



Homeless In Kitsap

The voice of and for the
homeless community in Kitsap County



February 1,
2010
through
March 31,
2010

The Salvation Army Homeless Advisory Board

Last summer, Major Jim Baker of The Salvation Army recognized the need for the homeless to be heard in the greater community. So he, together with Sally Santana, created The Salvation Army Homeless Advisory Board.

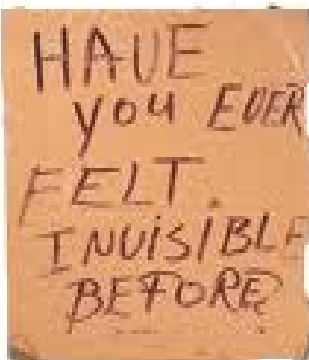
The board was able to get several goals accomplished by the end of the year. Here are two:

1. They set up two "Lunch with the Electeds" events where county commissioners, mayors and city council people, as well as our representatives from state and federal government, came to listen to and eat lunch with those at The Salvation Army. Many do not routinely come into contact with those that are homeless. During the discussion time afterward they said they had a better understanding of the challenges facing the homeless and would go back and examine their ordinances and policies to see where they could make some helpful changes.
2. Several homeless came to speak at the "No Place To Lay Their Heads - The Homeless That Live Outside" workshop. Two city council persons left there and went back to their councils and made the case for the creation of safe parks in their cities. We have their discussions on video. They continue to work towards accomplishing the task.

Right now we're working on creating our goals and vision statements and planning some events for fall.

We're also looking for a few more members. To join, you would need to be or have been homeless. We especially need those who can offer constructive thoughts and meet the third Thursday of the month for meetings. Contact Major Baker if you're interested.

Your
children
CANNOT
be taken
away from you
just because
you're
homeless
per
WAC 388-15-009
(5)(a)



CALL

2-1-1

Or toll free
1-877-211-9274

if you need
help finding
services like
medical,
housing and
financial.

~

Call

**Crisis Clinic
of the
Peninsulas**

at (360)
479-3033

if you need
emotional
support.

***Necesita ayuda con
el Ingles? Llame al
Centro de Asistencia
para
inmigrantes al (360)
440-2376***

Are you a victim of domestic violence?

Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness in Kitsap County.

From the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence:

“Domestic violence is not physical violence alone. Domestic violence is any behavior the purpose of which is to gain power and control over a spouse, partner, girl/boyfriend or intimate family member. Abuse is a learned behavior; it is not caused by anger, mental problems, drugs or alcohol, or other common excuses.

A few of the most common ways abusers control victims

- Isolation
- Emotional abuse
- Using children
- Dominating finances and family resources
- **Physical and sexual assault**

Who are victims?

Anybody can be a victim — rich or poor, any race, age, or religion. High school drop-out or Ph.D. Studies have shown no characteristic link between personality type and being a victim. If you are worried about yourself or a loved one, help is available.”

And from our own Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force:

If you have left your abuser and need emergency shelter for yourself or your children please call the YWCA/ALIVE program at (360) 479-1980. An advocate will be available to answer your questions and provide the support that you and your children need.

There are several spaces open for families at Kitsap Community Resources Safe Car Park

For those of you who live in your vehicle, here is an opportunity for you to **get off the street** and not have to drive around looking for some place to hide out.

It also gives you access to a **hygiene area**

where you and your kids can use a clean bathroom and not have to go hunt for one at 3 a.m.

Call

Jim Stowers at KCR at (360) 473-2047 for details.

Do it for the kids.

New Meal Sites

Bremerton Rescue Mission
Behind Rocket Coffee
on Kitsap Way, across from
Rite Aid

Monday Night - Hot Meal
6:30 pm.

~

Kitsap Unitarian
Universalist Fellowship
4418 Perry Ave./E. Brem.

Thursdays from
Noon to 4 pm.

Come for lunch,
get out of the weather,
take a nap, play cards.

*You can tie up your dog
outside, too*

~

Seventh Day Adventist
Caldart & Lincoln in Poulsbo
The last Monday of the month
5 to 7 pm.

Q: My backpack was stolen and my ID was in it, along with my Army discharge papers, birth certificate, voter registration card; all my essential papers. Most of those I can get in time but I really need a new ID card. How do I get one?

A: Go to any Dept. of Licensing (there is one at the courthouse, one on Kitsap Way by the Pancake House, etc.) and ask for a copy of a brochure titled, “Identification and Residence Requirements.” It will walk you through how to get one. If you can’t get in there, stop by and see Liz at The Salvation Army. She has them, too.

The “Homeless In Kitsap” newsletter is written and edited by Sally Santana (sally.santana @wavecable.com) bi-monthly and is reviewed, produced and distributed by The Salvation Army and The Salvation Army Homeless Advisory Board. Send info and updates to Sally.

On The Horizon

The Washington State Legislature has before it a number of bills they are considering.. Here are three of the 13 listed at the present time. They are under the Human Services and Corrections committee.

We'll keep you updated on progress.

HB 1956-S.E - Authorizing the housing of homeless persons on property owned or controlled by a church. Revised for 1st Substitute: Authorizing the housing of homeless persons on property owned or controlled by a church. (REVISED FOR ENGROSSED: Authorizing churches to host temporary encampments for homeless persons on property owned or controlled by a church.)

Authorizes a church to host temporary encampments for the homeless on property owned or controlled by the church whether within buildings located on the property or elsewhere on the property outside of buildings. Prohibits a local government from enacting an ordinance or regulation or taking any other action that: (1) Unreasonably interferes with the decisions or actions of a church regarding the location of housing or shelter for homeless persons on property the church owns or controls; (2) Unreasonably prohibits or attempts to regulate the housing of homeless persons on church property based upon the property's proximity to a school or day care center; or (3) Requires a church to obtain insurance pertaining to the liability of a municipality with respect to homeless persons housed on church property or otherwise requires the church to indemnify the municipality against such (4) liability.

HB 2497-S Concerning the victimization of homeless persons.

Makes it an aggravating circumstance if an offense is intentionally committed because the defendant perceived the victim to be homeless.

HB 2905 - Planning for the discontinuation of discharge of vulnerable populations from state institutions into homelessness.

Requires the department of corrections, the department of social and health services, and the regional support networks to plan for the release of persons who are or have been under their care or supervision, in order to reduce the likelihood of their homelessness.

The Changing Face of Homelessness in Kitsap County

In years past, most of our homeless were men, frequently vets who had returned from war and found themselves unable to process their experiences. Many ended up losing themselves in alcohol or drugs as a way to cope. They are with us now. We have groups that live in the woods in Poulsbo, Bremerton and Port Orchard, and in the county.



Today, the number is almost an even split between homeless adult males, and mothers with children and adult females. While reports don't find many families in tents, there are dozens that couch-surf or live in their vehicle.



They look like you and me because they ARE you and me. They just don't have a home of their own. Many women, single and/or with children, have lost their jobs and incomes or are fleeing abusive situations and have no where to go.

One of the saddest and most regrettable situations we confront is the fact that the mother and child shelters can't take in the male child over 12. This forces the mother to make the agonizing decision to split up the family at a time when they most need to stay together. Hopefully, she has the ability to place him with others temporarily. If there is no one, they leave with no where to go.



Regarding kids, we have five school districts, four of which report around 100 known homeless students, K thru 12. The number can



change month to month as families move from place to place. Also, we know

that parents often tell their children to not let anyone know they're homeless (even though the school could then help the family with resources.) They do this because they're afraid their kids will be taken away from them because they can't provide a roof over their heads (not true, unless the children are being abused - just like anywhere else); because employers tend not to hire homeless people; and because of the stigma and humiliation still associated with this situation.

Homeless children and youth face so many challenges. It's very difficult to study with a flashlight in the back of the car, especially in cold, rainy weather. It's hard to be alert and receptive in school when you hardly slept the night before, and you're hungry. Trying to stay clean takes a lot of energy. Watching your parent(s) try to hold it together breaks your heart. Life is hard.

We also have homeless seniors. Folks who lost their jobs, medical coverage, savings, their 401(k)'s in the recession. They took great



pride in giving to the food bank. Now they stand in line for help. They have no place to bring the grandkids. No cookies to bake, no overnights with grandpa telling scary stories. They worked so hard all their lives, never once imagining homelessness could be in their future.

Housing is a human right for everybody. It doesn't matter how old you are, what your gender is, what your politics or medications are, or if you have an addiction. Fortunately, Kitsap is a compassionate county and lots of people are working together to end homelessness. The wheels of progress sometimes move slow, but they are turning in the right direction. Hold on..