

GET LOUD

By, for, and about people experiencing homelessness

TEN
NEW
COPS
FOR WHAT?

Doin' the
Homeless
Shuffle

OUR SISTERS' DAILY STRUGGLE
TO FIND A SAFE PLACE TO SLEEP



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OUR MISSION

Get Loud, produced by Denver Homeless Out Loud, provides a platform through which those of us experiencing homelessness can give voice to our experiences, concerns, and recommendations. It also provides a means through which we can share information about resources, educate the broader community about homelessness, and explore ways to work together to create meaningful change. WWW.GETLOUDDHOLPRESS.WEBBLY.COM

EDITORIAL POLICY

Get Loud reserves the right to decide what we include in each issue. Priority will be given to publishing the work of people who have directly experienced homelessness.

Get Loud seeks to represent a variety of opinions, with the hope of stimulating discussion and action. On occasion this may offend somebody. In accepting pieces which are critical of individuals or organizations, Get Loud reserves the right to obtain a response from that individual or group. Get Loud reserves the right to edit or to refuse to publish articles that promote oppressive stereotypes of human behavior.

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DENVER HOMELESS OUT LOUD (DHOL) works with and for people who experience homelessness, to solve the issues that arise from the experience of homelessness. DHOL works to protect and advocate for dignity, rights and choices for people experiencing homelessness. To these ends, DHOL commits its efforts toward goals affirmed and raised by homeless people. DHOL strives to combine the strengths of all involved to create ways of living in which everyone has a place they can call home. DHOL welcomes everyone to join them in this work. Working groups include tiny homes, homeless bill of rights, urban rest stops and of course...Get Loud. Everyone is welcome to DHOL meetings! Wednesdays at 4:45-7pm at American Friends Service Committee office, 901 W 14th Avenue (Court House Square apartment building) ***We eat when we meet!*** www.denverhomelessoutloud.org Phone: 720-940-5291

Correction we inadvertently attributed the photo on page 8 of our April issue to the wrong photographer. That photo was taken by Joel Niemann and originally appeared in St Francis Center's Summer 2012 newsletter. We sincerely apologize for the error and any confusion it caused.

LOCAL RESOURCES

Organization/Address	Meals Served	Days Served	Times	Meals List
Agape Church 2501 California St	Lunch	Saturday	11:30 am-12:15 pm	
Broadway Assistance Center 1212 Mariposa St	Dinner	Thursday	5:30 pm	
Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church 1100 Fillmore St	Lunch	Saturday	8:30 am-12:30 pm	
Cathedral of Immaculate Conception 1530 Logan St (In Alley)	Breakfast	MTWRF	8 am	
Christ's Body Ministries 850 Lincoln St	Breakfast Lunch	TWR/Friday M/TWR	10 am/ 8 am 12:30 -3pm/ 1-3pm	
Church in the City 1580 Gaylord St	Dinner Bfst/Snack Lunch	Thursday TWR	5 pm 9 am	
Denver Rescue Mission Lawrence Shelter 1130 Park Avenue West	Breakfast Lunch Dinner	SMTWRFS SMTWRFS SMTWRFS	6 am Noon 7 pm	
Father Woody's 1101 W. 7th Ave	Breakfast Lunch	MTWRF MTWRF	8 am 11 am	
First Baptist Church 1373 Grant St	Lunch	Monday	11:45 am - 12:15 pm	
Food Not Bombs Sunken Gardens Park 11th and Speer	Dinner	Saturday	4 pm	
The Gathering Place women, transgendered 1535 High St	Breakfast Lunch/Snack	MTWRF MTWRF	8:30 am 11:30am/3:15pm	
His Love Fellowship 910 Kalamath St	Dinner	Thursday	6:15 pm	
Holy Ghost Catholic Church 1900 California St	Snack Lunch	MTWRFS	10am	
Jesus Christ Our Church 16th and Marion St	Breakfast Dinner	Saturday Tuesday	9 am 7pm	
Mother of God Church 475 Logan St	Snack Lunch	MTWRF	11am	
Open Door Ministries 1530 Marion St 4:45 Worship Serice Required	Dinner	Sunday	4:45pm	
People's Presbyterian Church 2780 York St	Lunch	Monday	11am	
St. Elizabeth's (Auraria Campus) 1060 St Francis Way	Snack Lunch/ Soup	SMTWRFS	11am	
St. Francis Center 2323 Curtist St	Dinner	W&F Except 3rd Wed	3pm	
St. Paul's Lutheran "Spaghetti Dinner" 1600 Grant St	Dinner	Monday	1-5pm	
St. Paul's United Methodist 1615 Ogden St	Breakfast	Sunday	7-9am	

Meals List

Hunger Free Hotline 855.855.4626

Organization/ Address	Meals Served	Days Served	Times
St. Peter and St. Mary 126 West 2nd Ave	Dinner	Tuesday	6pm
SAME Cafe 2023 E. Colfax PAY WHAT YOU CAN OR VOLUNTEER	Lunch	MTWRF	11 am - 2 pm
Senior Support Services 846 E. 18th Ave (ages 55 and up)	Breakfast	MTWRF	7 - 9 am
	Lunch	MTWRF	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
	Dinner	MTWRF	5:30 - 6:30 pm
Trinity Methodist 1820 Broadway	Lunch	WRF	11:45 am - 12:30 pm
Volunteers of America 2877 Lawrence St	Breakfast	MTWR	8:30 am
	Lunch	MTWR	11:30 am
	Dinner	MTWR	3pm & 5pm
	Lunch	F/ Sunday	1 pm

ARE DONUTS A FOOD GROUP?



able to offer a whole lot of fresh fruits and vegetables or whole grain cereals and breads. So let's not even get started on meats or fish.

By Ray Lyall

To many people, much like myself (homeless), trying to get not just food, but the kinds of foods that are good for you, can certainly be a daunting task. I'll bet you dollars to donuts every homeless person reading this article right now, knows at least one person with diabetes, if you don't suffer from it yourself.

Taking control of your diet is the single most important thing that you can do to fight and control diabetes, and many other health conditions that haunt people experiencing homelessness. Now, the reality is if you're one of the... let's just say thousands of people experiencing homelessness, choosing what you eat for breakfast, lunch and/or dinner presents a real challenge, to say the least.

When you're homeless, all too often your meals tend to come from a soup line or shelter that is not

Let's face it--pastry, bleached breads and junk foods seem to be our mainstay diet. If by chance you are lucky enough to go to a food bank, lugging around 10 to 15 pounds of well selected items is, at best, inconvenient, if not downright a royal pain in the assets.

Okay, so what's the point?

The only one who can help you start to eat right...is you. And in not calling on everyone to become a health nut, just find one place that offers at least one healthy meal a day, and your body will thank you for it. So eat a banana, have an apple, go for the oatmeal instead of the double chocolate chip muffin. Start looking for things that are green (no not frosting) vegetables.

In future issues we'll be covering more. So, if there's anything you feel you want to know, email us or heck, write your own article and drop it in one of our boxes or bring it to a Get Loud meeting.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Do you know how to protect your rights when you are detained by a police officer? At a recent Know Your Rights training in Curtis Park, Alex Landau encouraged everyone to be prepared to use the following key phrases:

- 1. "Have I done something wrong?" Never admit to anything.
- 2. If not, "Am I free to leave?"
- 3. "I do not consent to this search." Say this loudly, clearly and repeatedly during any search of your person or belongings. This may not stop the search but will help protect your rights in court. It's illegal for police officers to search you without probable cause unless you give your consent.
- 4. "I choose to remain silent."
- 5. "I'd like to speak to an attorney."

Self preservation is critical, says Landau. Do your best to be cooperative, even while protecting your rights.

In any encounter, get the officers' names and badge numbers. They are required by law to give this information to you. Also get the names and contact information of any witnesses.



Like what we're doing and want Get Loud to continue covering the homeless scene?

Send us a donation and become a Get Loud supporting STAR!!

Send your check, payable to Denver Homeless Out Loud, to Catholic Worker, 2420 Welton Street, Denver CO 80205.

Let us know if it's ok to list your name as a supporting STAR in the Fall issue of Get Loud. To learn more about the Stars program, contact Get Loud at 720-940-5291 or getloud@denverhomelessoutloud.org



by Carrie Cain (Harley)

*M*y name is Carrie Cain. I'm 32 years old, and have three kids who were taken by Social Services, saying that "I'm an unfit mother" because of my epilepsy and scoliosis. (I receive Social Security disability income because of my disabilities.) In June of last year I moved to Denver from Iowa with my boyfriend, to start over. But one month later he kicked me out.

Suddenly, for the first time, I found myself homeless. But unlike many who end up on the streets, I got lucky. The Gutter Punks and Juggalos took me in, taught me how to survive, and kept me safe, warm and fed when I needed it. They became family. I say that because family protects, loves and is always there...even at its worst.

Even a simple hello is too much for them. It rips and tears at my heart.

Most know me as Harlequin or Momma. I'm telling my story because I want to make a difference and also show my love and thanks to all those who are now family.

When I became homeless I didn't know where to go, what to do or how to survive on the streets. A friend introduced me to the Gutter Punks and Juggalos. Yeah they are rough around the edges and may never admit it...but they have big hearts--at least that's how I see them.

I am truly lucky to have my "street family".

Not everybody gets lucky, can survive or keep hope. Too many have died, gotten raped, beaten up, lost limbs due to the frostbite, gone to drugs, or become emotionally dead to the world. Hell, if it weren't for my husband Wolf, my dog Scottie, and a few of the family, that would probably have been my fate. I would have given up on life and would be just a memory.

So many times a day we all are degraded, harassed, glared at or worse...invisible. Shelters are disease-ridden black holes that kick you out at 5 or 6 am when it's below 0 degrees out and don't allow couples. Almost 99% of the places that are supposed to help us, look at us like they wish we were all dead, and the ones that do care can only do so much

because they spend their own money just so they can stay open and help. It's a double edged sword that slices into my

If we don't take care of each other, Who will?

heart. The ones who have nothing will go hungry and cold so that another can eat and be warm. Knowing and seeing, and being able to do this myself, warms my heart. But my experience tells me that 90% of those with money care nothing for those in need. Even a simple hello is too much for them. It rips and tears at my heart realizing how uncaring people can be. I am truly lucky to have my "street family," husband and dog... but not all are so lucky, so do us a favor, learn to care like we do. If we don't take care of each other, who will? X



SOCIAL IMPACT Bonds

--huh??

By Nancy Peters

“**Social Impact Bonds**” is a new concept that Denver Mayor Michael Hancock is hoping will help house some of the city’s most long-term homeless individuals while saving taxpayers money. This concept figured prominently in a new program which Hancock announced at the June 25th Clinton Global Initiative conference in Denver. The program will begin providing permanent supportive housing and services by 2016 to up to 300 unhoused individuals who most frequently use city services, including jails, detox, and hospital emergency rooms.

Through social impact bonds, **investors would loan the city money to provide affordable housing** and services for this target group of unhoused people, and the city would pay the investors back only when and if the program interventions result in savings from reduced use of city services by the housed program participants. The city will contract with three partners--Corporation for Supportive Housing, Enterprise Community Partners, and Social Impact Solutions--in designing, funding, constructing, and administering the program and the housing.

What are we to make of this new venture? What comes to

mind first is that permanent, truly affordable housing is sorely needed for all people experiencing homelessness--including those who have recently become homeless and those who have found themselves unhoused many times and for long periods. Affordable housing is needed for, and deserved by, people with and without physical and/or mental health and/or substance use issues--and for people who do and don’t have criminal records, and who have and haven’t served in the military--in short, for all people who lack houses. It’s laudable to want to provide housing to a segment of unhoused people who are suffering greatly on the streets. But it’s shameful to see this prioritization being promoted based on cost factors alone.

In order to properly evaluate the potential benefits of this new housing scheme of the mayor’s, many questions must be answered, including the following: **To what extent will the number one stakeholders--homeless people themselves--be consulted in the program design?** Will the outcomes which are tracked reference the profit motive and cost savings only, or will they also measure the “social impact” of the program on the quality of life of program users? Will program users get to decide what services to accept--as with

a true Housing First model? Or will participation in services such as substance or **mental health treatment be a condition of initial or continued program participation?** Will service providers with whom the program contracts be paid only to the degree that certain predefined outcomes are achieved, and if so, is that fair given the number of factors influencing success that may be beyond their control?

Since the program has just been announced, and details have not been worked out, **the answers to these important questions are not yet available.** Get Loud commits to following and reporting on this story in future issues, and encourages you to make your voices heard as well. X

SUBMITTED
TO THE GET LOUD
BOX AT CHRIST’S
BODY MINISTRIES:

The only way for the homeless to have a place to stay during the day and night is to just provide the shelter. ***This is a basic human right.*** Let them camp in only designated areas and Charge a small fee. City officials hate homeless people. They have all the deep pockets. We do not.

The city needs to get off its ***Lazy “rear end” and do its job to serve the city and its members of society.*** Or maybe they need a pay cut and ***GO HOME WITH NO JOBS.*** X

Homelessness & Mental Illness:

One Woman's Experience

by Virginia Denton

I am now homeless after recently being evicted from a federal HUD housing program for the disabled. I feel really sorry for myself until I see all these other women who are homeless--women older and much more disabled than I am! I get so angry at the government for allowing women to live like this. The competition to get into the very very limited spaces for homeless women is incredible. The VOA volunteers mentioned that the city is working on more shelters for women. They are certainly needed!

I'm 60 years old, was an RN for 25 years and have been denied SSDI three times. I have complex PTSD from sexual trauma as a child and again as an adult. Yet I think being homeless is the most traumatic thing I've ever experienced. I've been approached and told I need to sell my body by three different men downtown, which aggravates my symptoms and nightmares. The anxiety and stress from just trying to find a safe shelter at night is the most I've ever encountered, and I worked in the ER and psychiatry. The cops treat you horribly when you ask for help. Nothing is worse on earth than being cold and homeless in a big city at night. I've been suicidal but try to hold on.

I got into the Delores Project for women this week so my stress level is better. It's a nice place for women but again the competition to get in is insane. The "lotteries" for a spot in the shelters make me sick. There should be space for everyone who needs it. Women should not be allowed to be sleeping in the streets. Women tell me they sometimes ride the bus all night to be safe.

The staff treat us like prisoners.

In the VOA-run Women's Emergency Shelter, where I often stay, the conditions are absolutely pathetic. No soap or TP in the bathrooms. We are fed bread and peanut butter sandwiches every night. I tried to file a complaint regarding the conditions there but staff would not give me a form and told me I should feel grateful to be there because it's free. I have of course contracted an upper respiratory infection as I knew I would listening to the nasty coughs in that place where we are placed on mats three inches apart every night.

The staff treat us like prisoners and/or little children in the Brandon Center/Theodora House and the VOA Women's Emergency Shelter. They act like prison guards and will kick you out for any infraction of the rules. I have worked in an animal shelter and cannot understand why dogs and cats are treated so much better than women. I've tried to get into battered women's shelters but they are all always full. There must be a lot of battered women

out there.

During the day I go to The Gathering Place--a nice place with good food and showers and even a counselor and nurses. But like every place else where unhoused women go, I see very disabled women there. I also go to the Senior Support Services drop-in center on 18th and Emerson, and seeing all the very old, mentally unstable and untreated homeless people there is very depressing. I am usually one of two or three women among about 60 men there and it's very uncomfortable for me.

PTSD and psoriasis are both affected by stress and anxiety.

There's rampant untreated mental illness in the female homeless population I've been sheltering with during the last two months. As an RN with five years of in-patient psychiatry experience, I know it when I see it. There's a lot of psychosis. For example, three of the women in my room are responding to internal stimuli. They're totally in their own little world, talking and laughing to themselves. One constantly screams at her possessions. My bed neighbor over there told

me she had been hit in the head with a hammer and that she has a head injury from beating herself up. That was hard to believe, but I saw her in the park doing it as I rode by on the bus this morning.

And there's so much depression! You see it in the faces and flat affects on these women as they're waiting in line. You need a picture of that. Almost all of them, as I am, are trauma patients.

A PTSD specialist with the Board of Nursing told me that if marijuana helps me with my anxiety I should keep using it so I do. I have a red card. PTSD and psoriasis are both affected by stress and anxiety. Being homeless is the most stressful thing I've ever been through, yet I get kicked out of the shelters because I use marijuana my doctor prescribed. I got kicked out of The Gathering Place because I smelled like marijuana one day. I wasn't hurting a soul. The Brandon Center for battered women kicked me out back into the street because I drug tested positive for marijuana. These places and having homeless women running around the streets just set you up for more trauma. X



Doin' the Homeless Shuffle

OUR SISTERS' DAILY STRUGGLE
TO FIND A SAFE PLACE TO SLEEP

By Nancy Peters

Rat-a-tat-tat! It's 4 am Monday (or Thursday) morning, sisters. No rest for the weary...up n' at 'em! It's time to play the newest reality show: Who Gets to Sleep Inside Tonight?

Before April, if you were a woman or transgendered individual who needed a warm, safe place to sleep at night, you could pretty much count on getting into the Women's Emergency Shelter (WES) at 13th and Elati. While the accommodations aren't five-star--you have a mat on the floor, you share a single toilet with 59 shelter mates, and you have to be out by 7am--many women find that it beats dealing with the elements and the dangers that lurk outside--including the so-called "protection" offered by many men.

If you had nowhere else to go--maybe you'd lost your job and your apartment, or your spouse died leaving you out in the cold, or you'd finally left an abusive relationship--and maybe you'd tried to get into the CHUM rotating churches shelter program or the Delores Project overflow but you didn't win their lotteries--well, you could line up outside the WES building, and starting at 6pm you'd probably get to enter and spend the night. If the shelter was full, the staff would generally send women to another shelter or give them a motel voucher.

But then the rules changed. Now, there's no lining up outside the building in the afternoon. According to Denver's Road Home Executive Director Bennie Milliner, who oversees Denver's 10 year plan to end homelessness, women

were queuing up as early as 2pm, and the behaviors of some of those in line put others at risk and drew complaints from neighbors in the Golden Triangle. "It was change the procedure or shut down the program," said Milliner.

And so the first-come, first-served line-up system was replaced by a more complicated advanced registration scheme. Now, each Monday and Thursday, women must go to one of three locations--The Gathering Place (15th and High St), St Francis Center (2323 Curtis St), or Denver Human Services (1200 Federal)--to attempt to secure a WES mat. If they are successful, and if they arrive at the shelter by the 6:30pm deadline each night, they get to keep their mat until the next registration day.

Lindi Sinton, Division Director of the Volunteers of America (VOA) in Denver, which has a \$316,000 contract with the City to staff and run the WES program, cited concerns for women's safety as a major reason for moving from a nightly line-up to an advance registration system. "The numbers continued to climb and we were turning away 15-20 women some nights from the shelter due to lack of space, said Sinton. "This caused great anxiety for those who may not be first in line, or who were not aggressive enough to hold a place in the line. The three VOA staff coming on at 5:30 and 6pm had a chaotic and unsafe situation and no time to make referrals for those we were unable to serve, and we were having to turn people away in the cold and the dark."

As Sinton points out, the new advance



registration system allows women to keep their place longer (3-4 nights) once they get it. Plus, if they don't get a mat (because the shelter is full), they know the outcome earlier in the day and have more time to work on other shelter options, with the help of staff from the day shelters if they choose. Other shelter options? Counting the emergency places through WES, the Women's Homeless Initiative/CHUM program (which shelters 20 women nightly at area shelters), and the Delores Project (which has 10 emergency shelter beds), there are maybe 90 emergency shelter spots for unaccompanied women in Denver, plus possibly 10-20 motel vouchers provided nightly to women by the Denver Department of Human Services. And there are probably hundreds of unhoused women. Hence the game.

So, with at least three paths potentially leading to a WES mat, which one should you take? Ready, set...grab your worldly belongings, and off you go!



Maybe you follow the St Francis path to compete for one of the 15 WES mats they assign every Monday and Thursday. Their doors open at 6am, and at first they allotted their WES mats on a first come, first served basis, so women were lining up outside (including in bad weather) at 4 am to be at the front of the line. This was especially hard on women who were frail or disabled. Now that they've changed to a lottery system, the early queuing up is unnecessary. You just need to be on the lottery list by 8am. But some women are unhappy with the change, since now there's nothing they can do to improve their chances of getting a mat.

"I was a good tenant for 24 years, then I make one mistake."

One reason you might choose the St Francis route is that it's also the place where the daily morning lottery is held for the 20 cots available through the Women's Homeless Initiative/CHUM program. Should you try for that? Hmm, a cot, not a mat, it's less crowded, you get a good dinner and breakfast, and there's less competition for the bathrooms. Plus, you can store your belongings at St Francis for the night. But--it's only for one night, and then you're back in the game.

An important factor to consider in deciding where to try for a WES mat is storage. If you start your day at St Francis, you can leave your belongings there for friends to watch, while you get a meal or run an errand or use a computer at the library, until it's time to haul everything over to Elati. That won't work at TGP or Denver Human Services.

What if you choose The Gathering Place (TGP) path? They also control 15 WES mats

via a lottery, which you can sign up for when they open at 8:30 am. But making your way there in the morning from Elati (if you had a mat last night) may be harder than getting to St Francis (though it's no picnic dragging your belongings to either place). On the other hand, TGP serves three meals a day, and it's a nice place to hang out, with showers, computers and lots of other services. And, if it's a Monday, you can also play the lottery there (but not at St Francis) for one of 10 overflow beds at the Delores Project FOR A WHOLE WEEK. But at TGP you can't play the CHUM lottery... Help! This is really getting crazy! You need a computer program to figure out your best course of action.

Or should you make your way over to the Denver Human Services building at 12th and Federal, where the General Assistance department there can assign women to available mats? I spoke with Anna, who used that strategy on a recent Monday.



Anna is homeless because of an eviction from another state. "I was a good tenant for 24 years, then I make one mistake and now no one will give me housing," Anna says. "It isn't fair."

"This routine is wearing me down."

Anna took a bus to Human Services, arriving at 5:30 am, and waited outside in line until the doors opened at 7. Then she put her name on a list (she was third) and was seen at around 9am. Her diligence paid off--she got a mat!

Now what if, despite your best effort to choose the right path, all has failed...it's 6pm and you've nowhere to sleep! In that case, says the system, just head over to the Samaritan House at 2301 Lawrence St (right near St Francis). The staff there will try to get you in somewhere...maybe at WES, if there are still vacancies, because some women didn't show up...or maybe a motel voucher--if you aren't on the "Do not re-voucher" list, because of breaking a Motel Voucher program rule in the past, and if you haven't used up your annual quota...in which case it's the great outdoors for you.

Unfortunately, when Debbie--homeless since her husband's death--went to the Samaritan House at 6pm recently, after not making it into CHUM or WES, it wasn't smooth sailing. The staff person wasn't there, so she walked all the way to WES. They sent her across the street to the Sheriff's Department, where at 9 pm her name was taken, and at 10 she was given a motel voucher and a bus ticket. She arrived around 11:30, was in bed at midnight, but had to wake up early to start playing Who Gets to Sleep Inside? all over again.

As many women I spoke with told me, the increased uncertainty about where they will sleep each night, combined with the need to trudge from place to place seeking and then getting to safe shelter, is both physically and mentally exhausting.

I first met Yoko, a seasoned Asian American shelter user, lugging fifty pounds of belongings

down Broadway. With a bad hip, Yoko was using a cane and inching down the sidewalk with the air of someone who knew she would eventually arrive where she needed to go. Yoko found herself on the street after an argument with family members that she had been living with. She had just returned to Denver after using shelters in Boulder for a while. Yoko usually stays at WES and plays the lottery at St Francis. She described her lottery morning routine for me.

"It's exhausting."

"I get up at 4am and start packing my stuff, and then carry each bag out around 5, which gives me 1/2 hour to get my stuff to the bus stop at 13th and Welton (3 blocks or 20 minutes away). I thread my sleeping bag strings through my suitcase handles with my cane on back, leaving the handle above my cart handle....then I lift and roll!" "This routine is wearing me down," Yoko told me. "I have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, headaches, a bad back, and bad hips, much of it from abusive relationships. The worst is exhaustion. I take cat naps at St Francis, and at the shelter, once I get in at 6pm. Typically I leave St Francis for three or 4 hours a day. (She trades off with friends to watch each other's belongings.) I go to the library, and to 7-11 to get a meal. I leave St Francis around 3:30 or 4, and catch a bus (to WES)." Yoko explains that some women still line up hours before the shelter opens, in order to get their choice of mat space once inside.

I met Aimee, another WES frequent flyer, through Yoko. Aimee has been homeless three times, due to divorce, family issues and landlord

problems. "It's exhausting," Aimee said of the effort to get a shelter bed. "I'm asleep by 7:30 at WES, and I sleep until 5:30am, except on Monday and Thursday when I'm up at 4:30 to play the WES lottery."

"I have panic and anxiety disorder," Aimee told me. "When I don't get in to WES I'm out of my mind. If I wasn't on meds I'd be in ER every Monday and Thursday. It was better before because if you got there early enough you were good. I'd come at 4:30 or 5 pm and still get in."

"Three nights in a row, I didn't get in anywhere despite going to Samaritan House at 6pm. So one night I stayed at my sister's. The next night a friend was in the ER so I stayed there. The third night we rode the buses all night. I have SSDI so I have a discount pass. But many have no income and can't take the bus."

The Denver urban camping ban makes it illegal to sleep outside anywhere in the city without permission. Yet because of the lack of sufficient shelter spots for unaccompanied women, added to the unwieldy system for accessing these spots, many women are forced to do just that. That makes them vulnerable to attacks, police harassment, and entry into the criminal justice system.

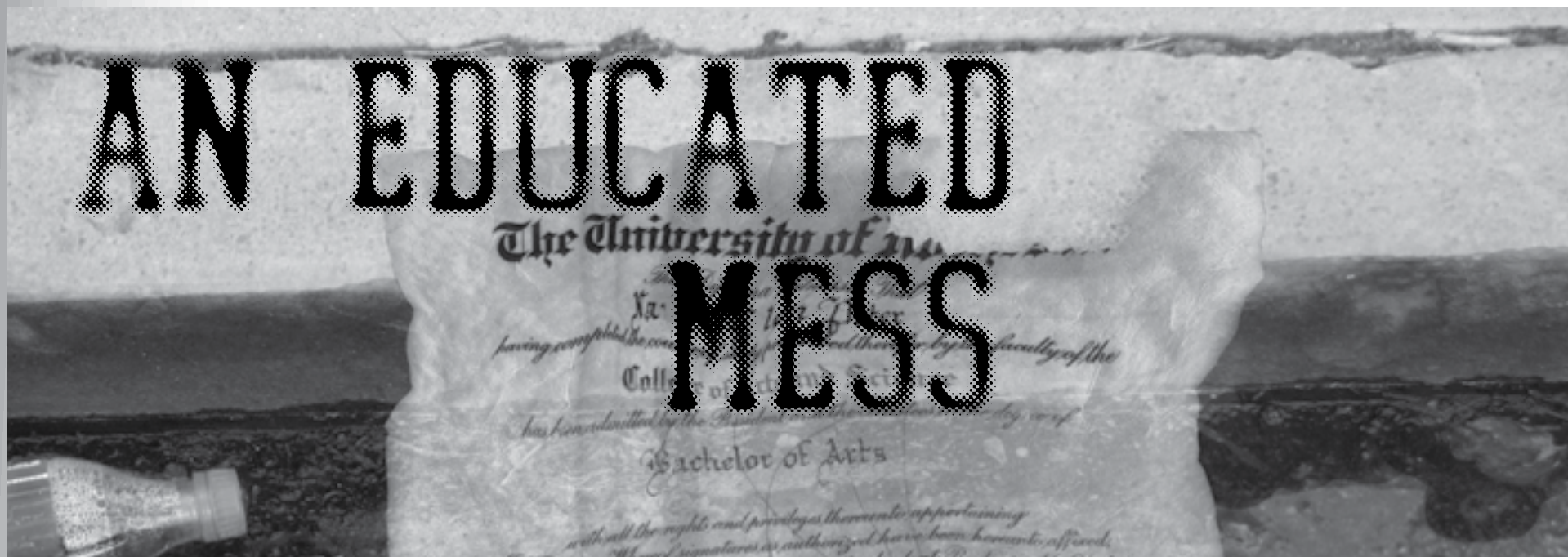
The bed counts above don't include beds for women in "transitional programs" run by such nonprofits as Sacred Heart, the Samaritan House, Irving Street, Brandon House, and the Delores Project. These beds are available on a longer term basis (from a month to a year or more), have a more extensive intake process, have waiting lists, and require candidates to meet certain qualifications and actively pursue certain goals, such as employment, permanent housing and benefits acquisition, with assistance from staff.

Entry into such a program is usually cause for celebration. But these programs don't work for everyone. Many aren't eligible (for example, virtually no programs exist for childless couples) or find the rules too restrictive. "The Samaritan House program isn't for me," said Yoko. "I don't need a program telling me what I have to do. I just need a safe place to stay and I can figure out the rest myself."

What is needed are easy to access, adequately staffed places where unhoused women can stay safely and comfortably for extended periods, without having to search for shelter each night or even every few nights. Places with the support and assistance needed to allow each guest to take care of her immediate needs and to transition into permanent housing, if that's her goal.

What is the status of the city's efforts to better meet the needs of women experiencing homelessness? The Women's Emergency Shelter, which has had five different locations since the program began in 2012, is slated to move again, since its lease at the current location is about to expire and other tenants are waiting to move in. The city is seeking another location, but it's not easy finding a building that's large enough, is easy to get to, has enough bathrooms, is handicap accessible, meets zoning codes and has accepting neighbors.

Meanwhile the women keep doing the homeless shuffle, hoping their lives will get better soon. X



by Dara Harvey

I am a 40 year old homeless woman. I am educated with a Bachelor's degree and I am also a struggling artist. My story of how I became houseless isn't much different from that of anyone else who finds themselves in the same predicament. As a divorcee, I moved back to Denver in 2011 and got mixed up with the wrong person who ended up using me for what little money I had from my divorce settlement. And in Denver's lousy and overpriced housing market, the money ran out rather quickly. I had anticipated Denver's art market to be more impressive than that of Spokane, Washington, considering the scale and cultural diversity here, and I tried every avenue I could think of to sell my work and be as prosperous as I once was--to little avail. I eventually had to take on two roommates for a two bedroom apartment. I looked for work but found nothing that could pay the bills or suit my skills. I was drowning in debt and became discouraged, depressed and started drinking heavily. I ended up selling almost everything that was of value.

I packed up my car, abandoned my apartment AND HEADED NORTH TO MONTANA.

It was shortly before Christmas and I was going to be evicted the following month because I couldn't pay rent, so I packed up my car, abandoned my apartment and headed north to Montana. Up there was tons of work, good paying jobs but at a price. Fracking was the game up there and people from all over the country flocked in droves to cash in on the destructive nature of this new method of well drilling. I found myself living in a camper city outside of town. It was lonely and boring. After working 14 hour days there was nothing else to do but drink. After staying in Montana for just

four months I decided to come back to Denver. Even with the work I found, I was still drowning in debt, struggling to survive and slowly going insane from the lack of mental stimulation that my creative mind needed. It was spring now but after coming back to Denver I had nowhere else to go but my car so

Over
the past year I've been struggling with one
thought on a daily basis
why am I homeless?

that's what I did, lived in my car until the day came that I had to sell it while it was still worth something. I couldn't afford the maintenance or the insurance anymore and it was slowly falling apart. I sold my car for a meager \$1,000 and used the money to pay for a small room in a communal house. That housing situation only lasted six months. The lady I rented from was absolutely insane and she kicked me out in the dead of winter for reasons unknown to me.

Luckily at the same time I found a small studio space in the Santa Fe Arts District for the same price I was paying at this other place. I wasn't supposed to be living in my studio at the time but me and four other people were doing just that. It was a good gig. I had a place to work and a place to be around other people that weren't crazy. It was nice until we all got the boot about four months after I moved in. The building wasn't up to code and it was illegal for anyone to be living in the basement, and the gallery itself was shut down for a couple months. This broke my heart but I complied to leave with a promise that I'd have a studio in the future if I hung around and helped with renovations and volunteerism. It was around the time the Urban

Camping Ordinance came into play and for a year now I've been living out of a shopping cart and couch surfing.

Over the past year I've been struggling with one thought on a daily basis...why am I homeless? I could get a job but I am disabled physically to a certain degree. and I have anxiety issues, PTSD, and manic depressive disorder. All of these make it difficult to be around crowds and have a normal life style. I take medication but is this an excuse to not re-enter society?

I am very blessed to have a place to make art and have a small refuge from the boredom and stress of street life... but every evening I must

I feel like I live a double life.

return to the streets. I feel like I live a double life, a very strange one. Since the camping ordinance, I have found it difficult to find a place to lay my head at night--either for reasons of avoiding people that want to hurt me or finding a space that is quiet and free from harassment. But I still ask myself everyday....why am I homeless?

Quite honestly, in homelessness I find some freedom from the shackles of mundane life: go to school, throw yourself into debt, work at a job you hate, be a slave to mass consumerism, get married, throw yourself further into debt, buy a house, have kids..blah, blah, blah. I've been there and I don't want that lifestyle anymore... although I will always be open to the idea of the man of my dreams sweeping me off my feet and helping me get off the streets. X

TEN NEW COPS



FOR WHAT?

By Get Loud team

Despite protests from dozens of homeless people and advocates, the Denver City Council on June 23rd voted unanimously to spend \$1.8 million for additional policing, arrests, and incarceration of people in several downtown Denver areas. Part of the money will be spent to add 10 full-time police officers to patrol the “hot spots” of the 16th St Mall, the Ballpark neighborhood (where St Francis Center, the Rescue Mission, Samaritan House, and many other services for homeless people are located), and LoDo.

Alongside this \$1.8 million from the city’s budget, three downtown business associations--The Downtown Denver Partnership, Visit Denver, and the Downtown Denver Business Improvement District--have already pooled \$175,000 of their own funds to hire one additional off-duty Denver Police Department officer per block to patrol three blocks of the 16th St Mall during the summer.

In advocating for the need for more cops in the Ballpark, LoDo and 16th Street Mall areas, Police Chief Robert White stated that the “real focus would be on having a police presence to prevent quality of life issues,” including panhandling, urinating in public, and public

marijuana smoking. Not mentioned but certainly targeted was the “crime” (due to the Urban Camping Ban) of sleeping in public. Laws against sitting/lying down along the 16th St Mall, and “loitering” in various areas will also be enforced.

As Council Woman Robin Kniech pointed out, this request for additional policing was made by Mayor Hancock in an effort to accommodate the complaints of the Ballpark Neighborhood Association about the \$8.6 million which the Denver City Council recently approved for the Lawrence St Community Center addition to the Denver Rescue Mission.

“You’re mixing apples and oranges,” said Kniech of the measure. ***“There are the night life problems (in LoDo, when the bars empty at 2am, and where additional police are needed to maintain order), and there is the homeless piece specifically requested by the Ballpark area. If you were to increase the homeless outreach (police) officers, that would be matching the solution to the problem.”*** Kniech also stated that ***“the safety issues have nothing to do with the homeless.”*** While the LoDo bar area is known to generate a high amount of

police activity, including assaults, the need for more cops due to the bars was downplayed relative to the focus on “quality of life issues” in discussions about the \$1.8 million request. In fact, the extra 10 police will stop working at midnight, and will not be available at 2am, when the bars let out and the 911 call volume is especially high.

In the weeks and days leading up to the City Council vote, Denver Homeless Out Loud (DHOL) voiced its concerns about the measure, which members believe could unfairly target people experiencing homelessness, increase harassment against them, and treat them as criminals for engaging in acts of survival. DHOL widely circulated a statement which suggested the money should instead be spent on things that would improve life for people experiencing homelessness, including public restrooms, job programs, and affordable housing. (Go to denverhomelessoutloud.org to read the entire statement “10 New Cops for What?” under “Recent Posts.”) Members also met with City Council members Susan Shepherd, Robin Kniech, and Debbie Ortega about the proposal, urging its defeat. And DHOL, along with the Colorado Progressive Coalition (CPC), organized a rally and march

from the 16th Street Mall to the City and County Building, which ended with some 40 participants attending the City Council meeting at which the measure came to a vote.

The campaign opposing the expenditures for more policing was covered by several media, including Westword, 5280, The Denver Post, KGNU radio, ABC Channel 7, and CBS Channel 4.

Opponents of the \$1.8 million request were frustrated and disappointed **that no public comment was allowed at that or any other City Council meeting**, that the measure was rushed through to passage after being introduced in committee just three weeks earlier, and that the request passed unanimously. At the same time, they were pleased that City Council members Shepherd, Kniech, and Ortega recognized them for advocating for the rights of people experiencing homelessness, and that these members called for more progress in providing real solutions to the problems faced by people experiencing homelessness. In addition, Councilman Paul Lopez called the urban camping ban a “flawed ordinance” and blamed it for drawing law enforcement resources away from real crime-fighting activity.

Shepherd, who voted for the measure along with the other City Council representatives, said she did so because additional cops were needed to reduce crime, but **“not to harass, intimidate or arrest people just for doing what the homeless have to do.”** Shepherd also highlighted the ideas which DHOL presented in their media statement, asking “How many public restrooms are there in these areas?” and making the point that no public officials in the room had any idea.

Kniech called for (and Shepherd and Ortega endorsed) tracking police activity related to adding the 10 cops, to determine whether the measure is having punitive effects on unhoused people. “If it turns out the result is an increase in bench warrants (against the homeless),” said Kniech, **“then this will not have been a good use of our money.”**

“This was a complete fucking success for us,” said Ray Lyall, a DHOL member and one of the organizers of the campaign against the request. “If we hadn’t gotten involved, no one would have even thought twice about what was happening. The powers that be would have gotten away with framing the issue as a homeless issue, of blaming homeless people for problems they have nothing to do with, like inadequate trash collection services, population growth downtown, and fights when the bars close.” X

3 men's ENCOUNTERS with cops

JY'S STORY:

I'm one of the “working homeless.” I get regular work through Standby (a temporary employment service). But I don't make enough to afford my own place. And I can't do shelters--it feels like being incarcerated. So I sleep outside. But for two days in a row I was too tired to go to work because a cop wouldn't leave me alone. Every time I'd go to a new spot, this cop would follow me and tell me, “Move along. You can't stay here.” I was trying to sleep in alleyways, out of the way of the yuppies. I even went to the river but he followed me there. I didn't get a ticket, but I didn't sleep either, and I lost two days pay as a result.

GEORGE'S STORY:

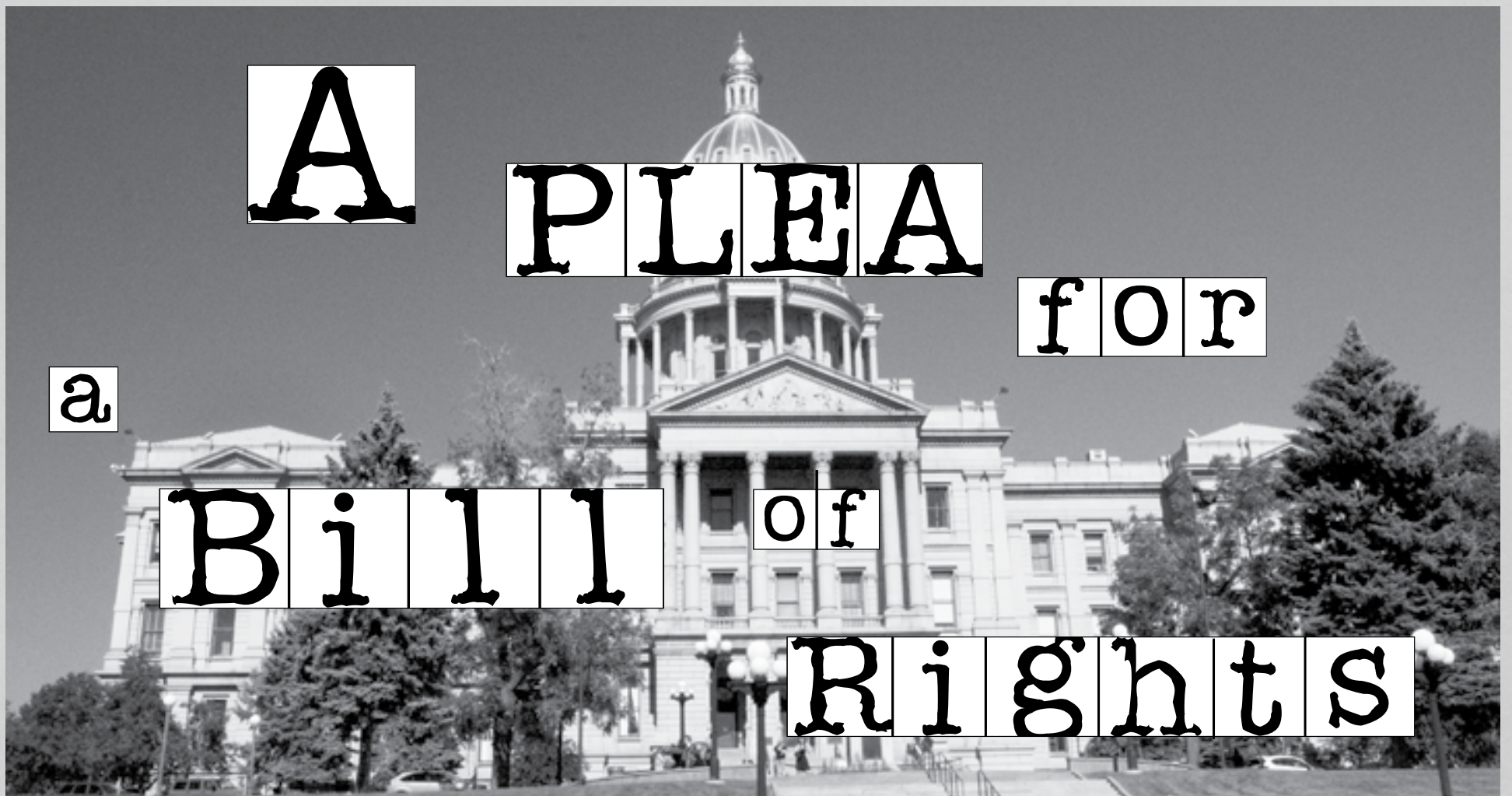
I came here from Delaware for 4-20 and just stayed. I can't do shelters, I can't live with other men, so I camp outside. One day I went into a dumpster by the Creamery, to look for packets of hot sauce, which I put on everything. A cop came over and said “You need two feet on the concrete.” I'm sure he just made that up, and there's no law that says that. Then he said “Do you have alcohol on your breath? What's your name?” He never liked me after that. He'll come find me around midnight and if he sees me he'll ask me “What's that in your cup? What's in your pockets?” He's always harassing me.

TIM'S STORY:

Some friends and I were sitting on chairs and talking at the edge of the sidewalk near the Corner Bakery on the 16th Street Mall. We weren't blocking the sidewalk or bothering anybody. A security guard for the Westin Hotel and the Palm Restaurant approached and said we were trespassing on private property and had to move.

We refused to move telling him the sidewalk was public property, and if we were trespassing he could call the police to give us a ticket, and we would take it to court. We said they were only harassing us and not any of the others on the sidewalk, including customers and employees of the businesses. And what about all the people walking on the sidewalk?

At that point a man who'd been watching the interaction brought a Denver police officer over. When we explained the situation to her, she told the security guard that it was a public sidewalk, owned and maintained by the city. She said we had every legal right to be on the sidewalk as long as we weren't blocking it, and that the security guards had no right to make us leave. We were glad this cop straightened out the security guard, who never bothered us after that. X



by Beuford Baby Boy Travis

Throughout American history, there have been laws which negatively affect some populations more than others. Over a century ago, there were Jim Crow laws that took away basic human rights from people of color. Then there were Anti-Okie Laws in California that aimed to keep out all the poor migrant workers coming from out East during the Great Depression. There was 'Operation Wetback,' which targeted anyone who was 'Mexican or Mexican-Looking.' Until the Civil Rights Act of 1968, we still had Sun Down Towns, which made it illegal for people of color to stay in central towns after sunset. And, yes, our country even had laws – called 'Ugly Laws' - against people that didn't look 'normal enough', even if they were middle class white folks.

Here's an example of one such law--Chicago **Municipal Code Section 36034:**

"No person who is diseased, maimed, mutilated or in any way deformed so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object or improper person to be allowed in or on the public ways or other public places in this city, or shall therein or thereon expose himself to public view, under a penalty of not less than one dollar nor more than fifty dollars for each offense."

Thankfully, this was the last of the Ugly Laws, and it was declared unconstitutional in 1974. But I suppose local governments always need to marginalize someone, and since our courts have affirmed that it is morally reprehensible to create

laws that discriminate against people of color, people of different genders, people with disabilities or people that are 'diseased, maimed, mutilated or in any way deformed', Denver, like many other cities, has decided to target another community--the homeless community.

And they are using the same tactics as they've used all along. Then: "It's not illegal to be black; you just can't go to the same schools." Or "You just can't sleep in town." Now: "We're not making it illegal to be homeless, they just can't hang around or sleep here. This is a business improvement district; they've got to go somewhere else."

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) have shown that using punitive measures, selectively enforcing city-wide ordinances (like loitering, jaywalking, and open container laws) against people experiencing homelessness, and enforcing 'quality of life crimes' (like panhandling or urinating in public)--rather than increasing the amount of services--has become the new norm in dealing with homeless people within major cities. For example, a 2009 study of 234 American cities conducted by the NLCHP found that:

- The percentage of cities with laws criminalizing homelessness is significantly increasing.
- 56% of cities prohibit loitering in particular areas.
- 53% of cities prohibit begging in particular public places, while 24% ban panhandling

or begging citywide.

- 40% of cities ban camping in particular public areas.
- 33% of cities prohibit sitting and lying in particular places.
- 22% of cities prohibit loitering citywide.
- 16% of cities enforce citywide camping bans.

Denver, in particular, has enacted and enforces numerous laws which are specifically designed to deter the presence of homeless people in public spaces. Here are just some of those laws:

- Prohibiting the obstruction of sidewalks and public places
- Prohibiting loitering in particular public spaces
- Enforcing a 'park curfew' banning late-night presence in parks city-wide
- Prohibiting sitting or lying in particular public spaces
- Prohibiting 'aggressive panhandling'
- Prohibiting begging or panhandling in particular places and at certain times
- Criminalizing urinating or defecating in public (without providing adequate public bathroom alternatives)
- Banning sleeping in particular public places

And now, since the passage of the 'Camping Ban'--

- Making it illegal to cover yourself from the elements while sleeping outside.

When the Camping Ban proposal was presented

to the public by Councilman Albus Brooks, he promised it would not only clean up downtown, but would also improve the lives of homeless people. But Denver Homeless Out Loud's 'Report From The Streets' (which was published in 2013 and can be found at denverhomelessoutloud.org) showed different results. DHOL analyzed the effects of Denver's 'Camping Ban Ordinance' on 512 homeless individuals living in downtown Denver. Those surveyed reported being 'moved along' from safe secure places and pushed into more secluded hidden and dangerous areas. They also said they have been approached more often by the police, yet they have received help less often, their lives have worsened and they feel less safe. And worst of all, nearly 40% of people reported not covering themselves from the elements in order to be in accordance with the law.

Cities know that criminalization efforts are counterproductive to helping end homelessness. Many reports have been written about the subject, and many authorities--including service providers nationally and locally, lawyers, the Obama administration, and researchers--have all spoken out on these issues. The consensus is clear: criminalization efforts violate peoples' civil and human rights, and are costly and senseless from a policy perspective.

Officials would rather trample on people's rights by criminalizing their status as people experiencing homelessness.

So what does make sense? Study after study has shown that housing homeless people, and making supportive services, such as health care and legal assistance, available to them is significantly cheaper than paying for the countless trips to the emergency room and stints in jail that are caused by a hard life on the streets. So, in the long term, the solution to homelessness is not to arrest the victims, but to make affordable housing available to them.

But meanwhile, right now, what to do about all the people without safe and secure places to sleep? What about the help that is available? Aren't there multiple large shelters in Denver for men and women? Why don't homeless people use those resources?

A brief look at statistics would help explain the problem. The Metro Denver Homeless Initiative's 2014 Point in Time Survey counted 3,245 homeless people in Denver on one January night. Yet, according to a 2013 report from the Denver's Road Home, there are only about 820 shelter beds available for them year-round, and 1170 during the winter months. (This includes many overflow mats placed on the floor in cramped quarters.)

In 2012, Denver's Road Home paid the National Alliance to End Homelessness to conduct a 'Denver Shelter Assessment.' The report's findings

are depressing. For example:

- "The shelter system in Denver has less public investment and less overall investment than in many other communities, resulting in lower quality than in some other cities, although not significantly so. For example, Philadelphia's Office of Supportive Housing invests \$28 million annually in its emergency shelter system, compared to approximately \$2 million invested by the City and County of Denver."
- "The shelter system is greatly inhibited by the lack of system-wide data and measured outcomes."
- "Access to the shelter system is uncoordinated and generally does not prioritize people who are most vulnerable. People who need to access the shelter system spend more time and energy gaining that access than is necessary. This is a stressful process and the time could be better utilized on efforts to find employment and housing."
- "Each shelter has developed standards, training protocols, and policies. However, there is an overall lack of community-wide standards and outcomes in the shelter system."
- "We were not able to identify any emergency shelter that takes pets, although some, like the Rescue Mission, take service animals. Many of the shelters serve people who are intoxicated, although there appear to be no good options for youth who are intoxicated. Those youth are sent to either one of the adult shelters or to a detoxification program. There also appears to be no place for childless couples, although they can stay in separate shelters, or in the case of Samaritan House, in separate rooms of the shelter."
- "The most important deficiency in the city's shelter system is the lack of an exit strategy for its residents. There is very little re-housing assistance for people experiencing homelessness in Denver. As a result, people are in the shelter system for longer than is necessary, which puts additional strain on the shelter system. Addressing this need should be the city's first priority."

So, what is the obvious conclusion here? America's elected officials would rather trample on people's rights by criminalizing their status as people experiencing homelessness, in the hopes of 'cleaning up downtown' and appeasing the business community, than actually end the epidemic of mass homelessness in America the one way we know how--by funding housing for unsheltered people. And in Denver and elsewhere we criminalize sleeping outside while failing to provide sufficient or adequate emergency shelter, transitional services, or housing options. So, what is to protect the rights of homeless people from the whims of business interest? It seems the only real answer, with any substantial legal weight, is to fight for a Homeless Bill of Rights (HBOR)--a piece of state legislation which

could prevent the rights of individuals from being trampled on by local municipalities.

Rhode Island, Illinois and Connecticut have each passed HBORs, and California and Oregon are currently discussing their own HBORs in their senates.

Connecticut's protections include the right to:

1. Move freely in public spaces, including on public sidewalks, in public parks, on public transportation and in public buildings without harassment or intimidation from law enforcement officers in the same manner as other persons;
2. Have equal opportunities for employment;
3. Receive emergency medical care;
4. Register to vote and to vote;
5. Have personal information protected;
6. Have a reasonable expectation of privacy in one's personal property; and
7. Receive equal treatment by state and municipal agencies.

If passed, California's HBOR would protect the following rights:

1. Right to move freely, rest, sleep, and pray, and be protected in public spaces without discrimination;
2. Right to occupy a legally parked vehicle;
3. Right to serve food and eat in public;
4. Right to legal counsel if being prosecuted;
5. Right to 24-hour access to "hygiene facilities"; and
6. Require judges to consider a necessity defense when hearing homeless related cases.

At the present time, homeless people are treated like second class citizens, with their rights being trampled on daily as the wheels of injustice spin freely. However, Colorado could become the 4th state to pass a Homeless Bill of Rights, if only its populace would have the will to do so.

"I am troubled that an ever increasing number of communities are banning urban camping in response to encampments in public places. There is a sad irony that Americans who are homeless and unsheltered are being displaced and their lives further disrupted at a cost to the taxpayer without solving the real problem. We will continue to reach out to communities and encourage that they embrace alternatives to criminalization including access to housing and safe shelter as well as collaborative approaches with law enforcement and criminal justice."

Barbara Poppe, Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

COLORADO Homeless People's Rights Survey!

by the Homeless Bill
of Rights Working Group

Denver Homeless Out Loud (DHOL), HartCore and 9to5 are working on a campaign to get a Homeless Bill of Rights passed in Colorado. We believe that any legislation protecting the rights of homeless people must be grounded in the experience and priorities of people on the front lines of homelessness. So our first step is to conduct a Colorado Homeless People's Rights Survey, in conjunction with organizations across Colorado, to gather information from people experiencing homelessness about what human and civil rights are being violated.

The survey asks 23 questions about how laws (such as those against sleeping, asking for donations, and loitering) are affecting people; how police and private security officers are treating people; what is happening in court; what access to shelter or other needed resources looks like; and what barriers people are facing in getting housing and employment.

In order to gather this information from people who are homeless in Denver and all across Colorado, we need people to help ask and answer these questions!

Become a Surveyor

If you would like to join us and become a surveyor you can contact us at info@denverhomelessoutloud.org or call us at 720-940-5291.

Answer the Survey Questions and Share Your Stories

If you are or have recently been homeless, fill out a survey! Surveyors will be all about town for the next couple months asking people to answer these survey questions. Or you can come to a DHOL meeting (see pg.2) to get a survey to answer. We also need more detailed stories regarding what rights are being violated when one is homeless in Colorado, so if you can share a story that is rad!

Come to Meetings

All are welcome to come to our Homeless Bill of Rights meetings every second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 3pm at the American Friends Service Committee room in the Courthouse Square apartment building (901 W 14th Avenue). For more info see <http://denverhomelessoutloud.org/homeless-bill-of-rights>



EMERGENCY SHELTERS FOR FAMILIES



By Get Loud Team

In the last issue of Get Loud we provided information on emergency shelters for unaccompanied men and women. Here we cover shelters that serve families with children, to which families can apply directly, rather than being referred by another agency.

Keep in mind that we gathered this information from shelter providers and do not have direct experience with these resources. We're not recommending them--just putting the information in one place for you. We hope you'll contact us to share your experiences with other Get Loud readers.

The Family Services Program

(2301 Lawrence), run by the Samaritan House, has a family floor with 21 rooms. Families admitted into the program can stay up to four months. During their stay, with support from a case manager, the family works toward achieving their housing, employment and other goals. Parents are expected to begin participating in a "full-time activity" (such as employment, a GED program, or a job training program) within 45 days. They are also expected to save 80% of their income after expenses.

Admission to the program is through a lottery which is held each day that one or more rooms become available. Families



should call 303-294-0241 by 7:30 am to find out if a lottery will be held that day. If so, the family must be at Samaritan House by 10am to have their name included. According to Family Services Supervisor Rebecca Wiman, there are typically about 15 families vying for each room.

Two-parent families need to provide a document showing they are a married or common-law couple. Documentation showing a parent-child relationship is also needed, but families have 30 days after program admission to obtain this.

Family Promise of Great Denver shelters 8-10 families at a time in host congregations (churches) at night, while in the daytime the families go to the program's day center where they receive support in pursuing their housing, employment and other goals. Each participating congregation serves as host for one week, beginning on a Sunday, and at the end of the week the families rotate to the next host. Families travel to the host congregation by program van, their own car or public transportation. They stay at the host congregation from 5:30 pm to 7 am, during which time they have dinner and breakfast and may also pack a sack lunch. Showers and laundry facilities are available. Families generally stay in the program for up to 60 days. Continued participation is contingent upon the family working actively and making progress toward achieving their goals.

To be eligible for the Family Promise program, you must have at least one child under age 18 living with you full time. Each adult must have a state issued photo ID and a social security card, and can not have domestic violence, assault or sexually-based offenses.

The first step in the application process is to call Family Promise at 303-675-0713. If there's an opening a phone screen will be conducted. If you pass this step, you will be scheduled for a face-to-face interview.

If there's no opening, you will be offered case management services, such as assistance with housing, employment or benefits acquisition. Families not interested in case management services will be offered other resources to contact and encouraged to recontact Family Promise periodically to check on openings.

The Denver Catholic Worker House (2420 Welton Street) offers short term/ temporary housing and community in a private home for women, families and couples who have nowhere else to go. The Worker has two single women's rooms, one family room and one room for couples without children. Families must have three or more people. Single parent families are welcome. No I.D. or paperwork is required. Simply call 303- 296-6390 in the morning after 9am to see if a space is available. Guests can stay for up to a few months. Living arrangements are familial and facilities are shared. General expectations include sobriety, non-violence and willingness to work to get more stable housing and to cooperate in a communal living situation.

The Comitis Crisis Center (2178 Victor Street, Aurora) has an emergency overnight shelter with about 40 beds for families with a youth under 18. Women and children stay in three rooms with ten beds each. Men stay on mats in the kitchen overflow area. Families needing a place to spend the night should go to the center at 6:30pm. A lottery will be held

if there aren't enough beds for all. IDs aren't required the first night but you will be asked to obtain one for future stays. Staff will check the sex offender registry. Families may also apply for Comitis' longer term transitional housing program, for which there is a waiting list. For questions, call 303-341-9160.

The Action Center (8755 West 14th Avenue, Lakewood) has a shelter program with 22 beds for couples, families and single adults. Guests may stay in the program for up to 45 days while working with case managers to develop and accomplish housing and other goals. Families and couples can remain together in private rooms. Each day, shelter guests receive breakfast and dinner and can choose to pack a lunch. The shelter is closed between 6:50 am and 5:30 pm, and guests are expected to be out looking for work and/or accessing other community resources. Guests perform chores each evening during their stay.

To find out if there are openings at the shelter, call The Action Center at 303.237.7704. If a shelter room is available that fits your family size, you will be asked to come in as soon as possible. Those seeking shelter will be pre-screened on a first-come first-serve basis to determine if they meet the shelter requirements. After pre-screening, interviews will be conducted between 1:30 and 3pm until the shelter room is filled. Applicants must present valid ID and pass a background check.

The Family Motel Voucher Program is funded and run by the Denver Department of Human Services funds. Motel vouchers are issued as a last resort on a case-by-case basis--typically when all other shelters have filled to capacity or there is an extenuating circumstance that prevents a family from staying in a shelter. Families are housed at the Family Motel, run by Volunteers of America, on West Colfax. There you will meet with a Denver Human Services worker who will help you stabilize your housing situation. If the motel is full, you may be placed temporarily in another motel.

In order to receive a motel voucher, you must have lived in Denver County for at least 30 days. Motel vouchers are issued from the following locations:

***Denver Human Services**, 1200 Federal Blvd., General Assistance, Monday-Friday, 8:30am-3pm

***Samaritan House**, 2301 Lawrence St., (7 days a week), Monday-Friday, 5-9pm, Saturday-Sunday, 4-8pm.

***Denver Sheriff**, 490 W. Colfax, (7 days a week), Monday-Friday after 9pm, Saturday-Sunday, 8pm or later.

Need help getting your

ID



by Linda Olson

Colorado Legal Services (CLS), along with partners Metro CareRing (MCR), the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and Denver Human Services, has created a special project to assist homeless clients and others with the sticky problem of needing an ID to get an ID. Without an ID, people find themselves unable to use a housing voucher or even get on a waiting list for permanent housing. Employers want to see an ID before offering a job. Many doctors and pharmacists also want an ID presented, even when a Medicaid or CICP card is shown. Picking up mail at a post office or opening a bank account can be impossible for those without IDs. Getting benefits like SSI, AND, food stamps and Medicaid is also a challenge without an ID.

To solve these and many other problems, the ID Project was established in 2007. Since that time thousands of people have received help getting a state ID, birth certificate or replacement immigration document. There is no charge for legal help for low-income individuals. (You must be a U.S. citizens or "lawfully present" immigrant to get help.)

Some cases are considered "simple" and a \$10.50 voucher is all that is needed to replace a valid or recently expired Colorado ID or Driver's License. Such cases, along with those only needing a certified birth certificate, can be handled at Metro CareRing.

Temporarily, during its construction period, MCR's ID Project staff will

only be able to see people through appointments, which can be made by calling **303-350-3631**.

Colorado Legal Services ID staff (one paralegal who is bi-lingual in Spanish and two attorneys) deals with more complicated cases. What is considered a more "complicated" case?

- No documents, or very few documents, and have never had a Colorado ID;
- Have gone to Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and been told there is a problem, such as a "fraud block", mismatch with Social Security records, or problem with fingerprints;
- Name on birth certificate does not match name on other documents or records;
- Had and lost green card, naturalization certificate, etc;
- Social Security record has error in spelling of name or date of birth;
- Never had a birth certificate (born at home), or birth certificate has errors;
- Department of Corrections (DOC) ID has errors in name or date of birth, or both; or
- Any other situation in which DMV has denied ID.

What do we do to help?

After an extensive interview with CLS intake staff, an ID case handler meets with the client to further explain the process, gather additional information, complete needed paperwork, and begin ordering documents.

What do you need to get a Colorado ID? Answer: It depends. Each case is different, and it can be frustrating when one person seems to get an ID with no documents and another makes repeated trips to DMV without success. ID Project staff is experienced with all the variations and can quickly assess each situation and what supporting documents will be needed. Some cases are resolved quickly and others take many months.

We always ask clients to stay in touch so that we can contact you as soon as we have the needed papers. Once the documents are obtained, the CLS staffer will meet you at the Lakewood DMV(1881 Pierce Street) and walk with you through the application process. If your contact information changes, please let us know. If you have no address, phone or e-mail address, check in with us periodically the best way you can.

Examples of People Facing ID Challenges

James, a homeless vet age 62, was born at home in North Carolina, and never had a birth certificate. He had many documents proving who he was, but Social Security required a birth certificate. Our staff gathered old school records, census records, and old medical records to convince North Carolina Vital Records of his name and date and place of birth. He was issued a "delayed" birth certificate, and then could begin to receive the SSI benefits he desperately needed.

Edith was having her retirement benefits deposited in her bank account when the bank changed policies and said she was not allowed to withdraw any of her money until she showed a current picture ID. She was about to be evicted because she could not pay her rent. We gathered the necessary papers to prove her identity and citizenship, and DMV issued her an ID. She then took that ID to her bank.

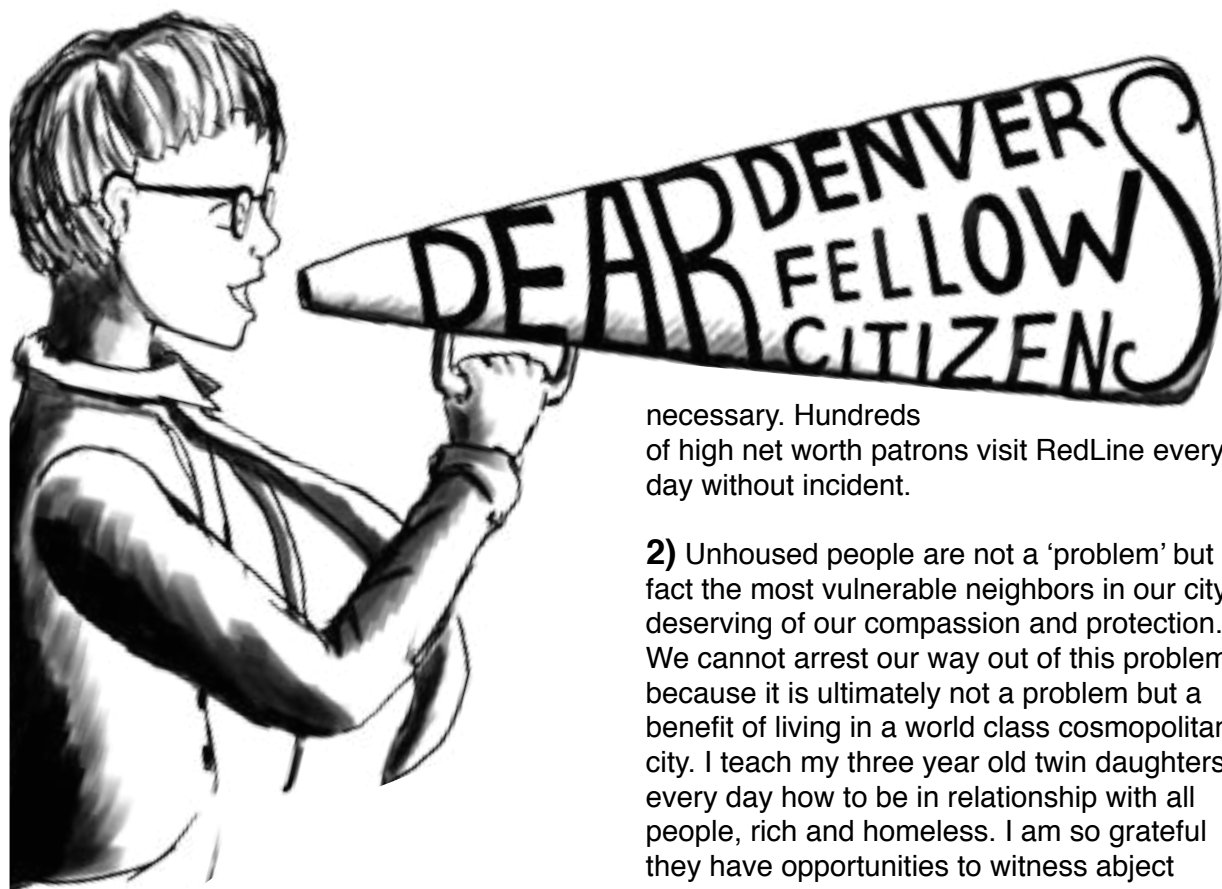
John, a homeless teen, had been thrown out of his foster home and his foster parent refused to give him any of his papers. He needed a birth certificate, Social Security card and state ID to get a job. We worked with his case worker at Urban Peak to get him an ID and birth certificate as soon as possible so that he could get off the streets.

Mary lost her children's birth certificates and her ID when she left her abusive spouse. Without these documents she could not enroll her children in school or find a job to support herself. We were able to replace the birth certificates and ID relatively quickly so that Mary could start a new life.

Abdul was robbed and his greencard was stolen. He could not get a job or an ID until it was replaced. Lost immigration documents are expensive to replace and the federal government takes a long time to process the applications. In this case we were able to get the fee waived and to get USCIS to process his case as a "hardship" so the wait time was reduced.

CLS serves walk-in clients without appointments from 8:30 to 11am Monday through Friday. The address is **1905 Sherman Street, Suite 400**. If you prefer, you can be interviewed by phone. Call **(303) 837-1321** and leave your name and number, and someone will call you back to interview you at a later time. You can also check our website, www.coloradoidproject.org for more information.

Linda Olson is Senior Attorney at Colorado Legal Services. X



by PJ D'Amico

I am so disheartened by the conversation being framed about the 'problem' of the homeless. To be clear, I am the Executive Director of the Buck Family Foundation, which provides funding to a number of homeless provider agencies in Denver, and I was recently the executive director of RedLine, a \$3 million contemporary arts organization that is physically located directly next to the St. Francis Center and the Denver Rescue Mission. I would like to share with you a few observations as a business leader, philanthropist neighbor and friend to people who happen to be homeless.

1) Businesses can be and are successful in immediate proximity to homelessness. Be it the Chelsea District in NY, the Mission in San Francisco or RedLine in Denver, businesses in cosmopolitan cities across the nation thrive in places where there are concentrations of homeless neighbors. I offer no panacea but suggest that businesses can find creative ways to work in concert with our homeless neighbors.

At RedLine we have homeless people who come into our space every day. Our building is tagged consistently. I have had to remove the enclosure around our dumpster so as to not provide convenient shelter to the homeless, and on more than one occasion I have had to personally clean up human excrement from one of my homeless neighbors. Still, in the four years I directed RedLine, we did not have a single incident of theft or assault between homeless people and our 20,000 annual patrons. I have called the police on a handful of occasions, but never has an arrest been

necessary. Hundreds of high net worth patrons visit RedLine every day without incident.

2) Unhoused people are not a 'problem' but in fact the most vulnerable neighbors in our city deserving of our compassion and protection. We cannot arrest our way out of this problem because it is ultimately not a problem but a benefit of living in a world class cosmopolitan city. I teach my three year old twin daughters every day how to be in relationship with all people, rich and homeless. I am so grateful they have opportunities to witness abject poverty up close and personal (within reason), and I am grateful that my daughters have not yet witnessed police arresting citizens for no good reason. I will share with them as they grow older, that each person experiencing homelessness is someone's mother, father, brother or son. They are folks who struggle, and we should have empathy for them just as we count our own grace and blessings. Once we begin referring to them as 'problems' it is we who are the real problem.

Please offer solutions not band-aids.

3) Until now Denver has been a world class city. You cannot have a world class city without world class civility. I spent the better part of my adult life in Atlanta where they passed a similar ordinance to Denver's Urban Camping Ban in advance of the 1996 Olympics. The city has been reeling ever since. Note that in Toronto in 1992 activists, at the time known as Food Not Bombs, blocked the Olympics from coming to Canada because of similar antics. Please do not give Occupy a good reason to make Denver the poster-child for protest and direct action. A world class city is measured by the way it treats its most indigent residents. Denver and The Road Home have been a national model until now. It is time we put the "neighbor" back in the hood and the "citizen" back in our city.

4) Please offer solutions not band-aids. The problem with the logic emerging out of City Council, and by proximity the downtown business leadership, is that it simply and literally just kicks unhoused people further down the road to nowhere.

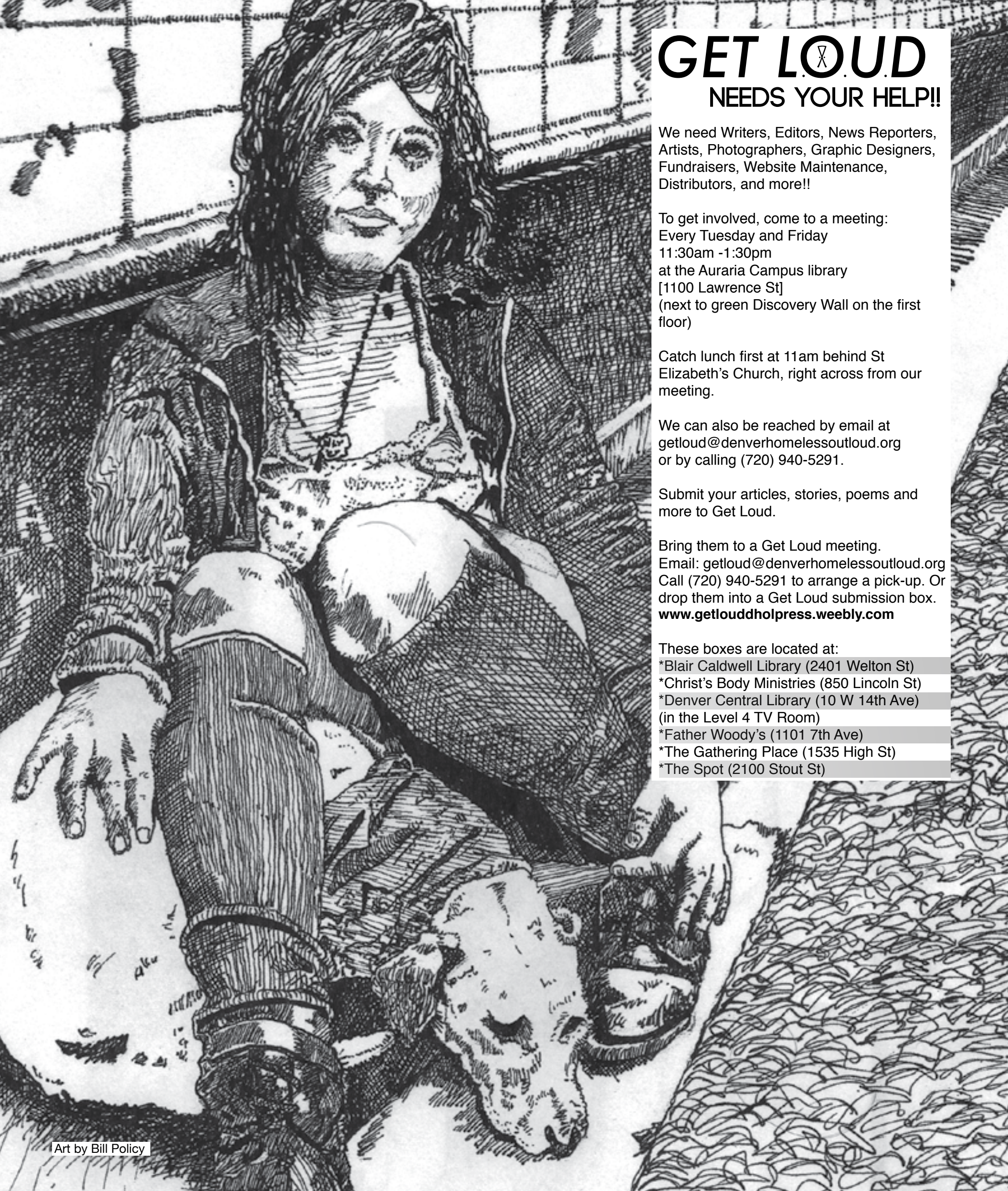
So if homeless people are not to be jailed or housed in a 24-hour shelter (whose funding is ambiguous), where do they go? They have to go somewhere. Police Chief White told me that the best the police can do is displace the homeless problem not eliminate it. And so, where in Denver would you have unhoused people concentrate once they are removed from the 16th Street Mall? Which community will inherit their new neighbors with open arms?

5) Have the conversation with the public. City Council is presently having a monologue that is being driven by narrow business interests and not the public/voters at large. The overwhelming majority of the citizens I meet are profoundly upset by the Urban Camping Ban and the arbitrary closing of Triangle Park and Sonny Lawson Park (now reopened), and yet the voices of dissent are squelched and certainly overlooked by mainstream media. How terribly poetic that, during the hearings on the Urban Camping Ban, when a voice of dissent could be heard in the chambers, two additional police showed up in the room to provide additional 'security.' What a terrible precursor to the new reality being ushered in by City leadership.

Let me share in closing that I am neither overly idealistic nor naive but fiercely practical. I once served as the night manager for a women's shelter in Five Points and recently directed RedLine, a thriving contemporary art space in the heart of that same community. But my lived experience is my greatest teacher. Just over twenty five years ago, I coached a baseball team where one of the ten year old boys, James, had a learning disability. A few years ago, I met James at the ripe age of 28 literally on that same exact baseball field in Atlanta. He struggled with chronic homelessness and faced a pattern of serial arrests. And so my wife took him into our home to live one night a week so that he might get a warm meal and a shower.

Now that I have twin daughters, taking a homeless man into my home is out of the question. And yet the question remains, where is it safe for James to be in our community? Who will look out for his human dignity while we go about our business? If we claim to be a moral community this is a question we must answer. I pray, God watch us as we watch out for James.

In closing, I implore you as both elected officials and neighbors not to "fix the problem" of homelessness but instead to create solutions that realize that these are men and women whose humanity is worth fighting for not against. Let us address this issue at its roots not by reacting to the symptoms. X



GET LOUD

NEEDS YOUR HELP!!

We need Writers, Editors, News Reporters, Artists, Photographers, Graphic Designers, Fundraisers, Website Maintenance, Distributors, and more!!

To get involved, come to a meeting:
Every Tuesday and Friday
11:30am -1:30pm
at the Auraria Campus library
[1100 Lawrence St]
(next to green Discovery Wall on the first floor)

Catch lunch first at 11am behind St Elizabeth's Church, right across from our meeting.

We can also be reached by email at getloud@denverhomelessoutloud.org or by calling (720) 940-5291.

Submit your articles, stories, poems and more to Get Loud.

Bring them to a Get Loud meeting.
Email: getloud@denverhomelessoutloud.org
Call (720) 940-5291 to arrange a pick-up. Or drop them into a Get Loud submission box.
www.getloudholpress.weebly.com

These boxes are located at:

- *Blair Caldwell Library (2401 Welton St)
- *Christ's Body Ministries (850 Lincoln St)
- *Denver Central Library (10 W 14th Ave)
(in the Level 4 TV Room)
- *Father Woody's (1101 7th Ave)
- *The Gathering Place (1535 High St)
- *The Spot (2100 Stout St)