you make  
Are really great  
So please...don't make a big mistake  
So please...don't make a big mistake*

debuted his comedy routine in a new venue. His joke and Dennis' song are featured on two different sites, AHAC's blog and YouTube.

## Healthcare action step

This month we're signing an online petition to expand healthcare for more and more Americans. Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts is working with other senators to put together a bill that will make healthcare affordable for all Americans. We are asking our own senator, Orrin Hatch, to help get this bill passed.

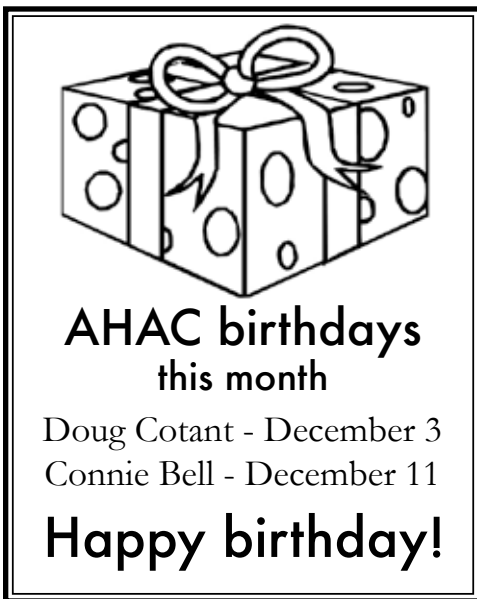
The bill will ensure that all children and low-income adults have health insurance. (Currently, Utah has the 10th highest percentage of uninsured children in the United States, according to

"Left Behind: Utah's Uninsured Children," from Families USA, November 2008.)

You can help! Sign the online petition that urges Senator Hatch to work with Senator Kennedy on this bill. You can find the link by going to

[www.utahpovertypartnership.org](http://www.utahpovertypartnership.org) and clicking on "step of the month."

In a similar action step, last month we delivered a stack of postcards to Senator Hatch's office. The postcards conveyed the same message as the petition. See story on page 3.



## Do you have these dates on your calendar?

**Tuesday, December 16**

AHAC holiday party, with food and singing!

347 South 400 East

Salt Lake City

5:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, January 27**

protest up at the Capitol--in costume! meet at 1:30 in the cafeteria

We'll be wearing surgeons' masks and carrying cardboard axes in our demonstration.

All are welcome to attend these gatherings. If you have questions about the meetings, the newsletter, or how you can help fight for low-income people, call Sarah at 364-7765, ext. 130.

# Volunteer spotlight: Laine Gardinier



Poverty summit, 9-6-08: Laine Gardinier looks off into the distance, daydreaming about more ways she can volunteer for AHAC.

interview by Sarah Martindell, social justice advocate at Crossroads

*What do you do to help out with AHAC?* I [go] to as many actions and events as possible; I tell others who we are and what we do; and I am now helping coordinate other volunteers.

*Why are you involved with AHAC?* I am concerned about inequality issues and believe 100% in the work that we do to help low-income people in Utah.

*What do you like to do in your free time?* I like outdoor activities and exercise, thrift shopping, listening to music, and taking in information--in any form!

*Describe your ideal day, and how you would spend it.* Lazy--lying on a warm beach with an "umbrella" drink and a crossword puzzle, listening to the waves and birds.

*What are your hopes for AHAC's future?* I hope that AHAC continues to influ-

ence our leaders to use their votes to help and integrate Utah's citizens, not harm and exclude (through policy).

*If you could convey a message to society, what would you want to say?* I would tell them to treat everyone with kindness, dignity and tolerance--because we are all just the same below the surface.

*What are your goals for the next five years?* I plan to finish my Masters of Social Work, become licensed, and either stay in social justice-related fields or go into counseling. I plan to remain involved with AHAC and Crossroads, as this is where I have found the best use of my time outside the classroom, and have met really great people who care about others like I do.

*Congratulations, Laine, on being volunteer of the month! You've earned it!*

## Postcards deliver clear message to Hatch

by Sarah Martindell, social justice advocate at Crossroads

On the day before Thanksgiving, members of the Anti-Hunger Action Committee delivered a stack of 345 signed postcards to Senator Orrin Hatch's office. The postcards carried the same message as the online petition carries (see "Healthcare action step," page 2). The sentences were simple:

*Dear Senator Hatch:*

*Your friend, Senator Ted Kennedy, has pledged to sponsor a bill that will make healthcare more affordable for hundreds of thousands of Utahns. Given Senator Kennedy's health problems, it is possible that this will be his final, and most important bill. Please help Senator Kennedy to get this bill passed as soon as possible.*

Participating in the delivery were AHAC members Darla Ball, Doug Cotant, Laine Gardinier, David Hughes, and Don Reifsnider.

Some AHAC members helped get the postcards signed by Crossroads Urban Center food pantry clients, or by friends and neighbors. Darla Ball spent time in the lobby of Crossroads, asking for

they delivered on November 26 were just the beginning. We will continue collecting signed postcards from food pantry clients and anyone we know. We have over a thousand postcards left, to demonstrate just how important healthcare is to us.

How can you help? Volunteer for an hour in the Crossroads lobby, collecting signatures. Come to Crossroads for a stack of postcards to take back to your neighborhood, church, family, school, club, etc. Forward the online petition link to everyone in your address book (see "Healthcare action step," page 2). And most importantly, join us the next time we deliver the

postcards to Senator Hatch's office!

For other volunteer ideas, contact Bill Tibbitts at 364-7765, ext. 131 or bill@crossroads-u-c.org

**Thank you to all who volunteered for our postcard campaign:**

**Darla Ball  
Doug Cotant  
Laine Gardinier  
David Hughes  
Don Reifsnider  
Rudy Roca  
Lou Anne Stevenson**

signatures. David Hughes, Rudy Roca, and Lou Anne Stevenson also devoted their spare time to collecting signatures from the community.

The work isn't over! The 345 postcards



# **HOLIDAY PARTY**

**Tuesday, December 16  
347 S. 400 E.  
5:00 p.m.**

**bring food for the potluck!  
bring your voice for singing!  
bring your smile for laughing!**



**The party is hosted by the Anti-Hunger Action  
Committee, but the invitation is open to anyone!**