Evening Agenda

Complimentary Wine Tasting  6:00-7:00

6:45  Welcome

7:00  Dinner

7:30  Poetry Reading
      1st place winner

7:40  Councilwoman Phyllis Cleveland
      Ward 5

7:50  A Look Back at NEOCH in 2005
      Teri D. Horne

8:00  Poetry Reading
      2nd place winner

8:15  A Look Forward at NEOCH in 2006
      Brian Davis

8:30  Award Presentation
      Kelly Burd and Dave Westcott

8:45  Drawing of 50/50 Raffle Winner
      Denise Sobieski

8:50  Drawing of Raffle Items

9:00  Acknowledgements and Closings
      Margaret Wilson
Six years ago, I learned about the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless when Executive Director Brian Davis and a formerly homeless member of the Street Voices Speakers Bureau came to speak to my class at the Case Western Reserve School of Law. Their information and the organization’s mission made quite an impression on me; two months later I became a NEOCH AmeriCorps*VISTA as a legal intern for the summer of 2000. Since then, I have served on the Board of Trustees to help expand the visibility of the Coalition and amplify the voice of those experiencing homelessness in Northeast Ohio.

Last year saw economic hardship that continues to impact and downsize the nonprofit sector in Northeast Ohio. Yet, despite tight budgetary constraints, NEOCH sustained strong programs and furthered its mission while NEOCH staff and Board worked together to address short-term financial needs and ensure the long-term viability of the organization and its mission.

The collaborative effort and commitment paid off; at the close of the year the Coalition began a search for its first development staff person, who was hired early in 2006. The Homeless Grapevine newspaper benefited from hiring support staff and continues to thrive. The Bridging the Gap program facilitated housing for over 100 clients last year. Following Hurricane Katrina, Coalition staff recruited and trained volunteers to help the Community Voice Mail staff distribute voice mail to people who relocated to Cleveland. The Cleveland Community Voice Mail program, in its sixth year of existence, won the 2005 Community Voice Mail Golden Phone award by the Community Voice Mail Federation.

Two federally funded programs, AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA, provided full-time members to support the work of the Coalition. AmeriCorps Service members recruited and coordinated over 100 volunteers to support the Coalition’s daily operations and special events. VISTA members supported existing programs such as the Street Voices Speaker’s Bureau, which provided more than 30 community presentations last year.

The Cleveland Homeless Legal Assistance Program, which I had the opportunity to help create as an AmeriCorps*VISTA, celebrates its fifth year of operation in 2006. The CHLAP program was conceived as a way to help people address legal problems that cause or perpetuate their situations of poverty and homelessness. Since its inception, CHLAP has helped over 2,000 individuals, expanded its volunteer base and created clinics with resources that help clients prepare their cases in the community.

The Coalition’s unique strength is in its advocacy and civil rights work. Regular advocacy meetings are held with homeless people to ensure that the Coalition’s efforts in the community are informed by the perspectives, concerns and needs of those experiencing homelessness. Last year, in response to numerous complaints, we worked to address critical problems within the Community Women’s Shelter through correspondence with City Council members and negotiation with shelter staff. NEOCH also worked with other Ohio organizations to create a statewide Coalition, through which they will collaborate on civil rights issues and legislation impacting the homeless and at-risk population across the state.

We pledge to remain vigilant and sensitive to the needs of our constituents. We will continue to listen to homeless people and respond to their needs with our advocacy and programs.

Sincerely,
Rev. Kelly Burd
NEOCH Board President
Special Appreciations

Annual Event Committee Members

Staff

Special Thanks

Thank you to Board Members for Raffle and Door Prizes

Wine Experts
James and Margaret Wilson
Robert and Elizabeth Sobieski
Jean Andolsen
Keith and Kathy Smyph Rasey

Wine Connoisseurs
Kelly Burd
Johanna Keenan
Marsha Bufford

Teachers Education Department CSU
Charles and Jill Royer
Christopher and Beth Karr

Johanna Keenan
Meg Wilson
Denise Sobieski-Cooper
Dave Westcott
Teri D. Horne
Massimo Da Milano
Broadway Angels
Brent Stowe
Heidelberg Distributing Company
Jill Royer
Margaret Wilson
David Westcott
Chris Karr
Cindy Miller
Kelly Burd
Marcia Bufford
Valerie Robinson

Charles and Jill Royer
Christopher and Beth Karr
Over the past four years at NEOCH, my eyes have been open and my heart humbled. It is an honor to work for an organization that gives a voice to those who are voiceless. As an AmeriCorps*VISTA I was really able to dive in and talk with the individuals NEOCH serves, but I never knew as a VISTA everything NEOCH did to serve the community. As the Director of Operations, I am responsible for the oversight for Cleveland Community Voice Mail, Bridging the Gap, the Cleveland Homeless Legal Assistance Program, and assisting in raising funds for each program.

Although searching for sustainable funding for these programs has been extremely difficult, it is rewarding to know that each program provides vital services to homeless people in Cleveland that they cannot receive anywhere else. In 2005, we had amazing program directors, which stepped up while I was on maternity leave. They had to adjust and they did an awesome job housing over 100 people, migrating over to a new system, and serving over 600 individuals, it was quite a year!

One component of NEOCH that I believe is major but doesn’t get the recognition, which it deserves, is Street Voices. Street Voices is NEOCH’s Speakers Bureau that really addresses one of the main reason some folks remain homeless. Street Voices is a partnership between NEOCH and homeless/formerly homeless individuals. Street Voices educates religious groups, school children and youth, as well as community leaders about the hardships facing homeless people and the frustrating difficulty in finding a path off of the streets. The audiences benefit because they are able to: put a human face on homelessness, build bridges with the homeless/formerly homeless presenter and find out ways to take action.

Education is the key and Street Voices provides a safe avenue to facilitate dialogue between the housed and homeless Cuyahoga communities. This is a great program, but fellow advocates we truly have our work cut out for us, the road is still bumpy and there are many with the NIMBY mindset. However, I have hope when I watch the faces of the audience. At the beginning of the presentation, some audience members appear cold and uncaring and by the end something has changed and they are warm and understanding. I know that Street Voices can help to break down barriers and dispel stereotypes about those who have experienced homelessness; it helped me.

Talking about your mistakes, something that may have been a devastating experience in your life, is a hard task. Our speakers are very brave and they amaze me with their stories, and to realize that in this unstable economy and the weather disasters, anyone of us could have been in their shoes. To listen about how they persevered humbles me each time and makes me want to work that much harder to reduce the number of people on the streets each and every day. I realize that it truly does take a village and everyone to help with this issue.

NEOCH needs the support of our membership and the community now more than ever. Invite Street Voices to your school, business, church, and organization meetings. We have to start somewhere. It can happen one presentation, one child, one adult at a time but it will happen. I look forward to 2006, this could be the year we dispel all myths and our community realizes, “We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly” - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Sincerely,
Teri D. Horne
CCVM

2005 was a challenging year yet rewarding year for CCVM. The program took a huge step towards the future by migrating to a Cisco Unity System. Through the assistance of the AmeriCorps National Service Program, CCVM were able to train all 75 participating agencies in both Lorain and Cuyahoga Counties. CCVM served over 2,400 clients in 2005, with 1,943 people obtaining employment and 1,456 people transitioned into housing.

As CCVM completed its fifth year of service to the community, it received congressional recognition from Dennis Kucinich. The program also received the national “Golden Phone” award for advocating on behalf of people in need given by the National Voice Mail Program. Closing out 2005 CCVM’s program director, Mike Gibbs, was voted onto the Community Voice Mail National Board of Directors.

Advocacy

NEOCH fought against the City of Cleveland panhandling ordinance. Every council member was facing re-election, which made it difficult to vote against the legislation. Activists were able to get the law to sunset in one year. Cleveland saw a continued loss of federal funding with public housing and direct homeless assistance decreasing in 2005. The Coalition hosted a series of advocacy meetings in 2005 that solicited comments and concerns from homeless people. The Coalition did a great deal of work in reforming the Community Women’s Shelter and did make progress on behalf of the women who stay at the shelter. The Coalition greatly improved its website to better educate the public including adding two blogs. NEOCH staged the largest homeless Memorial Day vigil in our 19-year history in collaboration with Care Alliance. Cleveland also saw the death of a homeless person on the streets from hypothermia along with the beating of a homeless man while he slept on Public Square, both in December. NEOCH worked with other Coalitions in the state to finalize an organization that now meets on a monthly basis to increase the capacity and coordinate advocacy efforts of the local Coalitions throughout the state.

AmeriCorps

In 2005, NEOCH had five members who competed their 1700 hours and received an education award. Members were divided among the CCVM, BTG and the Homeless Grapevine Programs. Overall the program provided an invaluable service to Cuyahoga County. Members assigned to BTG assisted in housing over 100 single men and women and 6 families. They created a Christmas toy drive and handed out toys to all of the families who were housed through the BTG program. They were able to gather items for the welcome home baskets and help find furniture for those in need. Members assigned to CCVM recruited and trained over 20 new agencies. They helped in the recruitment and training of volunteers to sign up the Katrina survivors who migrated to the Cleveland area, and provided them with 1-800 numbers so that they could communicate with their loved ones across the nation. Members at NEOCH recruited over 100 members during their term of service to help with various day to day operations and cleaning projects. They participated in several educational campaigns and taught life skills classes to homeless and formerly homeless individuals. Finally members printed 8 Homeless Grapevine newspapers, and recruited over 60 vendors to sell the paper.

Bridging the Gap

BTG staff said good luck to our Program Director, who moved to another state. Despite staff turnover and a drastic cut in personnel due to the ending of the AmeriCorps Making Connections program BTG accomplished a great deal in 2005. The Coalition established two new positions, Housing Placement Manager and Tenant Liaison. Ironically, the program that served 217 people and housed 123 individuals found itself homeless when the building they called home was closed. BTG continues to go to shelters to conduct intake, but they moved to the NEOCH main offices. BTG took a lead role in creating the first city wide website of affordable apartments, Housingcleveland.org. The website quickly grew to contain over 1,200 affordable units with 900 people a day visiting the site by the end of 2005. BTG increased the number of women and families served. In December, BTG delivered donated gifts to Continue Life and to all of the families BTG who recently moved into permanent housing.
In 2005, NEOCH had three great AmeriCorps*VISTA member in Cleveland. The VISTAs placed at NEOCH assisted with advocacy, civil rights agenda, and forwarding the goals of Bridging the Gap. One VISTA worked to establish a closer relationship with the local area churches to link homeless families with a support network. The BTG program constructed a life skills curriculum and put in place a protocol for service to those looking for housing. One of the AmeriCorps*VISTA program staff worked with the local advocates to assure that those re-entering do not become homeless. The VISTAs were also very helpful in constructing a resident council at the largest shelter in Cleveland. One of the other VISTAs helped to maintain the street voices speaker’s bureau programs.

CHLAP served 603 individuals, involving almost 700 legal issues, in 2005. The partnership with the Cleveland Bar Association continues to improve. CHLAP staff supervised 10 intakes sites in 2005, including a weekly intake at the May Dugan Center and Trinity Cathedral. Finding financial support from the legal community continues to be a struggle. However, CHLAP’s efforts in recruiting volunteer attorneys to staff the intake sites continue to be successful. Program staff started a Pro Se Divorce Clinic in 2005. CHLAP, Legal Aid and the Cleveland Bar Association are joint sponsors of the Clinic. The CHLAP lawyers also answered questions at the Convention Center for survivors from the disaster in the Gulf Coast.

2005 was a banner year for The Homeless Grapevine on a number of fronts. The Coalition was able to hire a Grapevine Operations Manager who has helped to move the paper to the next level. The paper moved to full-color production at the end of the year. The Grapevine also moved to full digital production of the paper, which will save valuable time and money long into the future. During the summer of 2005, Professor Yvonne Bruce from John Carroll University and the University of Akron, presided over largely informal discussion and writing sessions which increased the vendors’ interest in writing and participating in the production of the paper. At the end of the seminar, they published a “Letter to the Editor” voicing the concerns of the vendors of the vendors about a variety of issues. The Grapevine also started a weblog in 2005, which will provide another platform for homeless people to express themselves in a fast-growing medium. The Grapevine trained over 60 new vendors in 2005 and featured extensive coverage of Cleveland’s controversial panhandling law, Katrina evacuees, the 2005 gathering of street newspaper in Halifax Canada and more. However, the capstone achievement of 2005 had to be winning the 2005 Community Shares Award for Best Social Justice Reporting.
The Cleveland Homeless Legal Assistance Program began as an idea to provide “Justice to All” by moving lawyers out of the office and into the shelters. A group of lawyers volunteering for the Cleveland Bar Association began going to where the largest number of potential clients lived—in the shelters. This small effort grew, and the Bar Association approached the Coalition about hiring staff to coordinate all the cases and research. Five years ago, every big city in Ohio had a homeless legal assistance program except Cleveland. Today, all the other programs have shrunk or disappeared because of funding except the one in Cleveland.

The Cleveland Bar Association has increased their participation, and has remained a committed partner. In the first year, the Ohio Legal Association Federation provided a great deal of assistance and continue to help with malpractice insurance. The AmeriCorps*VISTA program provided two summer legal members who worked to find funding and build a foundation for the program. One of those VISTAs is our current Board President, Rev. Kelly Burd. Doug Lawrence was the first staff of the program and he worked long hours to set up the clinics and assure that every client received the best possible services.

Joan Burda began as a volunteer for the program in its beginnings, and then when Doug moved to Texas, Joan came aboard as the Program Director. She has figured out a way to balance students, volunteers, and pro bono attorney to service over 600 people in 2005. She has doubled the size of the program, and has developed a place on both the East and West Side of Cleveland for homeless people to go for help every week. Today, other Ohio cities are looking to Cleveland to duplicate the success of Homeless Legal Assistance Program and the successful partnership with the Bar Association.
Advocate of the Year
Marcia Bufford
For her six years of service to the Coalition and commitment to ending homelessness

Volunteers of the Year
Michael Farrell and Michael Shapero
For the service provided to the homeless community as well as the dedication and time given to the Legal Assistance Program

Outstanding Journalist
Tom Beres WKYC-TV 3
In recognition of his fair and ethical reporting given to the homeless community over the years.

2005 Award Winners

Brian Davis  Executive Director
Teri D. Horne  Director of Operations
Michael Gibbs  Community Voice Mail Director
Joan Burda  Homeless Legal Assistance Director
LeighAnn Ahmad  Bridging the Gap Director
Angelo Anderson  BTG Housing Placement Manager
Deidre White  BTG Housing Placement Manager
Clara Bell  Administrative Support
Ivan Rideway  Administrative Support
Leonard Spence  Administrative Support
Kevin Cleary  Grapevine Operations Manager/AmeriCorps Member

Greg Reaves  BTG Tenant Liaison/AmeriCorps
Member
Tenecia Stokes  Lead AmeriCorps*VISTA
Michael Cook  AmeriCorps*VISTA
Brian Southern  AmeriCorps*VISTA
Charlene Higginbotham  AmeriCorps*VISTA
Joshua Kanary  AmeriCorps Member
Colleen Cleary  AmeriCorps Member
Joan Gallagher  AmeriCorps Member
Robert Horne  AmeriCorps Member
Lynn Paul  AmeriCorps Member
Cie Viera  AmeriCorps Member
Debra Willis  AmeriCorps Member
Ron Pleban  Intern
Crystal Shen  Intern
David Marcus Duncan  Intern
Joe Perrelli  Website Consultant
NEOCH and the *Homeless Grapevine* organized a poetry contest for those homeless or recently homeless. We had over 20 submissions and we present the top two winners. They were our honored guests at the 5th annual event.

### “In My Fathers House”

In my fathers house there’s many mansions  
Yes, God has plenty of houses to give  
It’s a shame that I have to die and go to heaven,  
Just to find a place to live.  
You know its freezing out here  
And I have frost bitten feet.  
It’s a shame that I want to die and go to hell just to get some heat.  
Sleeping in boxes out in the cold.  
Washing up in public restrooms this is getting old.  
How I got here is a long story let’s just say that I trespassed on my Uncle Sam’s territory.  
I ended up in Prison for a crime I didn’t commit.  
If the truth ever comes out it will be a plot for a best selling whodunit.  
How do I get out of the slump I’m in?  
How do I get over the hump my friend?  
Do I commit allegorical suicide or do I, do I, do I just let this shit slide?  
I just need a place to live, something to call my own.  
I have nothing to give.  
I just want a home.  
I must stop now and thank God for L.M.M. Cross-roads shelter.  
Without them life would really be helter skelter.  
In my father house, I will have a place to live.  
I won’t have to panhandle because I, yes, I will have plenty to give….  
In my fathers house.

by Larry Dorn  
2100 Cross Roads Lakeside Shelter

### “Tears From An Addict”

I once met a friend with a huge white grin  
Named crack cocaine said he would take away all my pain.  
So without a thought I went out and sought  
Aw shit  
I done took my first hit.  
Now my pain went away but only temporarily.  
A few months later I’m locked up need money for commissary.  
Now back on the streets my heart skips a beat  
As crack cocaine pass through my veins.  
Pipe to my lips.  
Damn man look at those hips.  
Now with lust my mind went insane  
Baby do you smoke as I charmed her with jokes.  
My words pierced straight through her soul  
Longing for that flesh we made a dash to her address  
Now fate was in total control  
Her body was banging my pipe helped me see  
But larking in the shadows was H.I.V.  
Moments turn to hours, hours turn to days  
My eyes stayed glazed  
My mind in a haze  
Years came to pass as I continued to blast  
Familiar I know this must sound  
But my pain went away all thanks to crack cocaine when they lowered my ass in the ground.

by Sean A. Sanford  
YHaven

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**1st Place**

**2nd Place**
### NEOCH Revenue 2005

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Government</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
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<td>Individual Support</td>
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<td>Religious</td>
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<td>Grapevine Sales</td>
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### NEOCH Expenses 2005

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*unaudited bookkeeping financial report. These will be adjusted with the audit by an independent auditor.
Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless
3631 Perkins Avenue 3A-3
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

NEOCH’s Mission is to organize and empower homeless and at-risk individuals to break the cycle of poverty through public education, advocacy, and the promotion of nurturing environments.