



NCAB Newsletter

Vol. 2 Issue 3

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NCAB is the National Consumer Advisory Board, an organization of persons who are now or have been homeless. NCAB elects its own leadership, participates in consensus decision-making of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, and works to increase the consumer role at every level of health care and to improve access to health care for everyone. NCAB Membership is free—see how to join at the end of this newsletter.

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National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day

We Remember...

For nearly two decades, providers and advocates have observed National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day on or about December 21 – the first day of winter and the longest night of the

year. As much of the nation prepares to celebrate the holidays, on this day, we pause to remember our friends and neighbors who paid the ultimate price for our nation's failure to address the issue and to recommit to the important task of ending homelessness.

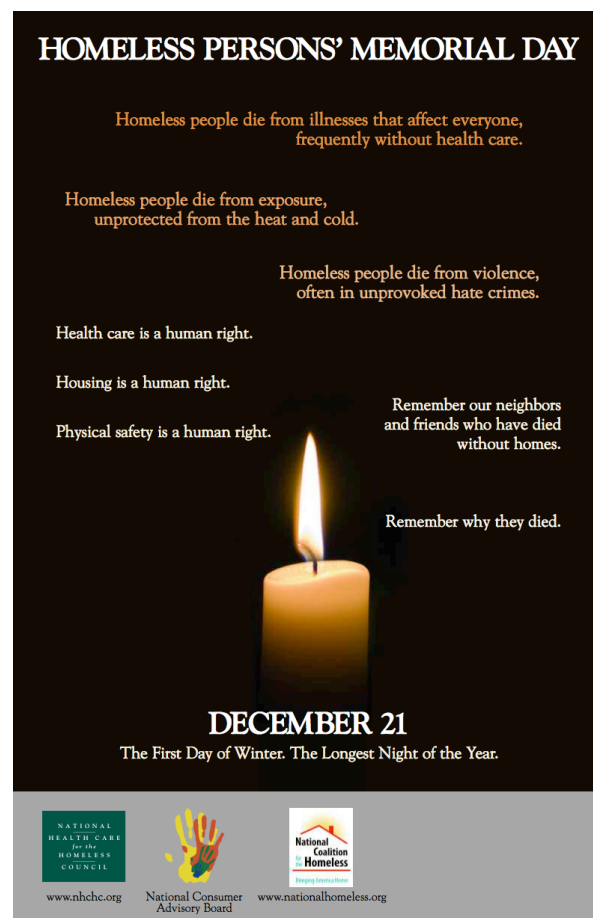
The National Consumer Advisory Board joins the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and the National Coalition for the Homeless to commemorate Memorial Day. In 2008, about 100 communities held events to draw attention to the tragedy of homelessness. This year, similar events are planned throughout the country in pursuit of public policy changes that are capable of making homelessness a rare and brief experience.

Organize a Homeless Persons' Memorial Day Event in Your Community

If no event is planned, take the initiative to assemble a memorial in your community or at your HCH project. Be sure to involve other organizations in planning and implementing the event. Encourage your clients, staff, and board members to participate. Include a reading of the names of those who have died. For more information and event ideas, view the National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day 2008 Organizing Manual online at <http://www.nhchc.org/memorialday/MemorialDayManual2008.pdf>.

Share details of your event:

The National Coalition for the Homeless is collecting the details of local Memorial Day events. Please send information to jbell@nationalhomeless.org



2008 Voter Registration Successes

National Homeless and Low-Income Voter Registration Week

NCAB members from different parts of the country participated in National Low Income and Homeless Voter Registration Week during the week of September 21-27.

- **Detroit, Michigan.** NCAB Executive Committee member Reginald Hall reports that Advantage Health Care Centers organized a Voter Registration Drive and registered 79 voters throughout the week.
- **Worcester, Massachusetts.** Two HCH agencies organized Voter Registration Drives. NCAB Chairwoman, Amy Grassetto, registered 47 voters at the Family Health Center. In addition, Members of the Community HealthLink CAB registered 58 voters.
- **Portland, Oregon.** NCAB Executive Committee member Carol Hall reports that the CAB affiliated with Central City Concern Old Town Clinic registered approximately 500 voters through their voter registration drive throughout the election season.
- **Houston, Texas.** The local CAB led voter registration and voter education activities over the course of a year. Throughout the year over 2000 people were registered and the CAB itself registered 950 voters. Through his organizing work, NCAB Executive Committee member Joe Benson secured transportation on Election Day for 400 voters
- **Eugene, Oregon.** NCAB Executive Committee member Marianne Malott personally went out on the streets to register voters. Through her experience she registered two former felons who were unaware that they were eligible to register to vote.

A Message from the Field

Reginald Hamilton describes his organizing experience:

This political season created an amazing energy that ripped throughout the nation. During this election season, Health Care for the Homeless projects around the country provided voter registration and voter education opportunities for clients, staff, Board members, and volunteers. In Detroit, Michigan, I collaborated with a community group to have volunteers spend a week at our clinics providing voter registration forms and general voter information. The collaborative relationships developed with members of the community and agencies within my community during this election season should be maintained, for the benefit of our health center. When used effectively, collaboration can be a powerful organizing tool that generates growth and stability for the organizations involved.

National Health Care for the Homeless Council Governing Membership Retreat in New Orleans

A Meeting of the Minds

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council's Governing Membership held its annual retreat in New Orleans, Louisiana this September. The Governing Membership includes representatives of NCAB, the Respite Care Providers' Network, the HCH Clinicians' Network and the HCH projects that are Organizational Members of the Council.

During this two-day meeting, many items of importance were discussed, such as HCH 101, 2009 National Conference proposals, and Council website updates, to name a few. Council staff presented a humorous skit to engage participants in a policy discussion about health care reform. Organizational members evaluated the Council's policy priorities and decided that single payer health care reform should continue to be the organization's top policy priority for 2009. After the meeting, Council Members volunteered to do hurricane clean up work in one of the devastated areas of the city.

A Moment of Reflection

Carol Hall describes New Orleans's Ninth Ward:

While in New Orleans, I was given the opportunity to volunteer through an organization called LowerNine.org. This organization has been helping to rebuild the Ninth Ward by doing hurricane clean up work. I thought I had seen a lot of devastation in my life growing up, but what I witnessed in the in this area of the city was truly tragic. There were empty lots where homes used to stand that had been wiped out, mold growing in some of the existing homes, debris laying in some of the yards and the surrounding areas. The impoverished community looked like a third world country. I was shocked that in the richest country in the world, a community like this could possibly exist—it hardly seems just.

Seeing these images touched me. I felt like I had been hit in the gut and made me very thankful for what I do have in my life. So many things to do! I was honored to help hang sheetrock, mudding and taping, painting, gardening, and flooring.

Region I Conference in Hartford CT

165 administrators, clinicians, consumers, and others gathered in Hartford, CT for a Regional Health Care for the Homeless Conference on November 13 and 14. A wide variety of workshops were offered—including one on advocacy and how to develop a Consumer Advisory Board. NCAB Chairwoman, Amy Grassetto, presented the workshop on how to start a CAB. During this workshop, Ms. Grassetto presented and distributed to the recently updated *CAB Manual* (available on the National Council's website at www.nhchc.org/advisory.html). The workshop was well received by approximately 20 participants. As always, HCH Conferences provide an

excellent opportunity to network and meet new people. This year, a Networking Reception was hosted to help facilitate networking among conference participants.

Contributions

Homeless Woman Returns Home

HOUSTON—If you had been in the reception area of Houston’s Health Care for the Homeless downtown clinic on May 5, you would have heard in a Caribbean cadence and melody, Hazel Jack’s joyous song:

“Trinidad is my land of which I am proud and glad,
But I don’t understand why some people does talk it bad.”

Ms. Jack, a native of Trinidad and Tobago, was singing the song because, after a long and difficult time in Houston, she was finally returning home to her family.

In 2001, Ms. Jack, 63 years old, came to Houston, Texas to access medical care because the services she needed were not available in her native country of Trinidad. She had been diagnosed with diabetes and hypertension and unfortunately, after she arrived here, her situation only got worse. She was robbed, and lost her passport and identification papers. Without money or documentation and being unable to read, she wandered between Houston’s homeless shelters, receiving a variety of services—meals, showers, and clothes. Eventually, she ended up sleeping on a sheet of cardboard under a freeway overpass. In the process, she completely lost contact with her family, seven daughters in Trinidad and a son in New York City.

In her wanderings around the city, Ms. Jack often went to Health Care for the Homeless Houston. The manager of Social Services there, Betty Roy, saw to it that Ms. Jack’s immediate medical needs were addressed, but she realized that, long term, Ms. Jack would need to return to the care of her family in Trinidad.

After two and half frustrating years dealing with various government and social service agencies, Ms. Roy finally got a breakthrough with the officials at Trinidad’s Consulate in Miami. They had located one of Ms. Jack’s daughters, a school teacher in Trinidad. Ms. Roy also found a way for Ms. Jack to obtain an emergency passport and identification so that she could make the trip back home. Arranging for the travel expenses was a combined effort of Health Care for the Homeless-Houston, Lord of the Streets, Loaves and Fishes, Mental Health, Mental Retardation of Harris County, and the Way Station of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church.

On Monday, May 5, Hazel Jack boarded Continental Flight #418 from Houston to Trinidad—only the second time Ms. Jack had been on an airplane. Continental Airlines was very helpful in arranging for a wheelchair and making the trip comfortable and enjoyable. Her journey ending with the joyous reunion, including three of her daughters who came to meet her at the airport and welcome her home.

“We’re very proud of our staff and greatly appreciate the hard work and determination they showed in Ms. Jack’s case,” said David S. Buck, MD, President of Health Care for the

Homeless-Houston. “They sacrificed their own time and money, and overcame all sorts of obstacles, to ensure that a homeless and vulnerable woman was able to return to her home. We’re also very thankful to all of Houston’s organizations who serve homeless people,” continued Dr. Buck. “It’s this kind of collaborative effort that’s necessary to address the needs of Houston’s homeless population.”

The Mission of Health Care for the Homeless-Houston is to provide health, hope, and dignity for Houston’s homeless through accessible and comprehensive care.

Live Your Passion

by Reginald Hamilton

In the heart lives the road map to the future.

The heart connects to unfathomable desire.

Traverse the unlimited bounds of the universal source of all energy.

The heart forms, shapes, sculpts the unrelenting passion for the soul.

That which makes you the energy displayed to the dimension comes via the heart.

Through the heart, life is vital, invigorating, compelling to make it worth living.

Through the heart you can uncompromisingly live your passion.

Living your passion summons the miracles inspired in the heart.

Miracles throb through the heart infusing our lives with the thing that is unavoidable.

It is bursting your spirit, transcending reason, ego, sanity.

The psyche is uncontrollable, the energetic bonds are unexplainable.

Living your passion is unavoidable, commencing prior to conception.

Your passion is congruent with the universal energy, the heart’s foundation.

Live your passion and unify the soul, mind, body into the miracle in your heart.

Ellen Dailey Consumer Advocate Award



Call for Nominations

The National Consumer Advisory Board of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council developed the Ellen Dailey Award to honor a woman who was a consumer, advocate, friend, and respected colleague. She welcomed consumer involvement and recognized and prepared people to use their strengths. She was a loud voice for people experiencing homelessness and fought against the social problems that allow homelessness to exist. She loved everyone no matter what their circumstances were. Ellen died on June 18, 2006. This annual award commemorates her strength and spirit.

The 2009 Ellen Dailey Award will be presented at the National Health Care for the Homeless Conference & Policy Symposium in Washington, DC, June 24-27.

Criteria:

- Must be a consumer or former consumer of Health Care for the Homeless
- Must be committed to improving the health and well-being of homeless persons through advocacy, outreach, and/or other work
- Must have done extraordinary work to improve the access to health care services for people experiencing homelessness
- Members of NCAB Executive Committee are not eligible for this award

Preferred Characteristics for Nominee:

- Exhibits leadership in their community
- Mentors other consumers
- Mobilizes other homeless persons in their community to become involved with advocacy
- Has participated in a consumer advisory group or the board of an HCH project

Nomination Procedure:

- **Nominations must be submitted by March 21, 2009**
- Anyone can nominate someone else
- Nomination forms can be filled out and submitted online or e-mailed to ncab@nhchc.org
- Nominations must include a statement about the person explaining why they should be nominated in **no less than** 100 words

Selection Procedure:

- The Ellen Dailey Award selection committee will review nominations and select the individual that best personifies the spirit of Ellen Dailey by April 15.
- The committee may interview nominees prior to making its final decision.

***Ellen Dailey Consumer Advocate Award
Nomination Form – Due March 21, 2009***

Please read the Call for Nominations prior to filling this nomination form. This form needs to be completely filled out so the committee will have all of the information it needs to select the recipient who best exemplifies the characteristics celebrated by this award. Nominations can also be made on-line at www.nhchc.org/2007DaileyAward

Nominee Information

Name

Address

City State ZIP

Phone Number:

Other Contact Information or Notes

1. Is this person or was this person a consumer of services at a health care for the homeless project? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

If yes, which one?

2. Will this person be able to attend the 2009 National Health Care for the Homeless Conference & Policy Symposium in Washington DC June 24-27 if chosen?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

Note: If money is an issue, we will provide funds for travel and accommodations for the recipient of this award.

3. Describe the qualities you feel make this person deserving of this award in 100 words or more:

4. Please list at least 2 references who can tell us about the nominee's work in the community, including the person nominating the candidate:

First Reference:

☐ Check if nominator

Name

Agency (if any)

Address

City State Zip

Phone

Additional Reference:

Name

Agency (if any)

Address

City State Zip

Phone

Only completed applications will be accepted and should be e-mailed to ncab@nhchc.org OR mailed to Dailey Award, PO Box 60427, Nashville TN 37206, OR submitted on-line at www.nhchc.org/2007DaileyAward by March 21, 2009. If there are any questions, feel free to e-mail NCAB at ncab@nhchc.org OR call 615-226-2292.

Send Us Your Stories

We need you!!! Hopefully, in our upcoming issues you, the readers, will send in your personal stories, poems, and articles regarding how you started your board and how it is running today. Please send any helpful comments on what you would like to see in the newsletter that might help others to ncab@nhchc.org

Join NCAB

Free membership to the National Consumer Advisory Board is available to anyone who has experienced homelessness and has received services from an HCH project. To join NCAB please go to to sign up on online OR send to ncab@nhchc.org or to NCAB, PO Box 60427, Nashville TN 37206-0427 the following information:

Name

Mailing Address (if any)

Telephone (if any)

e-mail (if any)

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