



Community

October - November 2010



The Voice, The Pulse, Of Our Village



The question is not whether we will be extremists but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? The nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists."

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



D a y s o f A c t i o n

Pictures: [top left and middle] Los Angeles Human Right to Housing Collective members march down Wilshire Blvd. to the Mayor's mansion demanding fair Rent Stabilization reform and a halt to any disposition of public housing. **Pictures: [top right and bottom]** LA CAN and partners call for the removal of Safer Cities Initiative officers and an immediate end to the harrassment of poor residents and the charitable food providers that serve them. ★★★★★



North American Street Newspaper Association

Suggested Minimum Donation: One Dollar (\$1)

Dispose of Public Housing? We don't think so!

On September 27, 2010 the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) conducted its final hearing before it approved their 2011 Agency Plan. By law, local Housing Authorities are required to create a document called the Agency Plan. The Agency Plan contains a 5-Year Plan and an Annual Plan. The 5-Year Plan lists primary goals hoped to be achieved by the end of five-years. The Annual Plan, on the other hand, represents what the Housing Authority intends to accomplish during the upcoming calendar year.

HACLA's 2011 Agency Plan, among other things, identified the City's entire public housing portfolio as eligible for disposition. Disposition means removing public ownership, through sale or transfer to a private non-profit or for-profit entity. Under federal regulations, HACLA can only dispose of 25% of its public housing stock each year. However, as a strategy, they listed all of their holdings so tenants and tenant rights organizations would not know which specific public housing developments would be targeted for disposition in 2011.

The current plan is to convert public housing stock to Project-Based Section 8 housing. This is a time-limited program operated by private owners. Under current federal regulations, the conversion would eliminate some tenant rights and protections, and could result in the displacement of some tenants from their homes.

Without a doubt the overall plan is to end public housing as we know it - to privatize the housing and therefore reduce government accountability. It is clear on the local and national fronts that the government is attempting to leverage public housing resources with private market investments--the same market that is largely responsible for the current foreclosure and economic crisis.

As one would guess these changes are not sitting well with public housing tenants. Historically, tenants have been through numerous examples of HACLA making plans that would purportedly "benefit" residents -- who only find themselves screwed in the end. Trust and HACLA are truly not synonymous terms.

In one recent meeting between HACLA, public housing tenants and tenant rights organizations John King of HACLA asked all in attendance to raise their hand if they trusted HACLA. Of the approximately 30 attendees, only two hands went up and they were employees of HACLA! Even more amusing was the fact that other HACLA employees also kept their hands down. Of course, not a resident in the building lifted a palm.

September 27, 2010 Hearing

At an August hearing on this same issue, held at the Los Angeles Convention Center, HACLA Commissioners were taken aback by

the numbers of tenants that showed up. Every public housing tenant who testified expressed opposition to the Plan and dozens more were kept outside and were not able to express their opposition. Given all of this history and armed with the knowledge that the Agency Plan represented significant risks to housing security, on September 27th public housing tenants from across Los Angeles mobilized to keep public housing public.

Instead of ensuring that the public could fully participate in the last hearing about the Plan, HACLA officials employed a dirty trick and changed the meeting time at the last minute from 9:00 AM to 8:00 AM. They notified the public of this change by posting a notice on the HACLA office doors on Friday afternoon, although impacted tenants live all over the City and would have no reason to go to the HACLA offices on a weekend. HACLA staff was fully aware that residents from all over the city had arranged for bus transportation to attend a 9:00am meeting.

A few supporters were able to arrive by 8:00 AM. They testified and insisted that the HACLA Commission hold this crucial item until 9:00 AM when the buses would arrive. The Commission refused. HACLA commissioners rushed to vote to approve the Plan before the troops arrived. These actions constitute a violation of the Brown Act, a State law ensuring public notice and participation.

Not to be deterred, public housing residents and supporters staged an impromptu protest in front of the Housing Authority to alert the general public to the cowardly ways in which HACLA attempted to lock-out community voices from a public process.

As always, the fight is far from over to preserve public housing and ensure fully PUBLIC processes. Stay tuned and get involved.



Campaign members from rear, left to right: Sam Jackson, Mayday New Orleans; Rob Robinson, NESRI; Darya Marchenkova, NESRI; J.R. Fleming, Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign; Debbie Burton, LA CAN; Alma Brown, LA CAN/Pueblo del Rio Committee; Brittany Scott, NESRI

Members of the Campaign to Restore National Housing Rights Go to D.C.

Tenant leaders and organizers recently descended on Washington D.C. to attend the historic annual convening of the Congressional Black Caucus [CBC].

The stated agenda of the CBC is one that resonates with Black people--as well as all people who are struggling to hang on and provide for their families. This year's convening dubbed, "Opportunities for All - Pathways Out of Poverty", definitely focused on those core issues that are in the forefront of just about everyone's minds:

1. Promote Educational Reinvestment in Low Income & Disadvantaged African American Communities
2. Increase Access to Economic Security
3. Eliminate Health Disparities
4. Provide Just Housing Options
5. Strengthen Civil Rights & Judicial Reform
6. Address Global Poverty

NATIONAL CONTINUED ON PG. #8



Headed to Geneva, Switzerland

Skid Row resident and Community Organizer, Deborah Burton is headed to Geneva to attend the United Nations' (UN) Universal Periodic Review.

Created by resolution through the UN General Assembly in March 2006, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States once every four years. The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights

situations in their countries and to fulfill their human rights obligations.

As one of the main features of the Council, the UPR is designed to ensure equal treatment for every country when their human rights situations are assessed. The UPR is a cooperative process which, by 2011, will have reviewed the human rights records of every country.

The UPR is one of the key elements of the new Council which reminds States of their responsibility to fully respect and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The ultimate aim of this new mechanism is to improve human rights situations in all countries and address human rights violations wherever they occur.

As an organizer with LA CAN and the LA Human Right to Housing Collective, as well as an impacted tenant, Deborah will be there to hear just how the UNITED STATES reports its housing situation, which should include homelessness, predatory lending, public housing, and section 8 programs. She will also have the opportunity to testify directly to violations of the human right to housing she has personally experienced and/or viewed. Lastly, Deborah will be networking with social organizations and other officials from around the globe.



Left to Right: Gelson, National Leader of the National Movement of Struggle for Housing Lurdinha, the National Director of the National Movement of Struggle for Housing

Fighting for Housing in Brazil

WRITTEN BY: GERARDO GOMEZ
PHOTOGRAPH BY: GERARDO GOMEZ

Gerardo Gomez, member of LA CAN's Board of Directors, recently traveled to Brazil to take part in the Homeless World Cup. While there he spent some time getting to know organizations and individuals deeply engaged in the fight for housing. Gomez is the second LA CAN member to travel to Brazil in 2010.

On September 24, 2010, I had the privilege of meeting Lurdinha, the National Director of the National Movement of Struggle for Housing, MNLM (Movimento Nacional de Luta Pela Moradia).

The MNLM started in 1990 and celebrated their 20th anniversary this past July. It started in several states throughout Brazil as a way to urge the government to recognize that the land is a social function and that the poor have a fundamental right to housing.

In the tradition of Brazil, when a building is occupied, it always carries the name of a revolutionary figure. The occupation carries the name of Manuel Congo, who was a slave warrior who founded a quilombo in Rio de Janeiro and was the leader of the largest slave rebellion that occurred in Paty do Alferes in Rio de Janeiro on November 5, 1838.

On October 26, 2006, 42 families occupied the Social Security National Institute which had been abandoned for over 11 years. The Social Security National Institute is next to the *Camara Municipal do Rio de Janeiro* (loosely translated as the House of Municipalities of Rio de Janeiro). The families that live there only pay 20 reais (\$11.93) a month for internet. Water and electricity are paid by the Social Security National Institute. The occupation is so well organized.



42 families have occupied this previously abandoned building since 2006. To its right sits a municipal building that handles government business on a daily basis.

They have a floor where they hold their assembly meetings. There is a laundromat collective. There is a cultural center space where children have a library and are taught science, math and other subjects. There is a basement known as the Casa de Samba-Mariana Criola (who was Manuel Congo's wife) where they have their social gatherings.

Lurdinha informed me that they are in the process of reforming the whole building and transforming it into a collectively run apartment. Currently they are in the process of starting several cooperatives: sewing, restaurant, cultural and the internet. Casa Mariana Criola will be transformed once they start the restaurant cooperative. All of the money generated from these cooperatives will go into Casa Manuel Congo.

Lurdinha and Gelson were wonderful hosts to myself, along with a Colombian comrade who has been cycling around Latin America since March 2009. Before I left, I provided them with a couple copies of the Community Connection. It was an honor to learn about the work that MNLM is doing and the dedication and passion that Lurdinha has put toward Manuel Congo. Her years of experience struggling for the right to housing are very inspirational.

LA Human Right to Housing Collective Trick or Treats at Mayor's House

Written by: Yelka Kamara and Margeau Valteau, Interns at LA CAN

On October 29, 2010 a group of almost 300 rent-burdened tenants, children, activists, and supporters gathered in front of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's home to decry his role in failing to put forward policies that will reduce the burden of rent for the tenant majority in Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles recently spent 1 million dollars to conduct a review of the Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance. The study showed that tenants, specifically low-income tenants, are strained, paying over fifty percent of their income in rent. Despite this finding the Housing Department and the Mayor released a report recommending that the ceiling for rent increase be raised. With full knowledge of the hardship that increases in rent continue to cause low-income tenants of Los Angeles, Mayor Villaraigosa's recommendations contained almost nothing to reduce rent burdens.

The Los Angeles Human Right to Housing Collective was outraged and called upon tenants to collectively take a stand against the Mayor's irresponsible governance in a Halloween-themed protest. The Collective believes housing is a human right and that the lack of affordable housing is the cause of the massive reality of homelessness in the United States. For many downtown Los Angeles tenants, an increase in rent can make them homeless. Costumed in orange T-shirts and cardboard boxes with houses drawn on them, protesters marched six blocks from Wilshire and Western to the Mayor's house, chanting loudly "We ain't scared of no mayor, we ain't scared of no chief, we ain't scared of City Hall cuz they ain't nothing but thieves."

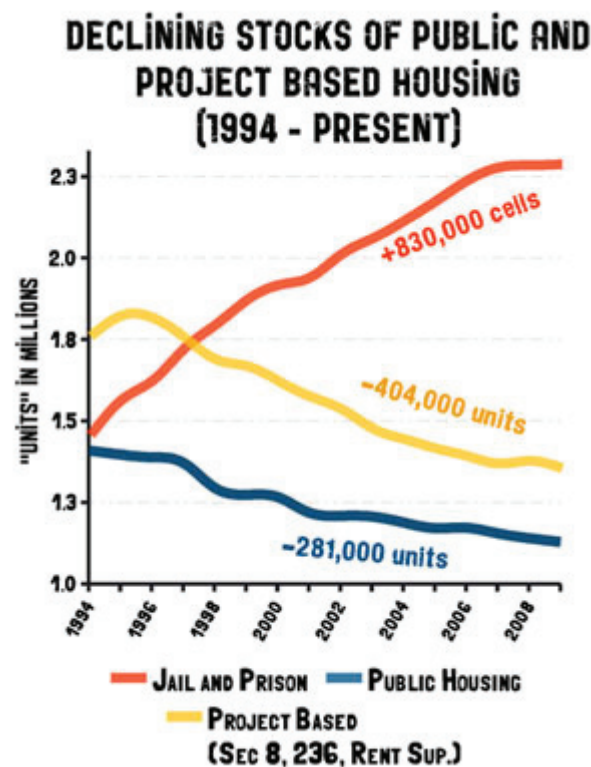
It was a peaceful protest, although multiple police officers stood guard at the Mayor's house. As interns at Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), one of the organizations in the Collective, we made phone calls urging members and supporters of LA CAN to come out and let their voices be heard. We were surprised and energized by the turnout and the enthusiasm expressed throughout the event.

As predicted, Mayor Villaraigosa did not come out to address his constituents or offer safe and affordable housing to the children who were there treat or treating. In his absence, street theatre was used to highlight the issues and a tenant acting as the Mayor was served a 30-day eviction notice. With the protest, tenants, activists, and supporters sought to send a message to the Mayor that housing is a human right and will not allow him to deprive them of this right.

The Quality of Whose Life? An Introduction to America's Modern Anti-Poor Movement

WRITTEN BY: PAUL BODEN, WRAP
PHOTOGRAPH BY: UNKNOWN

It's clear that there's a huge disconnect between our ideals and public policy. For example, The Huffington Post recently reported: "Americans vastly underestimate wealth inequality and support a more equal distribution of wealth." If this is true, why are we wasting billions of tax dollars locking people up simply for being poor? The chart below graphically captures the policy consequences of this cognitive dissonance. (Remember it when your Mayor or Chamber of Commerce promises that a Quality of Life ordinance will bring prosperity and security to your community.)



In city after city nationwide, we have seen the introduction and enforcement of Quality of Life ordinances. Anti-panhandling statutes, such as the one in Las Vegas, where both panhandlers and the people who give them money can be fined, are spreading across the country. So are bans on providing free meals for homeless people in parks. In San Francisco, a hotly debated new measure would make it illegal for people to sit down on city sidewalks, and the McDonald's on Haight Street, which has a relatively high concentration of homeless people, is the only franchise in the city that has stopped offering its popular Dollar Menu. These are only the latest developments in a city where the mayor sailed into office on a platform known as Care Not Cash that severely limits cash assistance to the homeless.

All these laws and ordinances (and many more like them) are presented to the public as serving the greater good, making cities more livable, improving public safety; in a nutshell, increasing quality of life across the board. Residents' quality of life is enhanced because they live in safer, cleaner cities. Businesses are able to attract more customers. Cities themselves are able to attract more tourists. All in all, Quality of Life ordinances seem to work for everyone. Quality of Life is, of course, a well-chosen phrase. It has a nice ring to it, it sounds upbeat and profound at the same time. Who could possibly oppose such a thing? One group might be those who care about social justice and our collective responsibility towards the economically marginalized -- the exact people who are, more often than not, on the receiving end of Quality of Life initiatives.

Clearly, quality of life refers to some lives, the lives that are worthy of legal and public protection. Other lives, on the other hand, do not seem to fall into this category. As in most instances, these ordinances have proved to be detrimental to the health, opportunities, and daily lives of people experiencing homelessness and those of lower socioeconomic status. In fact, it appears as if Quality of Life is a zero-sum game: I can only increase mine if I decrease yours. For a growing segment of our country, these initiatives simply institutionalize the inequalities of life. At first glance, these ordinances and policies might seem like a rather

extreme form of NIMBYism. City residents, who may not have a problem with the poor or poverty per se, are offered a way of not having to think about them, see them, or interact with them. In the larger scheme of things, however, what the Quality of Life movement really represents is a modern take on old-fashioned segregation. The resulting laws and regulations serve as judgments about who can and who cannot occupy public spaces, about who is free to go where and do what. Reminiscent of urban policies from a dark era of American history, they share many similarities with their Jim Crow forefathers. But where Jim Crow laws were explicitly based on race, their contemporary counterparts are ostensibly free from racial bias. Instead, they focus more prominently on socioeconomic markers by targeting the homeless, the hungry, and the poor.

In practice, of course, race and socioeconomic status cannot be separated from one another, and many of the Quality of Life ordinances affect people of color disproportionately. The Safer Cities Initiatives in Los Angeles is a case in point. In its three years of existence, this Quality of Life initiative has led to 27,000 arrests in a 50-square block area known as Skid Row, which abuts a fashionable area the city is trying to redevelop. Skid Row is home to about 14,000 residents: of whom 75 percent are African American, 95 percent are extremely low income, and roughly one-third are homeless.

The initiative has already cost taxpayers \$118 million in arrests alone, not to mention the human impacts. Los Angeles spends \$6 million a year on the initiative's additional 50 police officers, which is about the same amount it spends on homeless services citywide. Over a 14-month period, it's estimated that about \$5 million was spent to enforce jaywalking in the area. Things have gotten so bad that Los Angeles Community Action Network had to submit a Color of Law complaint for the Department of Justice to investigate Los Angeles Police Department's abuses.

Either way, the principle remains the same: while we as a nation may hold it as self-evident that all are created equal, in today's cities, some people are more equal than others. In the Land of the Free, there are city residents who are seeing their freedoms curtailed by a growing system of measures that essentially defines them as second-class citizens. This process of stratification is based, as it has been in the past, on valuing the rights and privileges of some while denying or stripping away the rights of others.

Undoubtedly, a Quality of Life initiative has either already come or is on its way to a city near you. Public discussions on these initiatives are typically held in a vacuum with little perspective, historical or otherwise. The resulting legislation tends to ignore its implications on deeply held values such as freedom, opportunity, fairness, and equality. These political developments ignore the bigger picture -- that this quest for safer and cleaner cities has been harmful to the lives of many Americans and a violation of fundamental democratic principles. Through a series of articles, we hope to provide that perspective. Part 1 of the series will present an overview of the current "Quality of Life" movement. This movement will be situated in the context of recent trends in social policies and public spending, including the increasing privatization of public space. A longer historical view will be taken in Part 2, which will show the continuity in American anti-poor legislation, despite the occasional progress made. Finally, in Part 3 we will examine what progress is being made today, what organizations are doing to fight the "Quality of Life" movement, and why you should get involved.

NOTE: THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED ON THE HUFFINGTON POST; SEE THEIR WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL PARTS IN THE SERIES.



LA CAN leaves the multi-million dollar police administration building on September 30, 2010 after highlighting the waste of resources that have gone into the Safer City Initiative in Downtown LA.

Listening With An Open Heart

WRITTEN BY: DEANNA WEAKLY, LA CAN MEMBER

It has been said that everyone has at least one book in them. This saying was never more true than on Saturday, August 21, 2010. On that day women from the Downtown Women's Action Coalition (DWAC) spread out throughout downtown to conduct their survey assessing the unique needs, conditions and opinions of women. The survey has been conducted every three years since 2001.

This year it was my honor to serve as Team Leader at the Union Rescue Mission survey site. My team-members, Rowena Magaria, Sandra Isnasious and Esther Alejandro, were three dynamic women and outstanding surveyors.

As with any worthwhile endeavor, we were faced with a few obstacles: 1) the weekend staff at URM did not know we were coming; 2) the ladies on my team did not have hats to shade them from the sun; and 3) the person that could grant us permission to use the site for surveying was on a bus, packed with women, and headed to the beach. With success on our minds - to ensure URM residents could have their voices included - we stopped the bus and gently pulled Ms. Thelma off to ask for permission.

Permission granted, we were on our way. Rowena conducted all of her interviews sitting on the floor. Sandra and I both roved around the mission asking women to participate in the survey. Esther took a seat near the gift bags we had for the ladies and her interview seat stayed occupied for two hours straight.

Prior to administering surveys, we had to complete a training. This training, held at the Downtown Womens Center and conducted by Steven Alvarez, focused on accurately collecting data and interviewing skills. As we interviewed we could see the truth and value of Steven's training: To listen without judgement, get your ego out of the way, allow the respondent freedom, and to let the conversation flow.

The ladies we interviewed had a variety of hopes and dreams, while also dealing with serious struggles. Several of the women thanked us for the interview, making comments such as, "I didn't think I mattered" and "At least somebody cares."

From a personal standpoint we felt the ladies were giving us a gift in sharing their experiences and ideas. The experience was just that uplifting. Other teams reported the same. All the DWAC survey teams listened with open hearts.

DWAC, formed in 2001, was borne for just this purpose: Identify a need and fill it. We will keep working to uplift and protect the rights and needs of women and children living downtown.



ABOVE: Master Gardener, Anne Har, leads a seed planting workshop for LA CAN community gardeners

In Full Bloom

**WRITTEN BY: LA CAN
PHOTOGRAPH BY: LA CAN**

The rooftop garden continues to flourish as we enter into the second season of planting. The first season's harvest consisted of bell peppers, serrano chilis, jalapeno peppers, strawberries, roma and cherry tomatoes, summer squash and a few other delectable variations of string beans. All of the food that was grown was subsequently used in preparation for the bi-weekly Residential Organizing Committee [ROC] meetings and meals. For example, the tomatoes and peppers were used to make delicious salsa, marinara, served in salad, or simply eaten off the vine. At a recent ROC meeting a long-standing LA CAN member wanted to know exactly which part of the traditional meal had come from the garden. That, of course, was a proud moment for all residents involved in the gardening program.

The first season, while a huge success, definitely handed Team Food a plethora of experiences to draw upon in preparing for the next crop. Frequent watering, 2-3 times per day, proved a daunting but necessary task for plants to survive withering heat and direct sunlight. In addition, fragile plants frequently needed to be moved to areas offering shade, which is definitely limited on our rooftop. Lastly, the post-summer heatwave, which posted record temperatures in Downtown L.A., nearly decimated our newly planted crop because of our severe shortage of shady areas.

The amazing rooftop garden journey has been fueled by the energy of community residents, steadfast supporters, and a cast of Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners, Anne Hars of The Foreclosure Garden and Maggie Lobl of Echo Landscape Design, have taught residents the science and practical application of cutting edge techniques used to plant and sustain healthy urban gardens. More recently Anne brought in colleague Erik Knutzen of Homegrown Evolution to teach residents how to build earth boxes, also known as self-watering containers, so that the time dedicated to watering plants could be reduced.

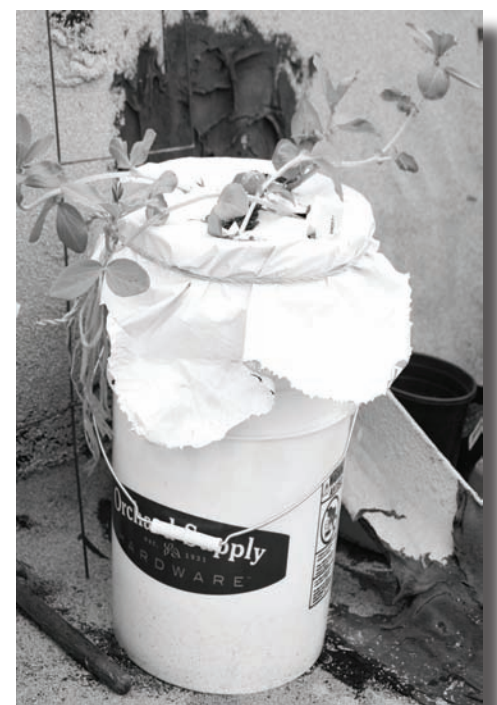
Our new crop will consist of produce that is best suited for the fall season. Neighborhood gardeners recently planted an assortment of

seeds that included cauliflower, lettuce, chard and a variety of herbs. The seeds used in planting the latest crop were imported from Italy. The region that they come from has a climate that is very similar to that found in sunny Southern California. As such, community gardeners anticipate a large and delicious bounty of Italian vegetables.

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Community Gardener, Lydia Trejo, shows off a few freshly picked tomatoes and peppers



Newly designed self-watering containers are being used to help ease the need for frequent watering.



GENTRIFICATION MY ASS "WE'RE STILL HERE!"

WRITTEN BY: LA CAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: FRAN VEGA

LA CAN members, neighbors, friends and other supporters turned out on September 30, 2010 to stand up, speak out, and fight back against four years of racist and oppressive policing in Skid Row. In September 2006, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and then-Chief William Bratton sent 110 extra police officer to Skid Row, making it the most intensely-policed community in America.

In the beginning City officials claimed that they were only focusing on the outside criminal element that preyed on the most vulnerable residents on skid row, but that of course was a lie! Now it appears that they are not even trying to hide the real motive, to remove Black and poor faces by any means necessary.

The police have used many different strategies to push residents out of the community, making it almost impossible to simply walk or sit in the community -- always fearing citations, arrests and jail. Residents are continually stopped, cuffed and questioned for taking cigarette breaks in front of their hotels. Tens of thousands of citations are written, mainly for some form of pedestrian violations, and given to residents with fees too high to pay on limited incomes. Black cyclists are stopped time and time again, oftentimes cuffed, because their bicycles don't have a reflector or light. Residents are PROFILED and constantly queried about their parole or probation status even when they are NOT ON PAROLE OR PROBATION. The "entrapment" of addicts in expensive bunco schemes geared towards netting addicts with miniscule amounts of drugs or paraphernalia and subsequently charging them as drug dealers.

More recently the LAPD--using Big "Debo" Joseph for the tool he is, Councilwoman Jan "how high does Carol Schatz want me to jump" Perry, Union Rescue Mission, and others willing to say anything LAPD asks them to-- has employed a new tactic to stop charitable donations of any kind from happening in public. This too, they have claimed, is happening in the name of public safety.



Members of the LA CAN Civil Rights Committee perform, "41.18d Keep it moving I said..." The theatrical piece was used to launch the Triple Block Bonanza: A Day of Action to Stop SCI.

"41.18d: Keep it moving I said..."

Satirical theater has been used as a tool for movement building and community education for quite some time. In Skid Row the use of artistic political satire can be tracked back to the emergence of the Los Angeles Poverty Department, Homeless Writers Coalition and others.

"41.18d: Keep it moving I said..." was written and produced by General Dogon. The skit included the portrayal of Senior Lead Officer Ernest C. Withers -- a fat and out of shape, long haired jeri curl wearing, get big quick by pill popping pig. His flunky is Barney Fife, a skinny goofy pig who cares more about the box of crème donuts in his hands (which he tries to keep away from his superior) than enforcing the ridiculous orders being barked by fat-ass.

It all starts when Barney sees a group of homeless residents resting in front of the LA CAN Office and decides to harass them. What the Pigs do not know is that while they are outside harassing poor and homeless folks, other LA CAN members are inside doing a pre-protest rally. When word gets out that Withers and Barney are harassing innocent homeless folks, directly in front of LA CAN of all places, all hell breaks loose as the front door of LA CAN opens and resident protestors demand that Withers and Barney Fife release the homeless folks.

Withers refuses to release the folks claiming that the group of detainees were breaking the "homeless laws"; one of which states that by simply being homeless you are guilty of loitering. Empowered residents demand the release of their neighbors citing the numerous laws being broken by Barney and Withers. The detainees demand that the Pigs take them to the C-O-P (Chief of Police which is a character modeled after the Wizard of Oz) traveling down the "you better not be Black brick road" which of course is Main Street.

The detainees were shackled together and led the procession to the new LAPD headquarters where a delegation delivered petitions calling for the removal of all SCI piglets.



In an LA Times story entitled, “Not All Welcome Skid Row Charity,” Officer Deon Joseph stated the following about charitable clothing giveaways:

“Have you seen one naked person today in skid row?” Joseph asked, before crossing the street to speak with them. “All that’s going to happen is they are going to walk around the corner and start bartering for crack.”

Joseph goes on to say in another LA Times story entitled, “L.A. Officials Crack Down on Street Distributions in Skid Row”:

“These folks don’t know what happens when they leave,” said Los Angeles police Officer Deon Joseph, who as senior lead officer is a liaison to the community. “We’ve had people get stabbed after fighting over clothes. We’ve had people get sick after eating their food. It’s just dangerous and irresponsible.”

Councilwoman Jan Perry, sometimes known as the wicked witch of Central City East, in the same article stated the following absurdities:

“Nobody has been moved out of the area,” she said. “Feeding people on the street is not hygienic, it’s not sanitary, it’s not good for their health.”

To which we would say, Ray Charles can see through all of this bullshit! Needless to say these new attacks against people trying to meet people’s most basic needs was more than enough fuel to get new partners engaged in the SCI Anniversary Action.

The Day of Action to Stop SCI started in front of LA CAN on Main Street. The SCI Committee created a theatrical satirical skit about skid row policing that was used to kick-off the activities [see sidebar, page 6]. Marchers then proceeded to the police administration building where they delivered

petitions calling for the end of the Safer Cities Initiative that had been signed by over 3,600 residents and local small businesses.

It must be noted that this, like all other LA CAN activities, was peaceful and well within our constitutional guarantees. That did not stop the LAPD from deploying a squad of cops on bikes to follow the marchers and about a dozen more to hover around us in the headquarter’s plaza. Our shrinking tax dollars hard at work.

Later that afternoon, a community food fest was held on Towne Street to reclaim our public space, featuring many hardworking organizations and individuals recently targeted for their charitable activities. World Agape, an organization that has been a prime target of recent attempts to stop give-a-ways, opened their line to a throng of fervent and hungry resident supporters. The Catholic Worker made up a pot of their ‘hood famous beans and rice and brought along some music and art to tell a message of resistance, respect and dignity. Food Not Bombs worked in two shifts to make sure everyone had enough brown rice, stir fried vegetables, and fresh fruit to last the night. Hunger Action Los Angeles [HALA] had an information table on deck and members there to share the status of current campaigns to end food-insecurity in Los Angeles. Water Corps was in the house to make sure that nobody went thirsty during this day long event to highlight the persistent human rights violations allowed to fester in Skid Row.

Over the past four years residents have spoken truth to power at City Hall and the Police Commission. Additionally, we have filed complaints with the Department of Justice and have brought the United Nations to investigate the clearly racist human rights violations happening on a daily basis in our community--the United Nations subsequently reported that fact. Residents have braved oppression, smear campaigns, arrests and jail while keeping the pigs in check and documenting their illegal and racist activities in skid row. And, lastly, residents are committed to fighting the good fight until we emerge victorious!

REPORTING THE FACTS:

Contrary to rumors, LA CAN routinely sits down with policy-makers to make certain the voice, power and opinion of those usually forgotten are represented. We know all too well what happens when politicians are left to their own vices--we get screwed! Through LA CAN’s Civil Rights Committee we also meet with those purportedly responsible for the police department: the Office of the Inspector General, Police Commissioners when willing--which is a another story--and LAPD Central Division leadership. Our goal in meeting is simply to hold them accountable for protecting and serving everyone and that we will work in many ways to have this standard upheld. Their recent targeting of food and other charitable providers does not meet this standard.

The ludacrous rants by Officer Deon Joseph regarding the crime caused by charitable giving demanded one question that both the LA Times and KPCC were unwilling to ask: Where is the LAPD’s proof and documentation to substantiate these absurd claims?

The LAPD claimed the following reasons to end free food/clothing giveaways:

1. Those who receive giveaways later exchange the free goods for drugs
2. Giveaways produce fights over food and clothing
3. Giveaways stop people from patronizing organizations like the rescue missions that are more equipped to help them improve their lives. Chamberlain stated that they allow people in Skid Row to continue making the “wrong choices.”
4. Giveaways leave trash in the streets of Skid Row, which contribute to disease and illness
5. Giveaways of “slop” have the possibility of food-born illnesses
6. The LAPD claimed that the “vendors” have been attacking health department inspectors, so a police presence is there only to protect these officials.

The LAPD contends for these reasons that food service lines should not be allowed in public space. However, when asked in a meeting with LA CAN and food provider partners for proof such as crime statistics, they stated that there was none available.

LA CAN Hosts First And Justice for All Awards Event

On October 2, 2010 LA CAN hosted its 1st Annual "And Justice for All" Awards in San Pedro, CA. The award celebration was held at the home of longtime LA CAN supporter Diane Middleton and proved to be the perfect venue. Breathtaking views of the ocean served as the perfect backdrop and the weather, which earlier in the day had threatened rain, was sunny and bright.

Friends, family members, and other LA CAN supporters gathered to pay homage to the inaugural awards recipients who are dedicated to our "community lawyering" model. We have engaged in a "community lawyering" model since 2002, whereby community organizers and attorneys work as equals with residents to identify legal interventions that support social change goals, defend human rights, and improve the overall quality of life for LA CAN members and our communities.

Recipients were honored for their work and commitment to LA CAN's human rights projects. Collectively they represented 25 years of work to bring equity, dignity & respect, and justice for residents in Downtown and South Los Angeles.

LA CAN and our legal partners have organized hundreds of tenants to build and support impact litigation that has preserved and improved more than 5,000 low-income housing units and facilitated high-quality legal representation for more than 2,000 individuals with "quality of life" citations. Additionally, hundreds of tenants have been represented in eviction cases, many of them unfair or illegal. More than 600 tenants who were illegally denied relocation benefits have ultimately had access to their benefits through successful litigation and community organizing. The four honorees, as well as hundreds of other LA CAN members and dozens of attorneys, have made these and other victories possible.

The Housing Awards were presented to [left to right]:

Barbara Schultz, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, 8-year LA CAN Commitment
Steve Diaz, Community Organizer, 7-year LA CAN Commitment



The Civil Rights Awards were presented to [left to right]:

General Dogon, Community Organizer, 5-year LA CAN Commitment
Jim Evans, Partner, Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P., 4-year LA CAN Commitment



Looking For Justice?



WE MIGHT JUST HAVE WHAT YOU NEED AT THE COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINIC

Have you recently received a "quality of life" citation? Some examples include jaywalking, sitting on a crate, littering, recycling, etc.

Has the LAPD, Sheriff's Dept., Highway Patrol, BID Security, City Clean-Up Crew or any other government employee taken or destroyed your

Has your landlord told you to leave; makes you change rooms every twenty-eight days; served you with eviction papers; or simply to respond to your requests for repairs?

Every WEDNESDAY NIGHT at 6:00 PM

530 S. Main Street
Wednesday Nights 6:00 - 8:00 PM
LAST Intake at 6:30 PM
For More Info: 213-228-0024

"Life without liberty is like a body without spirit."

--KAHLIL GIBRAN

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN, CONTINUED FROM PG. #2

Those critical of the CBC have brushed it off as just another "beltway ball" with high-priced parties, dinners, and corporate sponsored activities. Grassroots constituents hope that it is much more than that; hoping that it is a gathering rooted in making life better for their communities. So this year, tired of hoping or wondering, Campaign to Restore National Housing Rights leaders from across the country went to see for themselves.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt the gathering was a "who's who" event. And, just as one could have imagined, the environment was filled with, yep you guessed it, mostly partying and networking.

Yet our Campaign leaders were not there to party and bullshit. They were clear on the mission, objectives and goals--they wanted to make sure that policy makers did not mortgage our public housing stock and would put forward an agenda to protect all housing rights.

While in Washington D.C. leaders had a chance to square off with HUD Secretary, Shaun Donovan. Donovan was attempting to promote his plan to dispose of public housing to CBC members, who should know this plan would be devastating to African American and other communities of color. Our crew walked in and threw a monkey-wrench in an otherwise smooth performance, providing testimony that clearly laid out the issues and opposition.

A couple of pointed questions and passionate exchanges with Shaun Donovan about his half-cooked plan was all it took to expose him. Red in the face and looking puzzled, he quickly exited the forum. Job well done - let's get ready for the next fight.



Alex, Team Los Angeles, advances the ball.

Brazil Hosts the Homeless World Cup and LA CAN is There

WRITTEN BY: GERARDO GOMEZ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: GERARDO GOMEZ

(SEE RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3)

The Homeless World Cup is an annual event that brings countries from around the world to not only play soccer but to bring awareness to the plight of homelessness in our world. The idea for a Homeless World Cup was born in 2001 in Cape Town, South Africa when Mel Young and Harald Schmied were attending the 6th annual International Network of Street Papers (INSP) Conference. They were having a conversation about how they wanted to see homeless people from different countries experience what was happening on an international level. It was then that the idea of soccer came about as a way to break communication barriers. Soccer is not only an international game but a language that everyone can understand. It would provide homeless people from different parts of the world to come together and play amongst each other in an international soccer tournament. Mel and Harald thought about organizing matches between teams representing street newspapers from different parts of the world and after a very passionate conversation the idea of the Homeless World Cup was born.

The first Homeless World Cup was held in Graz, Austria, in April of 2003 with team Austria winning the inaugural Homeless World Cup. With the success in Austria, every Cup has been held in a different country and this year the 8th annual Homeless World Cup was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The Homeless World Cup or “*Campeonato Mundial de Futebol Social*” as it was called in Brazil, was held on September 19-26, 2010. This year 43 countries competed in the men’s cup and 12 countries competed for the women’s cup.

This year’s Homeless World Cup was special for many reasons. Not only was it being played in the mecca of soccer but it would also be the debut of Team Palestine, whose players were coming via the refugee camps in Lebanon.

To set the stage for this amazing tournament, the opening parade provided a glimpse of what the rest of the week would look like. With all the teams walking in the streets waving their country’s flags, singing, dancing and cheering, one was quickly moved by the spirit that the procession carries. It was such a beautiful scene. It was a scene that makes one want to cry for joy.

After Mel Young gave a speech to officially begin the 8th Annual Homeless World Cup, the games were under way. Team Brazil started the tournament by beating Chile 7-6. Throughout the week, teams from different countries not only played soccer but demonstrated great sportmanship. At the end of each game, both teams would hold hands, run towards the crowd and throw their hands up in the air. The crowd would respond by giving them a standing ovation.

The beauty of the gathering is that people from

Homeless Street Soccer, stated he is very proud of his team for the way they have represented themselves on and off the court. He has been impressed with the progress of his goalie, Tariq, who after participating in the Cup has been inspired to study sports management. The South Africa team is the only team who bonded very closely with team Palestine. They have shared songs with each other and have built a great connection amongst each other.

Some of the coaches from various countries are living proof that soccer continues to transform lives. Hamilton Ayiera, the coach for Kenya, represented his country at the 2006 Homeless World Cup in Cape Town, South Africa. Hamilton is from Korogocho (in Swahili, it means crowded shoulder to shoulder), one of the biggest slums in Kenya. Hamilton states that he was forced to dig through the dumps to get food. After his participation in the Homeless World Cup, he was given \$1,000 courtesy of the Play for Life non-profit organization. Hamilton started a barber shop with the money that he was given. And that is not all. Last year, he started the Ayiera Initiative, which seeks to transform poor communities through sports. Ayiera Initiative is a grass roots organization, that has made a difference in the lives of the children who reside in the slums of Korogocho.



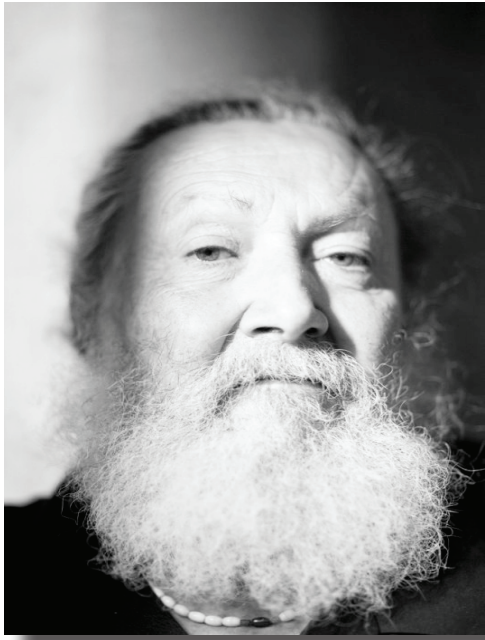
Team Cambodia shares some LA CAN/Community Connection love.

different ages and backgrounds are playing a sport that does not see their current circumstances but sees them as members of a team representing their country. The Homeless World Cup is about inclusion; it’s about the unknown becoming known and the “outcasts” taking center stage. It’s about the most marginalized populations in our countries demonstrating to the world the power of kinship, acceptance, love, understanding and more importantly respecting individuals as human beings. Vusumzi Shushu from Cape Town, South Africa, who has lived in the streets for 8 years and has been in prison stated that, “It’s been great. Getting to meet people from different parts of the world so that we can be one as a nation at the end of the day.”

The Homeless World Cup has changed many people’s lives. Martin Asamoah, the coach of Ghana, has seen many positive changes in his players but it’s Usman Mohammed who has impressed him the most. Martin states that “His attitude towards the game and his teammates and other players has been very positive.” Clifford Martinus, the director of South Africa



Gerardo Gomez, LA CAN, represents the USA’s street soccer league and builds global relationships for change. Pictured here with a Team Palestine member.



Memories of a Friend

Allen McCorkendale often referred to himself as “One cantankerous old coot.” But Allen was a real people person. He considered it an art form, as he did most things in life.

Allen loved the joy that a simple floral creation could bring, to truly

uplift the heart. Thus his chosen profession was a Master Florist. He worked in downtown’s florist district until his health would no longer allow. In his career he served the notable likes of Nicole Kidman, Diana Ross, Steven Segal, Edith Head, and Heady Lamar to name a few. Allen loved classical music but also was a big fan of LA’s 80s rock band Social Distortion.

Allen was a fighter; he would often say, “right is right.” As an LA CAN member, Allen was a plaintiff in the 2006 fight against the owners and managers of the Alexandria Apartment homes. Along with other LA CAN members - he won and was proud about speaking out for justice!!!!

During Allen’s long illness he always managed a smile stating, “It takes more muscles to do the other thing and I’m too tired.” Allen is survived by a younger brother, sister-in-law and many countless friends. LA CAN members honor his contributions to social justice. He will be sorely missed.



Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing, never can bring about a reform. Those who are really in earnest must be willing to be anything or nothing in the world’s estimation, and publicly and privately, in season and out, avow their sympathy with despised and persecuted ideas and their advocates, and bear the consequences...

--Susan B Anthony

Jenine Marie Guerriere

Wow...no words to express the loss that we feel. To look over our shoulders and not see Jenine walking into LA CAN smiling, ready to go to work, no matter the task. Always eager to be an integral part of any plan that was aimed at restoring a measure of dignity and respect for those so rapidly forgotten. Ready to say yes when so many others would have taken the easier route by simply saying no.

Jenine was our friend, our colleague, and our stalwart supporter. Her legacy will be carried by us, as well as her young son.

We say to Jenine: rest our warrior princess, we will navigate the rest of this journey in your honor. We Love You...



Saying Goodbye to Ray Sosa

On October 15, 2010 our community, Los Angeles, and the entire universe lost a truly dedicated soul; a truly dedicated servant; a truly dedicated individual that spent his time helping others and attempting to retrieve a capsized system.

Rosa Sosa, LA CAN loves you. And while we will miss you in the physical form the evidence of your presence remains all around us. Moreover, your influence has been instilled in countless numbers who are now duty-bound to carry on the journey.

Si Se Puede Comrade Ray

“Street papers are a hand up, not a hand out” says Lisa Maclean, Executive Director of the International Network of Street Papers (INSP). An international charity organisation, INSP unites and supports 110 street papers in 40 countries.

200,000 homeless people change their lives through selling street papers

Buying a paper at cost price and selling it on for the cover price – keeping the proceeds. It sounds like a very simple business model, and it is. But providing an income is only the first tool street papers use to tackle homelessness and exclusion.

Every day, street paper vendors around the world hit the streets with the latest edition of their paper or magazine. They sell from their designated pitch in busy shopping streets, outside malls or in front of office buildings, hospitals, universities, sports grounds or train stations. They are there, come rain or shine, working to earn their own living in an increasingly challenging climate.

They are people like Steven Robert, a vendor in Cape Town, South Africa, who like so many people, moved to the city as a teenager with big dreams. But without money or a job, he roamed around the streets, struggling to meet his basic needs. When two of his close relatives passed away, loneliness kicked in even harder. It was through the street paper that he found back purpose in his life.

“Life is still not easy for me. I live in a homeless shelter, but at least I’m earning an income selling The Big Issue. If I’m having a tough day at work, I go to the park and take a spin on the playground roundabout. When I have cleared my mind I go back to my pitch and get on with the business of selling the magazine. My dream is to have place of my own. I’d like to set up a small home-based business as I am now a good salesman. I tell other vendors to keep pushing forward with the skills that they have and to never give up.”

More than 100 street papers across the globe, in cities like London, Cape Town, Chicago, Oslo, Tokyo and in between, share that same vision: to provide the means and opportunity for homeless people to help themselves.

Vendors with street papers can access a range of other services, including sales training, drug and alcohol counseling and housing support. Several street-paper projects also run savings programs and art and literacy classes or organise rehabilitative sports activities.

“Street papers are a hand up, not a hand out” says Lisa Maclean, Executive Director of the International Network of Street Papers (INSP). An international charity organisation, INSP unites and supports 110 street papers in 40 countries. The network was founded in 1994 with a handful of street papers and a few hundred vendors. Today, more than 200,000 homeless vendors around the world have improved their lives through selling INSP street papers.

Maclean’s aim is to increase that figure over the next few years. “In the sixteen years of our existence, the INSP network has grown immensely. The number of existing papers on all continents has expanded and we have helped to launch new ones, particularly in Africa.”

“The 200,000 figure is a landmark for us, but we always look at the road ahead. Street papers provide an opportunity unlike any other charity, giving homeless and marginalised people a chance to speak out, earn a living and change their lives. Our job is to unite these papers and support them in their fight against homelessness, poverty and social exclusion around the world.”



LA CAN’s Community Connection being read around the world

The Impact of Street Papers:

Coinciding with the United Nation’s International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17, INSP released the outcome of its latest study into the impact of street papers on poverty and homelessness elimination. The research shows that, in 2009, 71 per cent of street papers helped their vendor force to get out of their homeless situation and move on. In addition to providing an income, 84 per cent said they improved their vendors’ wellbeing and almost 90 per cent said they increased their confidence. A quarter of papers were involved in creating policy change on housing and homelessness in their city or region.

Global campaign

INSP’s 110 street papers are a united voice against poverty and homelessness. As part of an international campaign on the UN’s anti-poverty day, street papers on all continents ran a full page advert in their publication. The poster slogan “The Future is in Your Hands” urged readers around the world to get involved in the street paper movement, regularly buy a copy from their local vendor and help to tackle poverty in a manageable way.

Breaking down barriers

The relationship between readers and their paper is unique. As the 2009 INSP study shows, 80 per cent of street papers engaged their readership through the interaction with vendors and the content of the magazine. Articles on social injustice and tackling homelessness appeared in North American and European street papers, while taboo-breaking issues like HIV/Aids and women’s and gay rights helped to break down barriers in societies across Africa. Interviews with celebrities and other public figures boosted street-paper sales from Australia to Latin America.

Street News Service

Articles written by any of INSP’s 110 member papers are made available through its independent news agency, the Street News Service. Street papers can republish all material free of charge in their own publication. At the same time, readers around the world can access the best of international street paper journalism online via www.streetnewsservice.org.



The future is in your hands

Every day, **114** street papers like this one help homeless people worldwide to escape poverty. So far, thanks to millions of readers like you, **200,000** vendors in **40** countries have earned a living and changed their lives.

Learn more and get involved at www.street-papers.org/2010



International
Network of
Street
Papers

To contact LA CAN or find out more about our work and how to support us write, or visit us online:

530 S. Main Street, Ground Floor
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Editorial Policy:

The Community Connection is a street newspaper and a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers. The Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) is a membership organization comprised of low-income, homeless and formerly homeless residents living in downtown and South Los Angeles, and surrounding communities. LA CAN's staff and core members write many articles that appear in the Community Connection. These generally appear without a byline, attributed to LA CAN as a collective. Articles by contributors who are not LA CAN core members and/or personal opinion/experience articles receive a byline. These articles do not necessarily represent the views, opinions and perspectives of the Los Angeles Community Action Network.

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