

## RESENTMENT

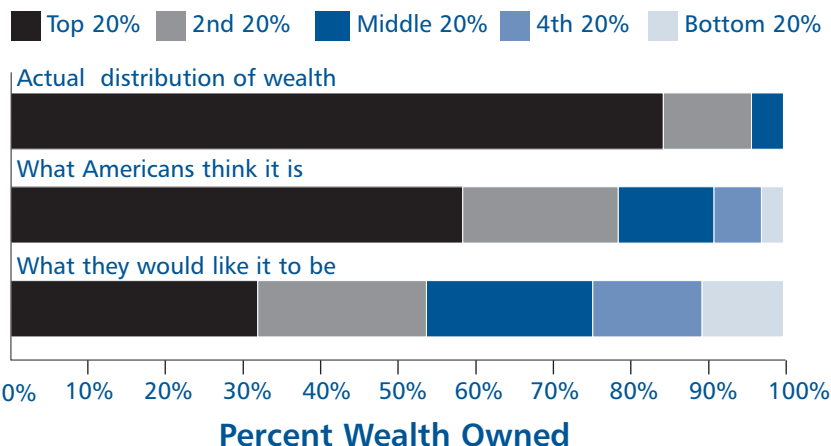


Mikkel Beckmen, Executive Director

We are living in a time of a severe and stunning imbalance in the distribution of wealth.

The 40% lowest income own nothing. The top 20% highest income own 84% of the nation's wealth.

We are also living in what was called



during the depression, “hard times.” One of the outcomes of this that I am sensing is a rising feeling of resentment in some parts of the community. The resentment is caused by anxiety and an erosion in the quality of life. You will be surprised to

know that in all of this I don't experience the resentment from the folks at “the bottom.”

Even more surprising is that this resentment is focused on caregivers, teachers, nurses, human services

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## What I Learned

*Maria was homeless for many years—including a stint living in her car while a college student. She worked with St. Stephen's Street Outreach to find housing. She has been in her apartment for nearly three years.*

As a homeless person, I generally would run into the same people every day. We would use the same places for food, blankets, and help finding housing.

One sunny day, a bunch of us were

standing by Peavey Plaza trying to figure out what church was serving meals that day. I noticed a man that was wandering around asking people for a quarter. As I watched, I saw the faces of the people that he asked, and their voices of denial along with the sarcastic remark of ‘getting a job’. These people are the people that society sees as successes. They are clean, they have suits on, they look busy and “important”.

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## St. Stephen's Human Services

### Housing

Housing opportunities for individual adults and families, including Kateri Residence for Native American women, our Rapid Exit partnership helping families and singles move quickly out of shelters, supportive housing in our Long-Term Homeless program, and Homeless Prevention for people in danger of losing their housing.

### Employment

Employment support for single adults staying in south Minneapolis shelters as well as families leaving the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

### Community Education & Street Outreach

Educational opportunities for the housed community to promote a greater understanding of homelessness, including through our zAmya Theater Project and A Day in the Life Program. For people living without shelter, and the community members concerned for them, we provide on-the-spot outreach and resources, including The Handbook of the Streets.

### Shelter & Emergency Services

Shelter and advocacy for adult men in our Shelter. Additional emergency assistance is available to the community, such as clothing through our Free Store, help obtaining birth certificates, and representative payee service.

For questions about this newsletter or St. Stephen's Human Services, please contact:

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*St. Stephen's never sells or shares the contact information of its supporters.*



# Exhibit Heading to the U.S. Senate

*When you're homeless you feel invisible. You're invisible to your fellow man and fellow-woman. You feel like even God can't see you anymore.*

### from the Oral History of Homelessness

The United States Senate has invited the exhibit ***Homeless is My Address, Not My Name*** to be on display in the Russell Senate Building in Washington DC. The exhibit is the work of St. Stephen's Human Services, created in partnership with Family Housing Fund and Heading Home Hennepin. It pairs portraits of people experiencing homelessness with audio of their stories.

Sponsorship by Senator Al Franken and Heading Home Minnesota, a statewide initiative to end homelessness, secured the invitation.

A unique feature of the exhibit is that viewers use cell phones to call in and listen to the stories in the tellers' own words, bringing an intimacy to the experience. People describe their homelessness, but they also tell of home ownership and employment, college degrees, loving relationships, undiagnosed mental illnesses or brain injuries, backgrounds of wealth and privilege, and much more. Popp Telecom donated the voicemail boxes used to hold the stories that callers access.

The exhibit is drawn from The Oral History of Homelessness, a collection of nearly 600 interviews with people who have experienced homelessness. The majority of stories were collected at the Minneapolis

Project Homeless Connect. A Legacy grant from the Minnesota Historical Society enabled the collection of stories from throughout greater Minnesota to document people's experiences of mid-size community and rural homelessness.

In addition to contributing to an educational project, participants are given copies of photos of themselves and their families. Many are



A security guard uses her cell phone to hear stories that accompany photos in *Homeless is My Address, Not My Name*

eager to participate because of the opportunity to describe their experience. One participant said, "If telling what I have gone through helps improve things for the next person, then it somehow makes my suffering make sense."

Thirty-six portraits and stories from *Homeless Is My Address, Not My Name* will be on display on Capitol Hill the week of July 11-15. An additional dozen portraits and stories will be on display at the nearby annual conference of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Support from the Corporation for Supportive Housing is facilitating the trip to Washington.

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# Creative Givers

## Nicollet Ace Hardware

Julene Lind has been with St. Stephen's since the beginning. "I was living a block from St. Stephen's back in 1981 when there was the hubbub over the shelter opening. That was my first experience with social justice issues and 'Not in My Backyard' attitudes and I was surprised at the level of controversy." Julene has been supporting St. Stephen's ever since.

This Spring Julene and her husband, Steve Rosch, who own Nicollet Ace Hardware on Nicollet and 38<sup>th</sup> Street South, decided to try a new way of giving. They set up a "point of sale" giving program at the store. For two months shoppers were offered an opportunity to donate as they made their purchases. "I got the idea from seeing this done at Costco and Petco. It makes it easy for people to donate. We created a UPC symbol so the



Margaret Miles (left) of St Stephen's accepts a gift from Julene Lind and Steve Rosch

cashier just had to scan and the donation was logged."

Nicollet Ace has been a leader in its Kingfield Neighborhood in rallying local businesses to support local causes. "We get a lot of requests," Julene says, which led to the need to

have a structure for charitable giving. "Next," she says, "we're going to let our Facebook fans nominate the non-profits we do our fundraising for. It's another way of involving the community in the issues that affect our neighbors."

## Brian Treece

Brian Treece wanted his 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party to be fun, memorable...and to make a difference. He came up with *Gimme Shelter: A Birthday Benefit to End Homelessness*. Brian worked with Ginger Hop Bar & Restaurant to organize a sit-down dinner for a few dozen friends and family members, followed by a performance by local bands open to the public. Proceeds over \$600 were donated to St. Stephen's Human Services.

"I wanted to celebrate turning thirty, but I didn't want it to be all about me," Brian says. "A friend was familiar with St. Stephen's and suggested we contact your programs about helping us make this happen."

St. Stephen's helped Brian advertise



Brian Treece (in tie) and family at his birthday fundraiser

the concert by linking on Facebook and Twitter and also sent housing expert Richard Amos to the event to speak for a couple of minutes and answer questions about homelessness.

"I've been to a lot of events," Richard says, "but not where someone used their own birthday party to raise money for other people. That's pretty inspiring."

# PREVENTING

*"It costs \$2,700 to shelter a family of three for 30 days whereas it costs an average of \$650 to prevent that family from becoming homeless."*

## Heading Home Hennepin, 2011

An important strategy to ending homelessness as a community crisis is to prevent it from happening to people. St. Stephen's offers two ways of helping people avoid becoming homeless, depending on their situation.

### The **Renters in Foreclosure**

**Program** is for tenants where the property is being foreclosed upon. Nationally, rental properties account for over one third of foreclosures. This means the tenants are displaced, often blind-sided by a 'notice to vacate' on their door. The situation is compounded by the fact that landlords who cannot pay their mortgages often fall behind on paying heat, water, and other utility bills. Further, landlords are often unable to return deposits to departing tenants. The combination of being unexpectedly forced to move and not having a deposit returned can put a low-income tenant on the brink of homelessness.

Funding from the Federal Government's American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) was awarded to Hennepin County to create a partnership between Legal Aid and housing providers. Legal Aid handles tenant-rights issues and St. Stephen's focuses on quickly relocating tenants so that they don't enter the shelter system.

St Stephen's is able to offer help with moving, storing belongings, damage



St. Stephen's Prevention team: Gino Nelson, Matt Holen and Aundria Morgan

deposits or short-term rent subsidies. We also furnish lists of places to rent and make sure the new place a program participant chooses is not in foreclosure. This program has been a crucial remedy for renters in the foreclosure crisis.

For individuals whose housing crisis is not related to foreclosure, St. Stephen's offers a **Prevention Program** for people who are falling behind on rent or mortgage payments. This one-time support helps people avert housing crises, though they must be able to demonstrate that if this crisis is resolved they won't be in the same situation next month.

Hennepin County operates a half-dozen such program partnerships; St. Stephen's focus is on Minneapolis households. Funding the Otto Bremer Foundation provides additional support.

Each month St. Stephen's prevention phone lines receive over four hundred inquiries. Of those, we are able

to help about thirty-five households.

Prevention Program Manager Aundria Morgan describes the initial phone screening, "We use a staff guided questioning method rather than the frantic-client-let-me-tell-you-my-situation approach. This method helps keep people on track when they are trying to describe what are typically very complicated situations."

Staff then secure all necessary documentation and confirm with property owners that the household is in arrears. Staff also take the opportunity to counsel participants on budget matters, moving to more affordable housing, being sure to access other resources such as filing for taxes, and in some case they direct people to a representative-payee who can help manage funds and reduce financial stress.

Since 2007, St. Stephen's and its partner Hennepin County Prevention programs have helped 5,303 households avert homelessness.



# HOMELESSNESS

## Client Stories

**Jamie** is a single, twenty-one year-old mother with a disabled three-year-old. She recently lost her job, so her current income is \$504 from her child's social security, but her rent is \$650/month. Her grandmother was helping with rent but then became ill. Jamie's landlord took her to housing court and since then she has made three settlement payments by pawning her television and jewelry and using her tax refund. We invited her landlord in to meet with us. He stated that Jamie was a good tenant and agreed to clear the eviction from her record and allow her to move to a less expensive apartment without the usual 60-day notice requirement.

**LouAnn** is sixty-two years old. She lost her job, has mental health issues, and has exhausted her entire savings and was on the verge of homelessness. We connected her to county services and have ensured that she has a workable financial plan to carry her through until she moves into senior housing in a couple of months.

**Richard and David** were renting rooms in a house that went into foreclosure. A third tenant was given the notice to vacate, but did not tell Richard and David who were surprised to find an eviction notice on their door. Legal Aid was able to work with the foreclosing bank's attorneys to stop the eviction process and extend our clients vacate-date by a couple weeks. We helped pay for deposits at new property and they both were able to move into new housing.

**Margaret's** rental property went into foreclosure in the fall just as her hours were decreased at work, making it difficult to pay her portion of the rent. She has decided to go back to school. We will provide rental assistance through the summer. When she starts school, her financial aid will help her maintain her housing.

**Caroline's** property went into foreclosure and was then condemned because her landlord did not have a rental license. She had a very short time to find new housing and was denied at a couple of properties due to her criminal background. Because we



**Katrina and her daughter received help to stay in their housing**

were running out of time, we paid to put her things in storage and then got her a week's stay at a hotel. We are continuing to work to find her housing.

## Top Reasons People Seek Rental Assistance

1. Loss of job/hours cut
2. Doubled up living with family or friends
3. Medical (example: child diagnosed w/brain tumor); parent has no paid work leave
4. Property owner's rental license revoked
5. Domestic abuse, need to leave
6. Unpaid maternity leave
7. Utility shut off

*For help with homelessness prevention, call 612-767-4446 for single adults living in South Minneapolis and 612 870-2298 for Minneapolis residents with minor children living with them.*

*For anyone renting a property in Hennepin County that is in foreclosure, being condemned, or that lacks a rental license, call the Legal Aid intake line at 612.334.5970.*

# SPRING AT ST. STEPHEN'S...



Staff from our Ending Long-term Homelessness Program offer support and education groups to program participants.



A Kateri resident paints a mural as a part of a project to beautify the freeway sound barrier facing the building.



A resident of Kateri Housing presents a corn husk doll to United States Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis.



Actors burst into song in zAmya Theater Project's "Home Room". Call 612-767-4447 to schedule a performance at your church, workplace, or school!



Street Outreach hits the streets on bikes donated by the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District's Safezone Initiative.



Minneapolis City Council Member Don Samuels thanks St. Stephen's, River of Life Church, the City & Hennepin County for providing temporary shelter to relieve crowded shelters last winter.



*“Resentment” continued from page 1*

employees and poor and disabled people.

*Why is this?*

Perhaps the poor and those who nurture and care for them symbolize a belief that we can improve the lives of others. What happens to a community that stops believing that collective, united efforts can change things for the better?

It has been sad and frustrating to watch folks in state government act on their resentments and slowly dismantle the resources to help people change. I will never understand political or social leadership that doesn't believe in the

power of our collective efforts to build a wonderful community. Or one that punishes the disabled and destitute while talking of shared sacrifice.

Let's not turn away from one another. To stop believing that other human beings can change is to stop believing in life itself. The cause of ending homelessness is really renewal of our own lives and souls. When we say, “Yes I believe lives can change! Yes, we can send people on a more hopeful path!” we are saying yes to life.

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*“What I Learned” continued from page 1*

The man made his way to the group I was with. He asked us for a quarter to buy some water at Starbucks. Without hesitation, everyone put their hands in their pockets and pulled out change. We all had a little bit, 50 cents here, 6 cents there; but whatever anyone had, it was given to this man. He thanked us and went about his way.

We resumed talking, but my mind was being flooded with all kinds of thoughts about this man and about all of the people standing there. What came to me was a feeling. I really was feeling proud; proud to be standing here among these people! Proud to part of helping this man, no matter what he needed. Walking around Nicollet Mall, I had always wondered what people think or see when they looked at us. How tattered and torn some of the clothes were, or how some looked run down from not getting

enough sleep, or what were we doing standing around in the middle of the day. That kind of thing. But this time, I felt God (who I call God) was looking at us proudly and saying, “Look around and see that THIS is what I mean by success, being a success as a HUMAN BEING”. No matter what anyone had, they gave it gladly to someone that asked for their help.

I hope that always in my never-ending quest to figure out what I should be doing right in this life, I will remember that one important moment. It doesn't matter what anyone thinks of you, just as long as you know what it really means to be a success as a human being. I will always remember and give thanks.

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*“Exhibit Heading to the U.S. Senate” continued from page 2*

We are honored to carry these voices to the nation's capitol. Cumulatively they paint a vivid portrait of our neighbors in economic limbo. Individually they tell of suffering and crippling injustice, but also formidable will and hard-won victories. They tell a simple story like this man's synopsis of his experience: “I've never been rich, I've never graduated high school even, but I've always been a citizen.” On behalf of our state, the exhibit tells the important story of the exceptional strategies Minnesota's communities are using to end homelessness for their citizens.

The exhibit will travel throughout Minnesota following the trip to Washington DC. Please see [www.OralHistoryOfHomelessness.org](http://www.OralHistoryOfHomelessness.org) for details.

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Homeless Against Homelessness rallied downtown Minneapolis in a call for a fairness in balancing the state budget. Homeless Against Homelessness is comprised of people who have experienced homelessness and their allies who wish to work on changing systems that affect people in poverty. St. Stephen's Human Rights Program provides administrative support for their efforts.