

Mosaic

exploring chicago's social issues piece by piece

Inside this issue:

One Chicago landlord goes the extra mile

Surveillance on chicago streets

Gooning: the new violent phenomenon

Women speak out about contraceptives

City restaurants offer ethnic diversity



2005

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Mosaic

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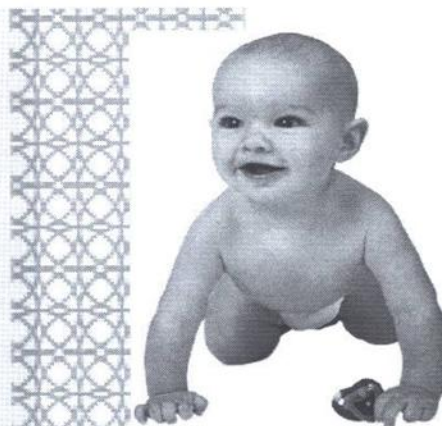
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A word from our publisher

Dear Reader,

It is my pleasure to present you with the second annual issue of Mosaic, a Loyola University Chicago publication centering on social justice and cultural diversity.

Our student team, guided by the expertise and enthusiasm of Professor John Slania, wrote and edited the stories, designed the layout and sold the advertisements that make this magazine possible.

We commenced this project as a classroom of students eager to gain firsthand experience with magazine production. We finished as coworkers united by a common vision, sharpened skills, and a greater appreciation for the Chicago metropolitan community.

The quilt of perspectives compiled between these cover pages come from employees of not-for-profit organizations, the local indigent population, community organizers, and the Chicago Police Department.

Each voice in this magazine represents a tile in the living, breathing mosaic that is Chicago. As the ancient form of artwork allowed us to see and understand preceding civilizations, so too does Mosaic seek to reflect the interconnectedness of our lives today. It is our hope that you will look upon the richness of our collective community with renewed regard after perusing these pages.

Monica Hortobagyi

Publisher

Struggling



on the streets





Cracking down on panhandling

Recent Chicago ordinance part of nationwide trend

by Elizabeth Liscian

"Can you spare some change?"

Almost anyone accustomed to living or working in Chicago can recognize that phrase and has probably heard it numerous times while walking down the street.

Erica Garner, 21, a junior at Loyola University Chicago, for example, said she wasn't harassed, but rather intimidated by a panhandler.

"Last summer, on my way to work, I'd always get approached by the same man and he'd always tell me that he had just been laid off the day before, and would beg for money," she said.

But sometimes, the situation takes an unpleasant turn, and according to the Chicago City Council, which cracked down on panhandlers in September 2004, people are harassed, insulted, and called obscene names. The Council's traffic committee reported hearing panhandling horror stories from women who live and work in the downtown area, stories in which women were chased or called insulting names when they refused to open their wallets.

A new ordinance from the Chicago City Council bans panhandlers from touching, chasing, or yelling at people while begging for money. It also prohibits panhandling within 10 feet of a bus stop, ATM, or bank entrance and also at sidewalk cafes and restaurants. The ordinance received unanimous City Council approval, and it fines panhandlers \$50 for first and second offenses and \$100 for each additional offense within a 12 month period.

"We're having a lot of problems," said Alderman Burton Natarus to the Associated Press. "People are getting harassed by these people. We don't want to go into a Charles Dickens philosophy. People have a right to ask for money as long as they do it in a reasonable way."

The crackdown, which was modeled after a similar 1999 Indianapolis ordinance that was upheld in court, is

"It disturbs me that the city is aimed at limiting activities of rather than trying to help these people."

-Susan Grossman, Ph.D., an associate professor of social work at Loyola University Chicago

part of a growing trend among cities across the country passing similar measures to keep panhandlers at bay; including Minneapolis, Rochester, N.Y. and Anchorage, Alaska.

"These ordinances and activities demonstrate the increasingly hostile attitude in the United States toward people who are homeless," Michael Stoops, director of community organizing for the National Coalition for the Homeless in Washington, D.C., said.

Many university towns like Colorado Springs, Colo.; Evanston, Ill.; and Asheville, N.C. have decided to put a lid on aggressive behavior before the big cities, and moved to stop aggressive panhandling. Evanston asked residents and students at Northwestern University not to give panhandlers money, but instead direct them to service-agency employees who would take them to shelters.

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, Gainesville, Fla. police threatened to arrest University of Florida students if they didn't stop serving meals to homeless people in the

park. In Santa Barbara, Calif., it's illegal to lean against the front of a building or store, and no one can park a motor home on the street in one place for more than two hours.

Some members of Chicago homeless organizations and advocates for the poor and homeless have criticized the new Chicago ordinance, saying it diverts attention away from solving the deeper problems that cause people to panhandle as a supplement to income.

Ed Shurna, executive director of Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, feels that ordinances like Chicago's new one ignore the deeper issues involved in panhandling.

"The ban on panhandling is not a step to eliminate homelessness," he said. "It is an attempt to move

homeless people away from businesses, restaurants, bus stops, and places where people congregate. It's not just a ban on panhandling; it's a ban on panhandling at certain locations."

Shurna said people do not have the financial resources to afford housing, and therefore poverty is the biggest contributing factor to homelessness.

"As long as people are poor, in need of decent employment, and unable to find affordable housing, you are going to find people seeing ways of making ends meet," he said.

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless focuses on the need for affordable housing and living wage jobs as critical steps to eliminate homelessness. Shurna says a shortage of affordable housing and jobs can take the credit for the growth of homelessness in Chicago.

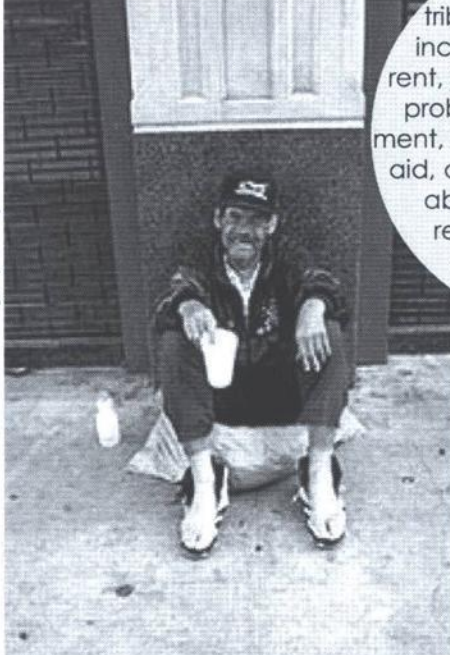
"Homelessness is growing and continues to soar," he said. "In the metro region every year, 166,000 people become homeless. This is a figure that comes from a study of affordable housing. This 1999 study also said there is a shortage of 153,000 units of lower income housing in the metro area."

Susan Grossman, Ph.D., an associate professor of social work at Loyola University Chicago, has done research in the area of homelessness, and points out that most people who resort to panhandling are not actually homeless, but are looking for ways to supplement their incomes.

Grossman, whose research in the '80s and '90s included evaluating services to homeless individuals with substance abuse problems, agreed with Shurna and said the ordinance banning aggressive panhandling is not an appropriate way to deal with the issue of poverty and homelessness in Chicago.

"It disturbs me that the city is aimed at limiting activities of rather than trying to help these people," she said. "I'm not sure that the city is doing all that it can. We stigmatize the homeless because we don't want to deal with economic problems. That's why the city passes anti-panhandling laws, limiting them to certain spaces. There is, however, the Housing First pro-

gram." In 2003, Mayor Richard Daley endorsed Chicago Continuum of Care's "Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness." The plan outlines a strategy to dramatically shift the current approach to addressing homelessness from a shelter-based strategy to a housing-



Chicago's new ordinance prohibits panhandling within 10 feet of a bus stop, ATM, or bank entrance, and also at sidewalk cafes and restau-

based strategy. Its emphases are focused on increasing prevention activities, reducing the use of shelters through consolidating three types of shelters (emergency/overnight, transitional, and second stage) into interim housing where the Housing First approach is used to re-house the homeless, and place those who are chronically homeless in permanent supportive housing.

As for the future of poverty, the news is grim, according to the 2004 "Report on Illinois Poverty: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty for Illinois Teens." Thereport found the number of youth in chronic poverty would exceed the population

of Aurora, the second largest city in Illinois. Statewide, the poverty rate among 18 to 24 year olds increased nearly 5 percent in one decade.

The statistics show high school dropouts

face a future of chronic poverty. An analysis of poverty trends found that more than 36,300 teens dropped out of high school in Illinois in 2003. Nearly 25 percent of young adults in the state had not completed a high school diploma or earned a GED—the worst non-completion rate in the 12-state Midwest region. A 2003 study by America's Second Harvest showed that, nationwide, the number of people hungry, or at risk of hunger, had grown to 35 million people, of which 13 million were children.

According to United Press International, nearly 36 million people fell below the official poverty threshold in 2003, an increase of 1.3 million people.

Key factors that contribute to homelessness include: inability to pay rent, job loss, drug or alcohol problems, family disagreement, being cut off from public aid, overcrowding, domestic abuse, and institutional release, according to cityofchicago.org.

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The National Coalition for the Homeless said that, nationally, 14.4 million families have critical housing needs.

Jen White, 20, a sophomore at Loyola University Chicago, remembers a time when someone begged her not for money, but for a meal. She said a hungry man on the el would not stop pressing her to buy him food.

"I had gotten some Taco Bell, and he asked if he could have a taco, so I gave him one. After he finished it, he angrily told me I should buy him a burrito."

Stoops doesn't believe the ban on aggressive panhandling will help curb panhandling in the long run, and that it doesn't work to alleviate homelessness either.

"The law is a temporary, quick fix," he said. "Most cities think they can legislate away homelessness. This won't rid the city of panhandlers and homeless people."

FEEDING CHICAGO'S HUNGRY

By Kevin Martin

Frank Fennell, a 62-year-old Evanston native and professor at Loyola University Chicago for the past 36 years, has been improving the quality of life for the homeless of Chicago for the past 15 years. Fennell and his wife have led a group of volunteers who cook and distribute food to the homeless each Thursday night down on Lower Wacker Drive.

"I organize the people who distribute the food and my wife organizes the people who make the food," Fennell said. "I have a ring of about 12 people, and every Thursday, three or four of us take the food and bring it to the homeless. My wife has set up the different teams of cooks and schedules them to make the food. The nice thing is that since there is now a large ring of people involved in this, each of us can afford to donate the time and money it takes to create and deliver the food."

Alan Gitelson, a political science professor at Loyola, is one of Fennell's team members who often assists and also recruits help from students in Loyola University's Magis program, a program designed to get students involved in social justice causes.

"When Frank first told me about what he was doing, I thought it was a great idea," Gitelson said. "It really gave me a chance to help others who are less fortunate, as well as recruit other Loyola students to get involved and help out."

As an English professor at a Jesuit university, Fennell constantly has teachers volunteering students to help him distribute the food. The experience is so fulfilling that some students continue to help him on a consistent basis. "I've been helping Dr. Fennell on his trips for the past couple of years," said Drew Bacebich, a 21-year-old Loyola student. "It's really a great feeling when you can give so much to the community, and it's real nice because I can help out without giving up a large amount of time and effort."

Fennell and his wife were already volunteering at an Evanston homeless shelter, but Fennell was forced to work the night shift since he was teaching at Loyola. However, the night shift began to wear on him, so he and his wife began looking for a new way to offer their services.

"We got interested in this when my wife Kay was watching a local television show and they were doing a human interest story about a woman who distributed food on Wacker three or four nights a week," Fennell said.

"We thought that it should be done every night of the week, so we joined her a few times, learned the route and volunteered on nights she wasn't going down."



The tragic faces of homelessness can be seen throughout Chicago. Frank Fennell, his family, and students at Loyola try to help alleviate the hunger of the homeless on Wacker Drive.

Photo courtesy of stock art

A few years later, the woman had to quit delivering the food for health reasons, so Fennell picked up right where she left off. Fennell gathered his team, comprised of Loyola faculty, college and high school students, neighbors and essentially anyone who was willing to give a hand. Fennell and his group of workers don't just stop at food though. Approximately once a month, they deliver donated clothes, jackets, and blankets. "A couple times a year, especially in Christmas, we bring down goodie bags that have sweets and candy as well as brand new shirts, underwear and different types of toiletries," Fennell said.

"Food is our main staple, but we try to supply them with other things too." While the professor has a hectic schedule and is appropriating an age when he may retire, he doesn't plan on quitting soon.

"When I first came into this, it was a small project to help out," Fennell said.

"Now it has grown into a scheduled production. I don't feel the need to stop though: After all, people will always be hungry."

Homelessness:

A Plea for Sympathy

By Erik Larsen

Benjamin Franklin once wrote that a man is "sometimes more generous when he has but a little money than when he has plenty."

Every day since I have been in Chicago, a homeless man has asked me for change. And every day I have been in Chicago with any money, I have given it away without hesitation, often having little or no money to call my own. Now I am not perfect, nor am I pious or out to win a Nobel Peace Prize, but the lack of compassion for the homeless in Chicago disgusts me.

Princes and princesses parade around downtown, weighed down by heavy wallets and heavier shopping bags, disregarding the needy and treating them like filthy street scum; old men climb out of limousines and escort their gold-plated wives to the opera or a fine restaurant. But when they walk by a homeless man or woman, an upturned nose and a haughty scoff are all they are willing to give.

It pains me to see people living on the street with nothing but a plastic cup to call their own. But what pains me even more is the lack of respect the homeless get. People assume the homeless have chosen to be that way, like it is their own fault they live on the streets. "Get a job," someone says. "Sorry, I don't have any money," another says as he clutches onto the change in his pocket like it was a precious heirloom.

Where is the decency in the people of Chicago? I have been told not to give the homeless change around the campus of Loyola University Chicago because it "encourages them." What does it encourage, eating? "Nah man, if you give them money they'll stay around campus," replies the resident expert on homelessness. Well, I never



A homeless man sleeps on the sidewalk in Tokyo, surrounded by his only possessions.

Photo courtesy of www.growabrain.typepad.com

thought of it that way! Shoot, why not give all the rich people secret passwords into the restaurants so homeless people, even when they get enough change to afford a cheeseburger, can not come in! It will be perfect; they will either have to leave the city or die. It works out for everyone in the end.

I simply can not understand the mentality of these heathens who refuse to give up a single cent to someone less fortunate. Yet it happens to be a construct of our society. The rich are taught to revel in their status. When considering income, over 70 percent of the nation's wealth is in the hands of people in the top 10 percent. The rich are getting richer, while the poor are being screened off the radar of sympathy.

The sad thing is that there, truly, is no solution to this problem unless people are willing to change. Compassion is about seeing yourself in those less fortunate. To recognize the equality and humanity in everyone, homeless or wealthy, is what empathy entails. People are unwilling to see a homeless man on the streets as his brother, as his equal, and this is the lost cause in our materialistic and consumerist society.

As evening falls on Chicago, about 80 people line up outside the door of 7649 N. Paulina Ave. Before the evening is over, the number of people could double. They are waiting for a ticket – not a bus or plane ticket, but a meal ticket. These people know the door is always open in the evenings at the Good News Community Kitchen.

"I come from the streets," said Michael Wilson, a volunteer of the Good News Community Kitchen. "I once was a patron. I remember when this place fed me at night. I was blessed that the doors were open."

The patrons are admitted at 5:00 p.m. and form a neat and orderly line at the front counter.

"For those of you new to the kitchen, you must get in line so that you can get a ticket," shouts a volunteer. "Also for those new to the Kitchen, we have rules: No drinking, no smoking, no spitting, no drugs, no abusive language or abusive behavior. Violators will be asked to leave. And if necessary, we will call the police."

Meals are served between 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Seating is in sections. There are sections reserved for families with children, senior citizens and people with disabilities. Their tables are closest to the serving area. These people are served by volunteers. Anyone who isn't a senior citizen or disabled has to stand in line for his meal.

The Good News Community Kitchen is the only soup kitchen in the area that serves meals 365 days a year to those in need. The kitchen serves more than 50,000 meals a year with an average of 140 people fed per night. It receives donations from The Greater Chicago Food Depository, churches, other social service organizations, and individuals.

"The Good News Community Kitchen started in 1983 as a program of the Good News Community Church," said Daniel Romero, organizer and advocate for the kitchen.

"We began serving meals in 1983 a few days a week. We started serving meals every day in 1991."

The Good News Community Kitchen has an array of community outreach services including education, social and emotional support, workforce training and referral in collaboration with other social service agencies to promote the physical, social and emotional well being of residents in the community. The Kitchen's mission statement is "to reduce poverty and hunger in the Rogers Park area and greater Chicago community by providing nutritious meals daily while building a just society through advocacy and collaborative relationships across racial, cultural and socio-economic lines to promote the well being of patrons served."

"The Kitchen had been pretty much a service organization providing meals, which is a good mercy mission...but there's an acknowledgement on the part of staff, the board and the patrons that this service alone doesn't do much to help patrons improve their lives, to help reduce the disparities in terms of how patrons are treated in the world," Romero said. "It certainly does nothing to achieve justice. And so we've moved from being a mercy organization to one that provides mercy and justice through community organizing and advocacy."

Patrons are white, black and Hispanic. Their ages range from

Spreading GOOD NEWS

By Nora Vinson



Kevin Kitner, operations manager of the Good News Community Kitchen, contributes to the many services offered by the program.

Photo courtesy of Nora Vinson

around 20 years old to senior citizens. There are families with small children and individuals with emotional problems. Some patrons are employed, unemployed, underemployed and homeless. Most are from the Rogers Park neighborhood but some are from other areas of the city. Volunteers come from colleges, universities and churches. Some patrons are so grateful that the Good News Community Kitchen is open every evening that they volunteer as well.

"We serve 140 people a night and a lot of them are regular patrons. They want to give back," said Kevin Kitner, operations manager at the Good News Community Kitchen. "They really appreciate getting and receiving the food and receiving the meals...that they say, 'Can I do something to help out?' We never have a lack of volunteers 'cause our patrons themselves step up."

One of those grateful patrons who volunteers is Mike Wilson. "It gives me a chance to work with people that come from the same background as I come from," he said. "And also, it gives me a chance to give back to my community. I get a chance to feed almost 200 people every night. I sleep good at night."



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RED DOOR: respecting animal life



A volunteer plays with a resident of the animal shelter.

Photo courtesy of Red Door website

Roger's Park no-kill animal shelter aids homeless animals, gaining popularity with the community through its compassion, education and community outreach programs.

By Erik Larsen



Red Door Animal Shelter gives help to animals like these, who often come to them in need of medical care and affection.

Photo courtesy of Red Door website

Maggie.

"We came to this shelter because we heard they adopted

The panicked cries of kittens echoed through the alley as a mother cat paced frantically, searching desperately for her kittens. As the day went on, no one could find the missing animals; the situation became desolate. Then the Red Door Animal Shelter came to the rescue. After locating the kittens trapped behind the drywall in an empty garage, Red Door workers cut through the wall and saved the kittens, Topsy and Turvey.

Located in Chicago's Rogers Park, the Red Door Animal Shelter is a no-kill sanctuary for the abandoned animals. Red Door is committed to helping animals in need, whether it is rescue, rehabilitation or providing shelter for cats, dogs and rabbits – America's three most popular pets.

Shane Mason, who has been the shelter manager since September 2003, believes the shelter is unique.

"We don't euthanize our animals to make room for new animals [like many other shelters do]," Mason said. "We also have something called the CAF* program — a cat and dog food distribution service for families that may not necessarily be able to afford food. We help people on Social Security or welfare who may not be able to pay for supplies or medicine for their pets."

Red Door provides cageless environments for all of its rescued animals. By doing so, Red Door's adoptees are more attuned to home life. The animals are basically trained early on how to become a welcome part of a new household. But even more impressive is Red Door's coveted adoption process.

"We're not strict [about adoption], we're thorough," Mason said. "We want to make sure we're adopting our animals into good homes. We need personal references from people, and if they live in an apartment, we want to speak to their management. We just want to make the right match. We want to match the personality with the animal." Rogers Park residents David Roberts, 32, and his wife Melissa, 33, came to the Red Door Animal Shelter to look for a pet with their 7-year-old daughter

rabbits," Roberts said. "We didn't want to start out with something too big for Maggie to learn how to take care of, so a rabbit seemed like it'd be fun.

"But we also researched shelters on the Internet and really thought that this shelter stood for something important," Roberts said. "We really like that it's a no-kill shelter; it makes us feel good about picking the right rabbit for Maggie, [because] we know the other rabbits and cats are well taken care of."

After the animals are brought back to the shelter, they are spayed or neutered and then placed up for adoption. Red Door's prominence in preparing animals for adoption can be contributed solely to each employee and volunteer's commitment to loving and nurturing the rescued animals.

"We have many volunteers here that socialize with the animals to

get them used to human contact," Mason said. "We have youth volunteers here to take care of the rabbits and the cats so they get used to children. The staff is here 10 hours a day. They know what they need to be adopted, whether it's medical treatment or a little more TLC. We understand the personalities of our animals a lot better because we are more intimate with them."

But the Red Door Animal Shelter is also a learning space for the people of Chicago.

"We assist people with any question regarding animal health or behavior," Mason said. "People in the neighborhood (a lot of families) come in here to learn about cats and rabbits and dogs, and we feel we provide a good source of information and what it takes to adopt and care for a pet."

Red Door is well known for having customers return for other pets

and helpful information.

"When Maggie gets older, we'll probably be coming back here for a cat or a dog," Roberts said. "This is a really great place with really great people."

The location of the adoption center is 2410 W. Lunt Ave., in Chicago. Adoption hours are 1 p.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Wednesday; 1 p.m.-6 p.m. on Thursday, and noon-5 p.m. Friday through Saturday.



Red Door's Mission is
to promote **Respect** for all
animals through **Education,**
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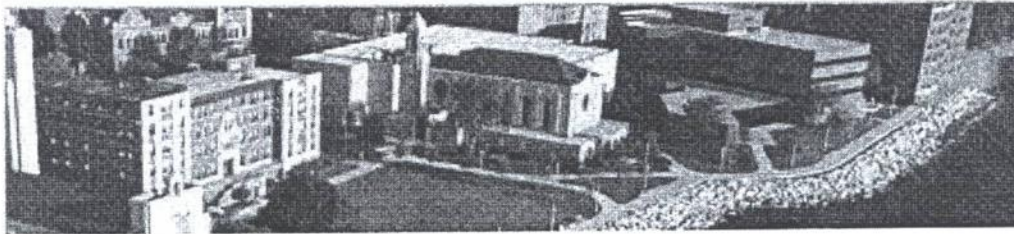
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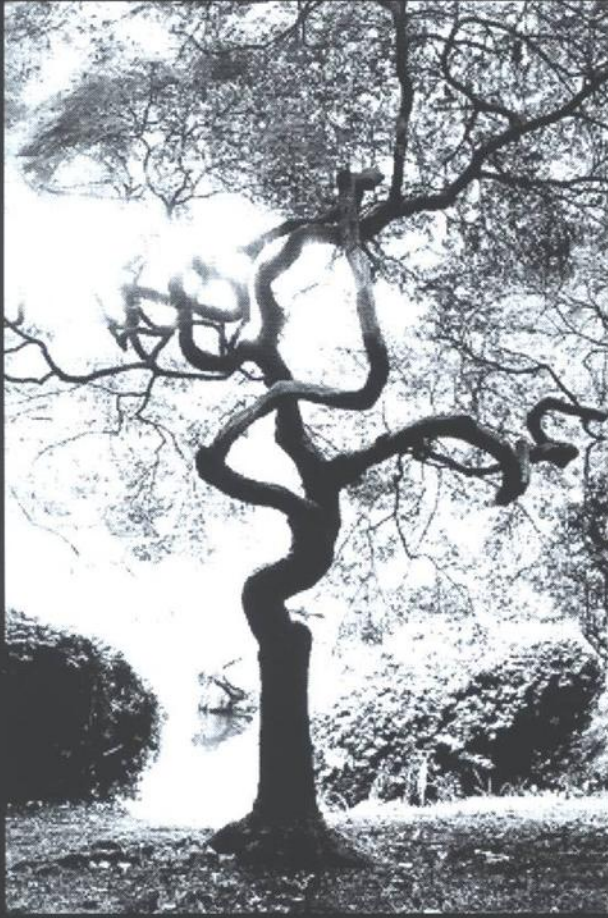
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GIVING



CENTRO ROMERO

Teaching a new way of life

By Lehia Apana

Centro Romero offers members of the immigrant Latino population in Chicago a way to adjust to American life by giving free English literacy classes.

It's 6 p.m., and 24 students wait patiently for class to begin. The lesson will last for three hours, but they do not mind. Most are happy to fill the seats of the bleak stone basement that serves as their makeshift classroom. These are the students of Centro Romero's Adult Education Program, a support agency that serves the Northside Latino immigrant community by providing free English language classes. Each week hundreds of students walk through Centro Romero's doors, many of whom are functionally illiterate. Most of the students are Latino immigrants who have recently moved to America, and who have little or no familiarity with the language or conventions of their new surroundings. These are just the kind of students this program strives to help.

"We want to bridge a disenfranchised community of Latino immigrants and refugees into mainstream American society," said Aaron With, Adult Education Coordinator at Centro Romero. Centro Romero does this by providing the community with resources to learn the language and

customs of America, With said.

"There are a number of students who come to Centro Romero having left school at an early age or having had negative experience in school in their home country," he said. "These are the people who need our help the most."

Centro Romero provides free English as a Second Language (ESL) and literacy courses for anyone who wishes to attend.

"We are certainly not limited to the Latino community, however because our staff is mostly Latino and we are known for that, that is largely the community we end up serving," With said.

"I came to America about one year ago...Centro Romero is very helpful because I don't have to spend money to learn. That is amazing."

Juan, student at Centro Romero

Centro Romero was founded 20 years ago by the Salvadorian community in Chicago, which wanted to support the refugees who had escaped El Salvador and come to America. Today, the organization is a trusted community center that works with volunteers and participants toward self and community change.

There is no typical student at Centro Romero. Some can understand a few English phrases, others have difficulty with basic greetings. Some

are high school aged while others have been married for 50 years.

Juan, 33, has been attending classes at Centro Romero for one month. He is currently in a level zero course for students who speak very little or no

English. He is already able to introduce himself and answer basic questions in English.

"My name is Juan. I am 33 years old. I work in a chocolate factory in Skokie," he said, smiling proudly. His energetic smile doesn't seem to leave his face for the entire three-hour class. Through the help of a translator, he explains why he is here at Centro Romero.

"I came to America about one year ago. My sister lives in Chicago, so I came to live with her and find work. Centro Romero is very helpful because I don't have to spend money to learn. That is amazing," Juan said.

Like many students, it's been years since Juan has been in a classroom. He admits that he is still getting used to being a student again, but that he feels fortunate to have this opportunity.

"For students who are reinitiating themselves into an academic environment, to jump into a large school setting might be a little overwhelming or not conducive to their needs," With said. "We're a community center that goes at an appropriate pace for our students."

The Centro Romero staff includes 23 full-time workers, five teachers, and over 100 volunteers.

"I'm so impressed by how eager and motivated the students are to learn," said Christina Elliott. "Even though they get frustrated and embarrassed, they still maintain a good attitude."

Elliott volunteers as a teacher's assistant every Tuesday for three hours. Elliott said she volunteers

because she wants to be a part of something positive, but admits that she gets back more than she gives.

"Working with the students can be so inspiring," Elliott said, "because the rewards of teaching at Centro Romero are so apparent and immediate."

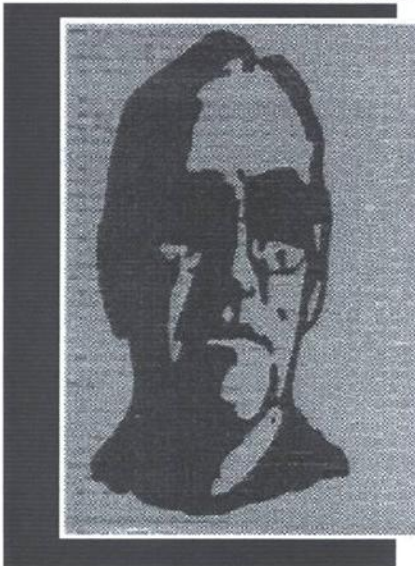


Students at Centro Romero gather for their class.

Photo courtesy of Leah Apana

"We want to bridge a disenfranchised community of Latino immigrants and refugees into mainstream American society."

-Aaron With, Adult Education Coordinator at Centro Romero



Former Brigadier General fights the war on hunger

Michael Mulqueen's past military training makes him a disciplined and strong leader in his cause

By Elizabeth Lisican



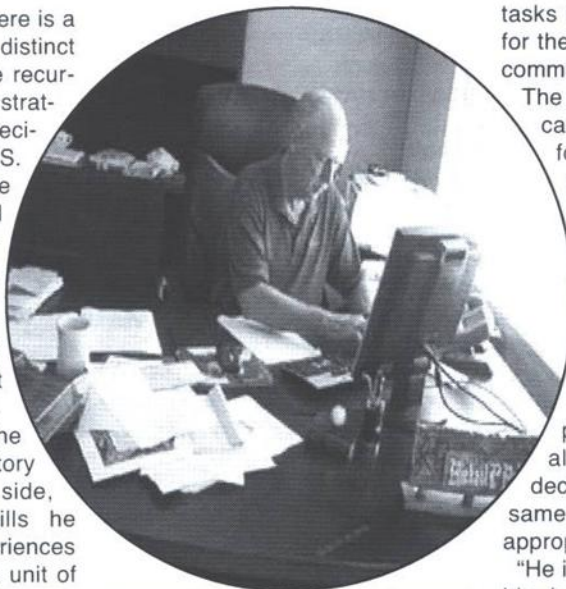
The Greater Chicago Food Depository helps feed those who have limited resources.

Photo courtesy of The Greater Chicago Depository website

Michael Mulqueen's past is quite different from his present. Yet there is a strong link between his two distinct careers when one considers the recurring themes of leadership skills, strategy, and the ability to make decisions. Mulqueen controlled U.S. reconnaissance plans during the Cuban missile crisis and served two tours of duty in Vietnam during his 30 years as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. These days, the former Brigadier General is a different kind of commander, fighting a different kind of war—the war on hunger.

As executive director of the Greater Chicago Food Depository on Chicago's Southwest side, Mulqueen, 66, uses the skills he acquired from his military experiences to supervise a staff of 91 and a unit of 8,000 volunteers. He has held his position since 1991, when he retired from the Marine Corps.

"My job is to create an environment and culture that aspires to be excellent," he said. Mulqueen's daily



Michael Mulqueen, executive director of the Greater Chicago Food Depository, puts in a hard day's work at the office.

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Lisican

tasks include focusing on fundraising for the depository's capital campaign, communications, and public relations.

The centerpiece of the \$30 million campaign is the depository's new food distribution and training center, which opened early in 2004.

"This new facility is a model food bank in this country," Mulqueen said.

Kate Maehr, director of fund development at the Greater Chicago Food Depository, is responsible for the capital campaign. She says that Mulqueen allows room for independent decisions from his staff, but at the same time, offers guidance when it's appropriate.

"He is always available and accessible, but makes a point standing back and letting me 'do my thing,'" she said. "I have learned more from Mike than anyone I have ever worked with."

Mulqueen admits he was a bit apprehensive about being able to

carry out his job tasks well when he first started at the food depository. But that initial unease quickly faded away, and under his leadership, the organization has grown to become one of the country's largest and most reputable distributors of food for the poor, feeding more than 90,000 needy Chicagoans each week.

"As our mission statement says, we do two things: one, we provide food for hungry people. But we also deal with the root causes of hunger, a symptom of poverty," Mulqueen said.

The food depository is a not-for-profit distribution center, and has been in operation since 1978. The depository receives its food from United States Department of Agriculture and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, local food sources, and by purchasing essential foods, such as peanut butter, directly from manufacturers. The depository is a member of America's Second Harvest, an organization that solicits food from national manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers and makes it available to over 200 member food banks and food rescue organizations throughout the country. The Greater Chicago Food Depository collects, sorts, and repacks products before sending them off to member agencies.

For the fiscal year 2003-04, the depository distributed more than 40 million pounds of food through its network of 600 pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. In 2003, food drives brought in more than 702,300 pounds of food and \$142,000—the equivalent of approximately one million meals. Fundraising has increased 33 percent to \$9 million since the year 2000.

"The secret to success is hiring great people," Mulqueen said.

Hal Hothan, chief financial officer, in turn says that the opportunity to work with Mulqueen is the best part of his job.

"You can see his military background in what he does," Hothan

said. "He really encourages me to bring all that I can bring to this job. And he's a wonderful communicator with a great sense of humor."

Ruth Igoe, director of public relations at the depository, says that Mulqueen is a superb speaker and leader who keeps the agency's mission at the forefront.

"He really keeps a focus on the mission, and on the root causes of hunger," she said. "He always has the best interests of the hungry in mind."

In 2004, the depository moved into its current facility, a place that has opened doors to new opportunities for more efficiency in food distribu-

"Here we might see a single, young mom with two kids, and this is the first time she's ever felt like she's actually doing something. Suddenly, she begins to break the cycle of poverty."

-Michael Mulqueen

tion. The size of approximately four football fields, the building is nearly double the size of the depository's old facility. It can store up to 10.3 million pounds of food, and with ceilings 32 feet high, it can stack food donations five pallets high. It also features a conveyer belt to help volunteers sort food.

The Greater Chicago Food Depository is home to several programs that are designed not only to provide food, but to combat and help eradicate the persistent problem of hunger in Chicago. Chicago's Community Kitchen, for example, is a 12-week food service training program for underem-

ployed and unemployed adults.

"Here we might see a single, young mom with two kids, and this is the first time she's ever felt like she's actually doing something," Mulqueen said. "Suddenly, she begins to break the cycle of poverty."

Other programs include Kids Café, which offers meals and tutoring to needy children after school; and Pantry University, which provides training and educational workshops on topics that include food safety, nutrition, and grant writing.

Born and raised in Walden, New York, Mulqueen earned a Bachelor of Arts in history from Fordham University and a Master of Science in guidance and counseling from Troy State University. His personal decorations include a

Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," the Meritorious Service Medal with gold in lieu of a second award, and the Navy Achievement Medal. He has a daughter, a son, and six grandchildren.

Mulqueen plans to retire from the food depository in July 2006, and wants to make sure he can leave the agency with a strong staff and continued efficiency.

"I want to make it even better here for whoever succeeds me," he said.

Mulqueen chooses a humble approach when it comes to recognizing the qualities in his character that link both of his life's careers. He compares his job to the famous "Starfish Story," by Loren Eiseley, in which a wise man walked along the beach and saw another man throwing starfish back into the ocean because the tide was going out and the starfish would die otherwise. When the wise man said that there were miles and miles of beach and starfish along every mile, and that he couldn't possibly make a difference, the other man pointed out that he was indeed making a difference. Mulqueen likes to maintain a similar attitude in his quest to end hunger.

"Just like the story says: 'It made a difference for that one.'"

Keeping Promises

A Chicago chapter of Asha, an international organization dedicated to improving education for children and adults in India, finds that change is best accomplished through action.

By Emily Van Camp

Driving by car from the city, two travelers came to a point where the road stopped and were forced to continue on foot. Warily, they walked a mile and a half over hilly terrain until reaching their destination—a small village seemingly far removed from the rest of the world.

After journeying this far to see the village, they were disappointed and shocked at what they saw. Intoxicated men ambled around, drunk off of their own country liquor brew; the women were confined inside their homes and the children were not going to school.

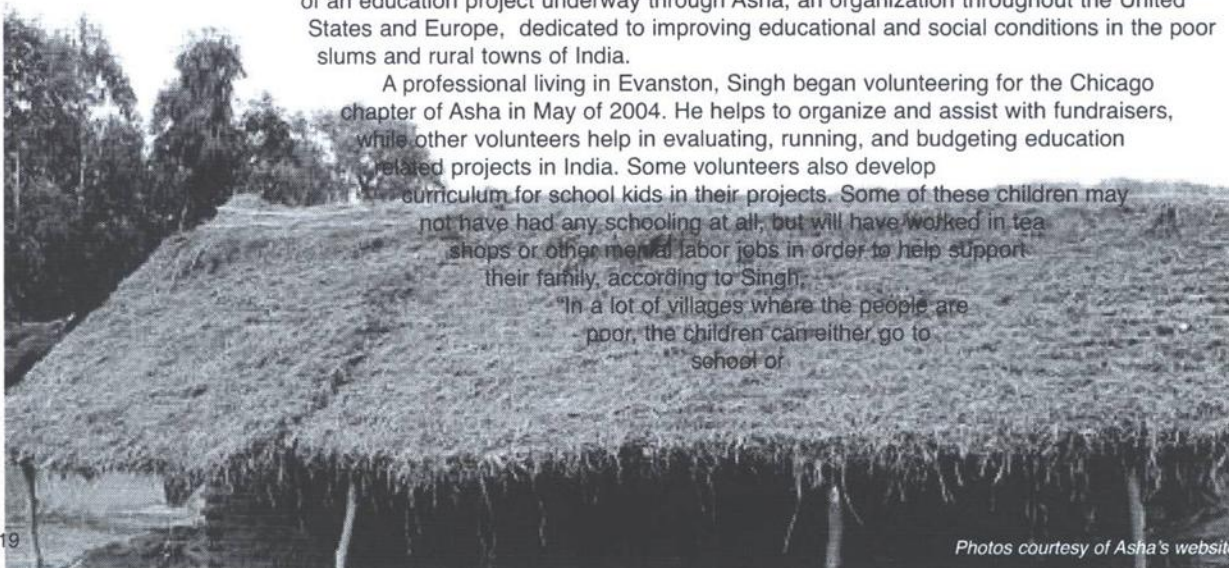
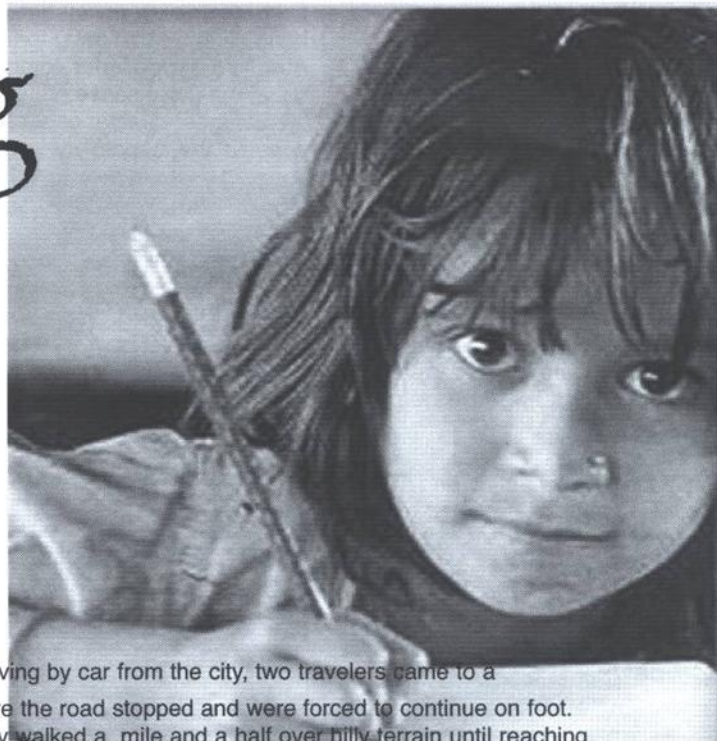
This village outside of Bombay is one of the many sites that is in desperate need of assistance that had long been promised help, but had never received any. "It seemed like people [living in rural India] were used to people coming in and making promises," said 31-year-old Bhawani Singh, a Chicago-based fundraiser for Asha. "They knew promises were empty; politicians coming around only during election time. Asha is here to serve them."

Singh has also visited the slums of Bombay, where he and a friend checked the status of an education project underway through Asha, an organization throughout the United States and Europe, dedicated to improving educational and social conditions in the poor slums and rural towns of India.

A professional living in Evanston, Singh began volunteering for the Chicago chapter of Asha in May of 2004. He helps to organize and assist with fundraisers, while other volunteers help in evaluating, running, and budgeting education related projects in India. Some volunteers also develop

curriculum for school kids in their projects. Some of these children may not have had any schooling at all, but will have worked in tea shops or other menial labor jobs in order to help support their family, according to Singh.

"In a lot of villages where the people are poor, the children can either go to school or





“You can be very critical of the government and society, but it doesn’t make sense if you don’t do something about it.”

they can work, and a lot of them need the kids to work,” said Gaurav Sarup, administrative coordinator for Asha’s Chicago branch chapter.

Asha, which means “hope” in Hindi, was started in 1991 by college graduate students at University of California at Berkeley, and was meant to help alleviate socioeconomic barriers affecting the education that children receive in India. Its reach extends beyond the United States and into Great Britain and India, each chapter funding several projects in different poor regions of India.

“They [Asha members] wanted it to be secular, non-controversial, so they could help everybody, not just one group,” said Sarup, comparing Asha to religious charities and political organizations. “We don’t just give them money; we want them to continue to sustain themselves.”

On an annual budget of \$20,000-\$30,000, Asha Chicago volunteers not only build new schools and replace old school supplies, but they also educate parents about the importance of education, inform villagers about good health practices and try to make a positive impact in places where women and children are not given equal opportunities.

Many of Asha’s projects are unique to each situation. One focuses on a school in the city of Lucknow that caters to children with learning disabilities, as well as the many girls in the area. Others teach children of prostitutes who might not otherwise be educated.

“In rural and slum areas, girls get married at 15 or 16, and have babies at 17 or 18,” said Singh. “If you get these girls to stay in school longer and away from the home, they stay in school longer, tend to get married later, and delay the age they first have babies. Women are the ones who have the most responsibility in raising the children...you need someone supporting the kids at school.”

India does have a universal elementary education system, and many of the children do attend school. However, many of the present schools in slum or rural regions have either poor quality education or are not designed for the needs of the community, according to Sarup.

“If you’re in a village that’s never seen traffic signals before,” said Sarup, “and you bring the same curriculum [as other schools], you’re going to lose interest; they won’t relate.”

For this reason, Asha collaborates with

educators in India to develop special curriculum based on each community. Asha also organizes teacher workshops to discuss problems and strengths in the programs.

The Chicago Asha chapter raises money for their cause through local and national fundraisers, such as the “Work-an-Hour” money drive, in which supporters donate a portion of their paycheck to Asha.

Like most of Asha’s volunteers, both Singh and Sarup came to the United States from India, and have seen first hand the need for change.

“People talk a lot about doing something and blame others, but very few take the initiative and do the job,” Singh said. “You can be very critical of the government and society, but it doesn’t make sense if you don’t do something about it.”

Sarup believes that the contributions of Asha’s Chicago Branch chapter are important, even though they may be modest.

“We have a limited volunteer base and limited funding, and we do realize that it’s a small drop in the ocean,” Sarup said. “But this is something you’ve always heard about in the news. Once you’ve had some communication with these children, you realize their determination to go to school each day.”



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AN OPTION FOR THE POOR

An Austin neighborhood landlord improves the quality of living for her tenants.

By Ashlea Adelegan

In the middle of a sunny afternoon on a particular street in Chicago's Austin Neighborhood, garbage litters the sidewalk, children hang at the corner, a baby sits unattended in front of his home and a shady transaction happens at the same corner where the children are standing. Not far away, an elderly woman attempts to separate herself from the concrete steps in front of her home. The surroundings of her home are noticeably nicer than those a few blocks away, and the home itself is a rehabbed duplex, with five bedrooms for her and her five grandchildren. In near exhaustion, she finally stands to take her landlord's hand.

With a grave look on her face, she stares at her landlord dead in the eye and said, "You know, we ain't going nowhere, ever," and then she bursts into a smile. The comment of 65-year-old Bernadette Wilson was both a frank assessment of her present physical state and a promise for the future. In Austin, on the city's West Side, Wilson has been living in public housing for most of her life. She knows that options for quality housing, especially for the 21 people depending on Chicago



Shown above is one of the homes that landlord Deborah Mitchell cares for in Chicago's Austin neighborhood.

Photo courtesy of Ashlea Adelegan

Housing Authority's (CHA) Voucher Program, are nonexistent.

Wilson's landlord, Deborah Mitchell, took her tenant's comment as confirmation that she is doing some good by trying to provide people with quality and affordable housing.

"It's simple, I believe that people should live in affordable, well-maintained housing," Mitchell said.

Mitchell, 31, knows that while Austin is slowly improving, the area still has a long way to go. There are vacant, boarded-up buildings, liquor stores, and drug dealers hanging around nearly every block. She also knows that two out of three high school students entering freshman class won't graduate. But Mitchell has owned property in Austin for about five years now and is happy with her decision.

For Mitchell, the need to help people is something that has been instilled in her life as a little girl growing up in Evanston.

"My father was a professor at Northwestern and my mother was an in-home care provider," she said. "With four children, my parents did not have enough money to take care of us."

In Mitchell's community, people

naturally pitched in.

"Growing up was hard, but we had so many people helping us out," she said.

"My first job outside of school was selling foreign books for a company, but I knew that I wanted to do something that was more meaningful to help people," Mitchell said.

Soon, she joined a public agency dedicated to foster children.

"Because my job involved a lot of traveling, I began to learn about the disparities between Chicago neighborhoods and the socioeconomic issues involved and thought, 'Why do people have to live this way?'" she said.

That experience gave her a spark to learn more about these neighborhoods, and Mitchell went back to school to get a graduate degree in Urban Planning and Development from the University of Illinois Chicago. A few years later, when Mitchell was presented with the opportunity to invest in Austin, she and her partner took a chance. Mitchell chose to lease rental space in Austin, particularly to those who were on public aid.

"It would be easy and less stressful to rent to 'commercial tenants,' but they have a choice as to

where they can live, CHA tenants really don't get many options," she said. More important than the quality of housing is the quality of care that tenants receive, according to some of Mitchell's tenants.

"Deborah (Mitchell) is really different and I mean that, she just cares," said Vanessa Martin, a 25-year-old retail clerk and single mother of two, and a tenant of Mitchell's for over a year. "The places I've lived were the slums. The landlords never cared when you complained. It was bad. The mice would even greet you at the door."

"That's nothing, said fellow tenant Tanya Williams, a 24-year-old currently unemployed single mother of one. "Mine [the mice] would watch TV with us."

Mitchell strives to provide her tenants with the same housing quality as other areas in the city.

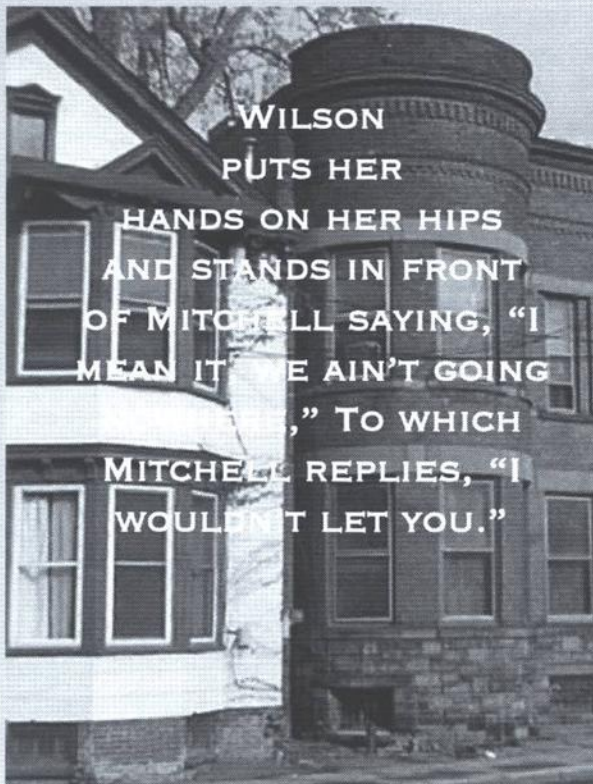
"It's hard here. Although my family had it difficult, we had education as a primary value because of my father. But here, it is very hard to focus on school, when you are worried about survival. They [Austin's residents] are genuinely angry about life [quality] and society," Mitchell said.

In an effort to help some of the young male tenants and to teach them to respect the property, Mitchell hired them to do maintenance work around the building.

Mitchell admits that it is very hard having CHA tenants, not only because she worries about possible defacement of property, but also because of the inspections that must take place regularly. Yet in the end, she finds that it is all worth it.

"When I have tenants that have children, I want them to have a good environment to live in," she said. "And if there is anything that I can do to help them, as it regards resources for employment opportunities, that I know of, I will."

Considering the low quality of housing she has had and being dependant on public aid for many years, Bernadette Wilson finds herself constantly amazed that she is able to have such a lovely home.



"The last place I lived I never saw the landlord, no matter how much I called him. I just tell her [Mitchell] that something is wrong, and she comes running when you need her," Wilson said. "She is so respectful and kind, I think of her as my own kid."

Wilson puts her hands on her hips and stands in front of Mitchell saying, "I mean it, we ain't going nowhere."

To which Mitchell replies, "I wouldn't let you."

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Building bridges with the community

Students give a little, get a lot

Students give up their vacations to serve others

By Lehia Apana

Theresa Carlson patiently sits on the dirt road in the poor Ecuadorian city of Duran. Waiting there, she sees kids running barefoot past her playing soccer. She sees young girls tending to crying babies. She sees a water truck filling up large barrels in front of huts made of sugar cane. Despite all the action transpiring around her, Carlson continues to wait for her new friends, Angelica, Jasmine and Sooli. A local woman explains to her that the girls' mother fled the city, taking the three girls with her.

"I found out that there was a huge domestic violence dispute between their mother and their father. Their mother ended up stealing her children to go away somewhere," Carlson said.

Throughout her visit to Ecuador, Carlson felt first-hand the cruel realities of people living in a third-world country. "It's what helped me to understand social justice in the first place and what it means to be a person for others and live every day as a person who is conscious of problems in our world," Carlson said. Carlson, 21, is one of many student volunteers who took part in an immersion trip to Ecuador last May through Loyola's University Ministry. Every year, student volunteers are given the opportunity to spend their fall, spring or

summer break doing volunteer work in places throughout the United States and abroad. These alternative break immersions provide students with another option for travel.

"I wanted to have a new experience, something different to do during spring break," Carlson said. "I felt [that] going to Cancun or doing something typi

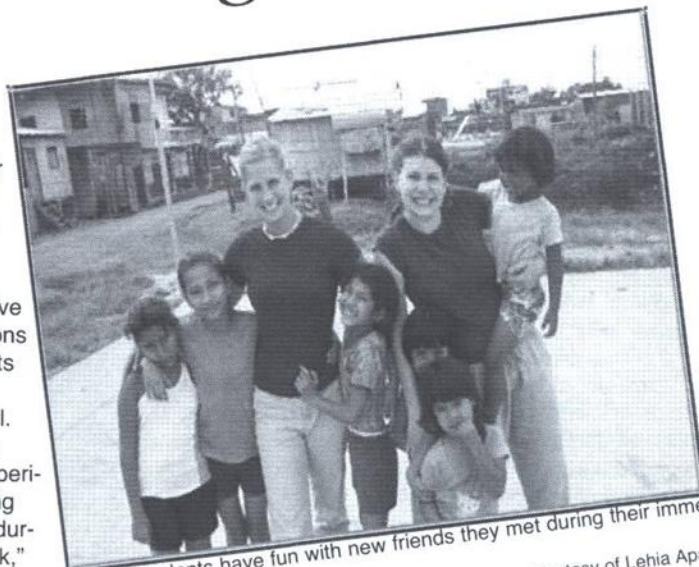
"What is essential is that there be direct contact with the human face of injustice. We need to understand the causes and conditions that perpetuate suffering."

-Daniel Hartnett, philosophy professor at Loyola

cal of a college student wouldn't enhance me as a person."

Students who apply for an immersion trip can visit sites within the United States or internationally, depending on their preference. However, priority for the highly popular international trips is given to those students who have experience with a domestic immersion.

"[Alternative break immersions] have been going on at Loyola for



Loyola students have fun with new friends they met during their immersion trip.

Photo courtesy of Lehia Apana

many years, but within the last eight years we've seen quite a bit of momentum in popularity. That's a trend across all universities, not just Loyola," said Bridget Grady, University Ministry chaplain and immersion trips coordinator at Loyola.

Due to the program's increasing popularity, many students have been turned away from international trips. Last year Grady was forced to turn away some students who applied for the volunteer trips.

"Approximately 70 students applied, but we could only take 35 students," Grady said.

This year Grady estimates that 15 students will be placed in each of the three international trips to Guatemala, El Salvador and France. She anticipates that the number of students who apply will exceed the available openings.

There are many factors that point to the program's continuing success, Grady said. However, word-of-mouth has been the most effective method.

"There is starting to be a pretty large core group on campus who have experienced these trips, who are now talking about it quite a bit," Grady said. 24
"The program really speaks for

itself, people first need to know it exists.”

Many volunteer organizations are seeing the growth of international participants. Habitat for Humanity is an international non-profit organization that helps to build homes for individuals with inadequate or no housing.

Each year during spring break, Habitat for Humanity organizes a Collegiate Challenge program where students spend a week building houses for those in need. Since the program’s inception in 1990, it has grown immensely. In 1990 there were over 1,000 students involved, and in 2004 over 11,000 students participated.

Not only is there increased interest in volunteer trips among the student population, but there is also a shift in entire face of volunteerism as a whole, Grady said. Students have become more aware of the bigger picture.

“Instead of painting a house for a person, we want to paint it with that person,” Grady said. “By doing this, students realize that they are not simply there to provide a service, they are also providing an understanding of another culture.”

This continuing concern for global issues is one of the program’s key objectives. It no longer is enough to simply visit a place to paint houses or repair buildings. Trips nowadays focus more on understanding than providing physical labor.

Penny Hartwell, 21, first participated in an alternative break immersion within Chicago during fall break of her sophomore year. Although she did not travel across the country or to an exotic location abroad, she admits that she saw a new side to a familiar city.

Students were taken to underprivileged communities like Cabrini Green and Pilsen where they cooked for the homeless and slept overnight in shelters.

“The trip showed me places in Chicago that are different than the usual places like Michigan Avenue, Lincoln Park or Navy Pier,” Hartwell said. “It opened my eyes to other people’s lifestyles who are [physically] so close to me.”

Year after year, Loyola’s immersion trips have given students like Hartwell a real-life look at issues that affect the national and global community. Programs like these force students to experience other ways of life that are different from their own.

“What is essential is that there be direct contact with the human face of injustice,” said Daniel Hartnett, philosophy professor at Loyola. “We need to understand the causes and conditions that perpetuate suffering.”

Hartnett spent 23 years in Peru, directing the adult education program in a squatter settlement of 22,000 people. He has also taught a class at Loyola that focuses on volunteer immersion.

“The first step toward justice begins with listening to the narratives of justice,” Hartnett said.



Loyola students help build a house as part of their alternative spring break.

Photo courtesy of Leahia Apana

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Gift from the heart

The Gift from the Heart Foundation aids children throughout the world to overcome obstacles after surgery

By Kathy Undas



Krystyna Pasek, President of the Gift from the Heart Foundation

Origami paper cranes and pictures bursting with color and life are just a few signs of a talented artist. Yet, it is not an artist's hand that created these pieces of art, for the artist herself has no hands.

Anna, 14, was born in Poland with no arms and one leg that is shorter than the other. The art that she creates comes directly from her soul and is manifested to the outside world only through the use of her feet. Anna can fold origami, write, paint and create works of art with just the

use of her feet.

At the same time, Anna is receiving help in order to make her legs even and will eventually attain prostheses arms. She has undergone numerous surgeries, none of which would have been possible without the help of the Chicago-based Gift from the Heart Foundation.

Polish businesswoman Krystyna Pasek formed the Gift from the Heart Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, in 1988.

Pasek, 48, who serves as the foundation's president, based the beginnings of this organization on her belief that, "people are worth what they can give of themselves to others."

The organization offers help to children throughout the world but especially in Poland and Eastern Europe. Orthopedic technology in Europe has not advanced as far as it has in the United States. Therefore, the goal of the organization is to transport the suffering children from Europe to the United States, house them and help them to recuperate after the surgeries.

Over the years the organization has received many awards, honors and praises from the community. As Alderman A. Wojcik of the 30th ward says he, "holds the organization in the highest regard and heartily supports the endeavor," especially because the foundation's "beginnings were as a grass roots organization with little or no funding." Since then, the organization has grown, flourished and formed relationships with some of Chicago's foremost hospitals.

Shriners Hospital for Children has been with the foundation from the beginning by evaluating the children's orthopedic problems and performing surgeries

Anna draws a picture while spending time with a friend. Gift from the Heart gives newfound hope to children undergoing surgery.

Photo courtesy of Kathy Undas





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Life of Service

By Suzi DeGuilio

Jenn Haas was a child herself when she decided she wanted to help children for a living.

"She got so angry one time when we were at the grocery store," said Christine Haas, Jenn's mother. "A woman spanked her child and Jenn was furious. She was only about eight years old, but I still had to tell her not to say anything to that woman."

Even though Jenn was only in the second grade, she realized what her goal in life would be. That goal is being accomplished today.

Haas, a 21-year-old social work graduate student from Loyola University Chicago, grew up in South Bend, Indiana in a rough area.

"There were many single-parent homes; men were always coming over to houses and arguing with women or hitting them," she said. "I saw this at a young age and wanted to help those children who had to experience that fighting."

Growing up in a single-parent home also had an effect on Haas.

"I have always been very close to my family," she said. "My mom is a nurse who works with children, and my grandma raised eight kids without much help; they were my inspiration to do what I do today."

Though only in her twenties, Haas has accomplished a lot.

"Hard work and determination is what it takes to do what I do," Haas said.

She started her work in South Bend at Memorial Hospital when she was in high school. After high school, she began work at Villages Foster Care, which is also located in South Bend. This was Haas' first experience at working with foster children, and it opened her eyes to the real world of social work.

Haas soon moved to Chicago to attend Loyola, and, last summer, she worked at Make-A-Wish, a foundation that grants dying children a final chance to live out their dreams.

"It was hard work there...I actually spoke to a 17-year-

old girl who had ovarian cancer and only three weeks to live," she said.

"I listened as she told me that going to Disney World was her dream. It made me evaluate my life and the way I act."

Today, Haas works at Catholic Charities in Chicago, a nationwide agency with many different charitable programs. Haas, keeping in mind her dream of helping children, works in the foster care facility.

"I think she is doing a great job and I think that since this is her first time working in adoption, she is showing all the traits necessary for being a successful social worker," said Carmen Ariles, Haas' co-worker at Catholic Charities.

Brooke Lawler, Haas' best friend since grade school, also commends Haas' accomplishments, and she foresees further achievements.

"I am not surprised that she's been successful so far," she said. "She was always passionate about helping others even when she was going through hard times herself. I am proud of what she's done, but I know this is only the beginning."

With the many expectations placed on Haas, one may think the pressure would get to her. However, it has not. Haas allows people to expect the best from her because she expects it from herself.

"I have many goals, but my biggest has always been to open up my own practice to help women and children," Haas said.

The word "practice" may sound like she is thinking of law school, but for now, Haas is taking it one step at a time. While law school may be in her future, she says that right now, she wants to make a difference in the world of social work.

"I want to change the system," she said. "I believe that family preservation, one aspect of social work, should change. It's not always the best thing."

Family preservation is reuniting children with their biological parents and the "main goal" in helping children at many facilities including Catholic Charities. However, Haas said that many parents are not fit and, while it may

be difficult to take a child from his or her parents, it can sometimes be the best thing to do.

While working at Catholic Charities, Haas has spoken with many adults who want to take in a child of their own. She has gone on several house calls to see if newly placed foster children are doing well in their new environment. These children, who have lived lives most could not imagine, now have a chance to flourish. Being united with other families allows the children to have a chance at a normal life.

While the process may be difficult, Haas believes she is making a change in the lives of children.

"I know that many think social work is an emotional field to work in, and it is," she said. "But the end results are, many times, rewarding and that makes all the hard work worth it."

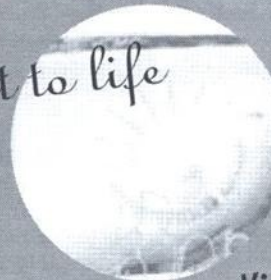


Jenn Haas is pictured here in front of the Catholic Charities building.

Photo courtesy of Suzi DeGuilio

The Enterprising Kitchen

gives women "fresh" start to life



By Kenya Kidder

All photos courtesy of The Enterprising Kitchen

The Enterprising Kitchen offers jobs and new possibilities to women in their specialty soap making industry

In Chicago's Uptown neighborhood sits an old, dark and narrow complex on a busy street. The faded name beside the second floor buzzer reads, The Enterprising Kitchen.

From the outside, no one could guess that this complex houses an organization which has changed hundreds of women's lives. A hint at the Enterprising Kitchen's mission doesn't come until the elevator doors open on the second floor to reveal a bright, yellow walled multi-room floor with soothing aromas of lavender and sage wafting through the air. The Enterprising Kitchen produces homemade, natural soap products by women seeking to enter the workforce.

"The Enterprising Kitchen provides life skills for women who have never had a job, have not had a job in a long time or have had numerous barriers to overcome," said founder Joan Pikas. "Our main goal is to make these women self sufficient by giving them most of the skills which will make them employable."

Pikas, 55, initially got the idea while she was teaching a GED class for women.

"Many of the women thought that once they passed the test things would be better, and I realized that

would not be the case for most of the women. I thought to myself, what they really need is a job," Pikas said.

Pikas graduated from Washington University with an Education degree and has always been attracted to jobs which educate and assist those in need.

"I like interacting with people," Pikas said.

After graduation she worked with children through the Illinois Department of Mental Health until she became a mother. As her sons grew older, Pikas took a job teaching adult literacy.

"I felt strength when I was around people I was helping like at the Mental Health clinic and teaching," she said.

The Enterprising Kitchen was not created overnight. Pikas just knew she wanted to create a program which would empower women and provide them with the skills to become self sufficient.

"I started with 4-6 women at first, and I had the women packaging grain because I thought that if you had a good product and mission then everything would be OK, but I was wrong," Pikas said. Problems arose when production slowed due to a drop in demand. Since Pikas refused to lay any of her employees off, her workers were getting less hours.

It was then when she realized something needed to change. Then an acquaintance told her to make soap.

"It's hot right now," she told me," Pikas said. "So every day after the women left, I started to experiment and make soap.

The first Christmas we offered soap it was a fantastic success."

Eventually Pikas phased out grain packaging and



One of the Enterprising Kitchen women prepares part of the soap making process at her work station.

focused solely on soap.

Today, women at The Enterprising Kitchen are employed 25 hours per

week in all aspects of the soap making business from customer service, sales, inventory management, soap processing from raw materials to filling orders and shipping finished goods. The revenues generated through product sales help sustain The Enterprising Kitchen's workforce and development programs.

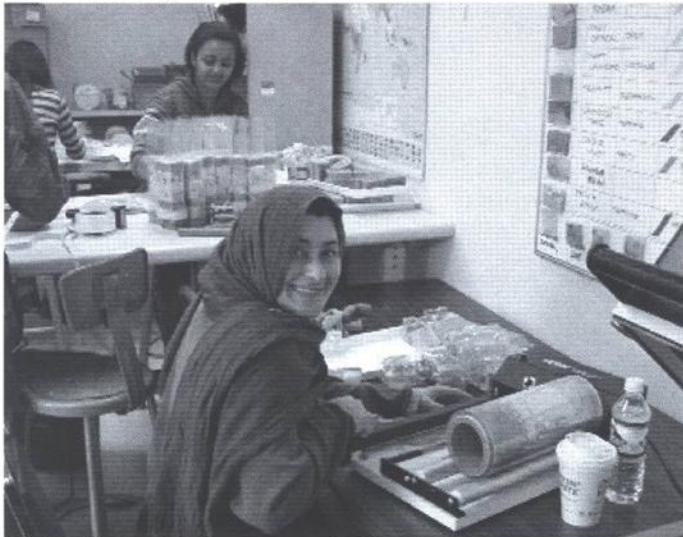
"The Enterprising Kitchen helps you understand that people care, and that you're not always by yourself," said Aja Robinson, current employee of the month. "The majority of the time it seems like that, but you're not. You've got people to help you here. They give a lot of people hope."

Robinson is an Enterprising Kitchen success story. Like most of the women at The Enterprising Kitchen, unexpected circumstances put her in a position where she didn't have control over her life anymore. Two years ago, Robinson was jumping from job to job, then she found herself unrepentantly pregnant and her life spiraled out of control. She was laid off, jobless for over a year with a newborn to support. Robinson said she didn't know what to do. Then she heard about the The Enterprising Kitchen from an acquaintance. The Enterprising Kitchen provided her with a nurturing environment and now nine months later she is working steadily and has been promoted to chief soap maker.

Lauri Alpern, The Enterprising Kitchen's co-executive director, credits

the organization's success to Pikas.

"She's sensitive and communicates well with the women. She is such an



Another employee wraps the soaps before they are sent out to customers.



The Enterprising Kitchen workers come together to learn lifelong skills and gain experience and friendships.

open person and the women respond to that," Alpern said.

Pikas currently serves as co-executive director, but is still becoming accustomed to her new role. Pikas was previously involved with all aspects of the business from soap making to book keeping to running the program.

"Now my focus is on the program itself. My job is to bring in and interview the women, bring in other programs like financial advice, work ethics and cus-

tomers service skills. It's hard and frustrating not knowing everything that is going on, but I know I have really good people working beside me," Pikas said.

Despite her change in title, Pikas says it is not uncommon for her to work 12-13 hours a day and come in on Saturday and Sunday.

"I love the women I meet here, even the ones who don't go on to great success," she said. "I enjoy getting to know them and I admire and learn so much from them. There is a large immigrant population at The Enterprising Kitchen; these women have really enhanced my life. I have the chance to learn about their culture. I guess it's the sociologist in me."

Pikas has always been a big believer in doing what you love.

"I've always told my sons to find their passion and do what gives them satisfaction," she said. "The Enterprising Kitchen does this for me. I love what I do. If I didn't, I wouldn't do it."

Despite her love for the organization, Pikas sees herself retiring in the next few years, but has big plans for her creation.

"In 10 years I hope we have bigger space, more women, different tiers of employment for the women, possibly providing housing, and hopefully a store front." She added, "My main

goal is when I leave The Enterprising Kitchen that it will continue on. I'm setting the foundation right now so I will know that it will be here long after I'm gone."

For more information or to support The Enterprising Kitchen please visit www.theenterprisingkitchen.org.

Director of local National Student Partnerships reassesses career

The Evanston chapter of the National Student Partnership unites students, promoting a life of service instead of monetary profit.

By Lauren Bishop



Mary Svenstrup has dedicated herself to helping others as the local director of Evanston's National Student Partnerships.

Photo courtesy of Lauren Bishop

Squeezing in an afternoon nap, finding that oh-so-cheap restaurant that serves eggs at 4:00 in the morning, and getting that horrible history essay done just in time. These are typical elements of college students' daily lives, and can continue to be prevalent components of students' four years as undergraduates. The previous examples perhaps lead some to believe that college students only do the necessary work in their courses, and then nap the rest of their time away.

But there are students who choose to go the extra mile and fill their spare time with worthy commitments: students such as members of the National Student Partnerships, the largest student-led organization in the United States. Members are helping underprivileged community members find jobs, houses, childcare, or even just an email address.

Mary Svenstrup, 21, a senior at Northwestern University and local director of Evanston's National Student Partnerships, is one of the many students who has changed and been changed by the organization.

"When I came into college I was very dead-set on being a banker," Svenstrup said. "I didn't really care about anything else."

At the Evanston office, the largest National Student Partnerships office in the nation, Svenstrup spends 15-20 hours a week volunteering, all while attending

to her academic tasks. But Svenstrup doesn't seem to struggle between her commitments. She says National Student Partnerships is an important part of her life, and she is not only dedicated to the clients she serves, but also the

volunteers that she recruits.

Furthermore, she says she wants all the organization's volunteers to have the same experience that she has had, and to understand that poverty is not just a problem with one person but it is a larger issue, a sociological issue.

National Student Partnerships was formed by college undergraduates in 1998. It operates a national network of drop-in resource centers, staffed by student volunteers from area colleges and universities. The organization's volunteers provide intensive on-site and referral services, enabling low-income community members (clients)

to reach goals by working with them one-on-one. It strives to unite a national movement of students dedicated to direct service now, so that systemic challenges are not passed on.

An economics and international studies major, Svenstrup joined the business fraternity, Kappa Alpha Theta sorority and the Campus Republicans upon entering Northwestern University. Late in her freshman year, she stumbled upon a flier for National Student

"I worked with a few people that were so interesting to me and that had such extensive backgrounds but just could not find a job, and it really struck me that there's probably more to [life] than me just making money."

- Mary Svenstrup, director of Evanston's National Student Partnerships

Partnerships, and her interests took a new direction. Three years later, she has risen to her current position as director.

"Mary's dedication to NSP has been very evident the whole time," said Emily Rhodes, 23, site coordinator at the Evanston office.

Svenstrup was born in Indiana but raised in Dallas. She has one younger brother James, 19, a freshman at the University of Texas with whom she says she's very close. Her mother Teresa, 49, was a stay-at-home mom and her father James, 50, worked in private wealth management. Her father's work required the family to move around a lot so Svenstrup has lived in seven different states. Her parents' Republican views influenced hers directly, although she now admits she didn't understand many of the issues she stood for. Svenstrup says National Student Partnerships changed the way she viewed the world and herself.

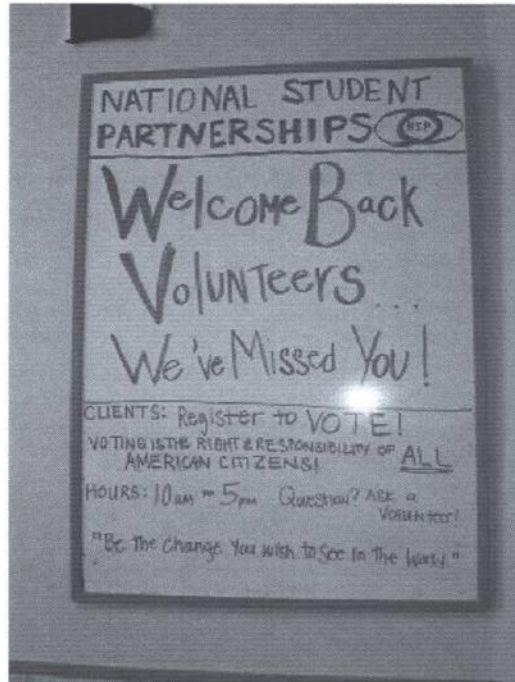
Whether meeting one-on-one with her clients at the quaint, yet busy, Evanston office, or spending a day planting flowers with clients during an outreach retreat, Mary says she's been deeply affected by those she has worked with.

"I worked with a few people that were so interesting to me and that had such extensive backgrounds but just could not find a job, and it really struck me that there's probably more to [life] than me just making money," she said.

Svenstrup graduates in June and will work at JP Morgan for two years, focusing on one of the company's newer public policy programs as opposed to the

"National Student Partnerships really changed what I wanted to study, my political beliefs, and has shaped what I ultimately want to do..."

-Mary Svenstrup



The National Student Partnerships of Evanston welcome back their volunteers.

Photo courtesy of Lauren Bishop



Members of National Student Partnerships help disadvantaged members of their community get back on their feet with housing and jobs.

Photo courtesy of www.nspnet.org

investment banking programs that she held such a strong interest in before she became involved with National Student Partnerships. All of this is in preparation to pursue an M.B.A. in public policy, and use that to reach her ultimate goal of starting her own non-profit financial community development organization.

"Mary is remarkably energetic and enthusiastic about everything she does," said Svenstrup's roommate Amanda Stanford, 21, who has faith that Svenstrup will accomplish her goal.

Svenstrup explained that she is still "batting around" the conflict of her corporate interests versus her social policy interests, but the mark that National Student Partnerships has left is clear.

"National Student Partnerships really changed what I wanted to study, my political beliefs, and has shaped what I ultimately want to do...my dad jokingly makes fun of me, [by sending] me George Bush emails, but he doesn't really care...he understands that [this work] is important to me."

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Project Vida

Letting AIDS patients find "the center of their power"

By Colleen Curtis



A Latino woman lies on the table looking around at flickering candle flames dancing on the wall. Slowly she closes her eyes, lets her body melt into the surface. She is fully clothed, with a soft, faint smile across her tired face. The smell of lavender and mint is inhaled, held onto, exhaled slowly. Her chest rises and falls methodically. She waits patiently for treatment to begin, and as a voice begins pulsating throughout the room, slow and smooth, she begins to relax for the first time in days. Her muscles release, her stress dissipates, and she begins to let positive energy flow through her body and mind. Clear thoughts, positive feelings and a sense of empowerment begin to filter through her. She feels energy, pure and elusive energy.

The woman on the table contracted HIV 10 years ago as a prostitute on the streets of Chicago. She has not come to the clinic for injections or cocktails of prescription drugs that will defeat her body into submission. Nor has she come to listen to technical medical jargon that she cannot understand. She has come to this place, Project Vida, to receive energy work from Sue Saltmarsh.

"I was looking for a place that would allow me to practice alternative medicine while benefiting HIV/AIDS patients that were not being helped by traditional methods," Saltmarsh said. She found that place at Project Vida.

Energy workers like Sue Saltmarsh explain that energy flows from the universe through their bodies and from the palms of their hands, to specific parts of their own or others' bodies in order to facilitate healing. Saltmarsh says that her intention is the single most important element of her energy work, along with the patient's willingness to receive it. Saltmarsh works to promote positive, lasting energy in her clients to alter their quality of life, frame of mind and physical well-being.

Most people desire increased energy to get more done or be more efficient in their daily lives, but Saltmarsh focuses on a community that requires her services for different reasons. Saltmarsh's clientele are people struggling with HIV/AIDS in the Chicago area.

Eleven years ago Saltmarsh joined Project Vida, a clinic offering alternative therapies to those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in the Chicago area. Located in Little Village, around 28th Street and Pulaski Road, the clinic aims to help low-income Latin community suffering from AIDS.

Saltmarsh, 48, has not always been a pioneer in alternative AIDS therapy. She first became the wardrobe director for Hubbard Street Dance Theater, a touring company based in Chicago. Through the dance company she became friends with many gay entertainers in the dance industry.

"I had many good friends from my days with Hubbard Street, and I lost several of them to AIDS. This is part of the reason I felt compelled to start doing positive work for those suffering from it," Saltmarsh said.

After graduating from the Southwest School of Botanical Medicine in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Saltmarsh returned to Chicago. Her degree in herbal remedies and alternative therapies led her to her job at Project Vida.

At the time she first began working with HIV/AIDS patients at Project Vida in 1993, little was known about the disease and its progression.

"There was a dialogue between Western and herbal medicine about the benefits of each. Now it is apparent that neither is successful alone, but together they are much more effective," Saltmarsh said.

Saltmarsh said energy work is beneficial to clients because it "lets them find their center of power." Saltmarsh evaluates, focuses and flows the energy within her clients. "After they have consistent treatment they get into the habit of always making healing decisions for themselves, which helps them in the long run of life, and their disease," said Saltmarsh.

"Clients that have positive energy simply live longer, better lives," she added. "Treatment is a part of taking their power back and having a say in what they are doing for their health. They understand their energy, the benefits and the outcomes, and they know it is helping in a definitive way. It is the power of faith in themselves," said Saltmarsh.

"Sue's intuition about energy and the body is miraculous," said Brian Chambers, owner of Skylight Wellness in Rogers Park. Chambers and Saltmarsh became acquainted when he hired her as an energy worker for his practice.

"She has added an effective new dimension to our staff and practice, and I can see why her patients benefit from her work so greatly," he added.

Saltmarsh possesses knowledge about bodies and the virus and sees how AIDS changes people's lives. She has seen how sickness can change a person, for the better or worse. This is why she attempts to heal not only the physical, but the emotional and mental ailments of her patients through alternative therapies. She will even see clients in her home if they are unable to make the trip to Project Vida.

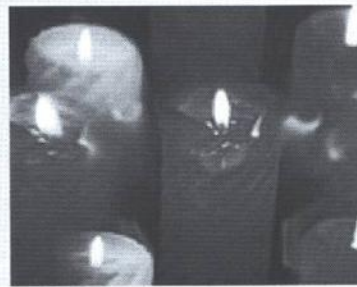
"At certain stages of treatment it is imperative to receive persistent positive work and energy for themselves, even if they are too sick or busy to travel to the clinic," Saltmarsh said.

"Sue's work with me has been the ultimate difference in my life. I live to live, not to die because I have increased energy and awareness of my body and its capabilities," said a long-time Project Vida client, who wishes to remain anonymous.

Saltmarsh is proud of her work with HIV/AIDS patients.

"In the face of a terrible epidemic like HIV/AIDS, we need not blame those who have been afflicted," she said. "We have to work to ensure they do not suffer needlessly because of poor care or morale."

"Clients that have positive energy simply live longer...They understand their energy, the benefits



and the outcomes...It is the power of faith in themselves."

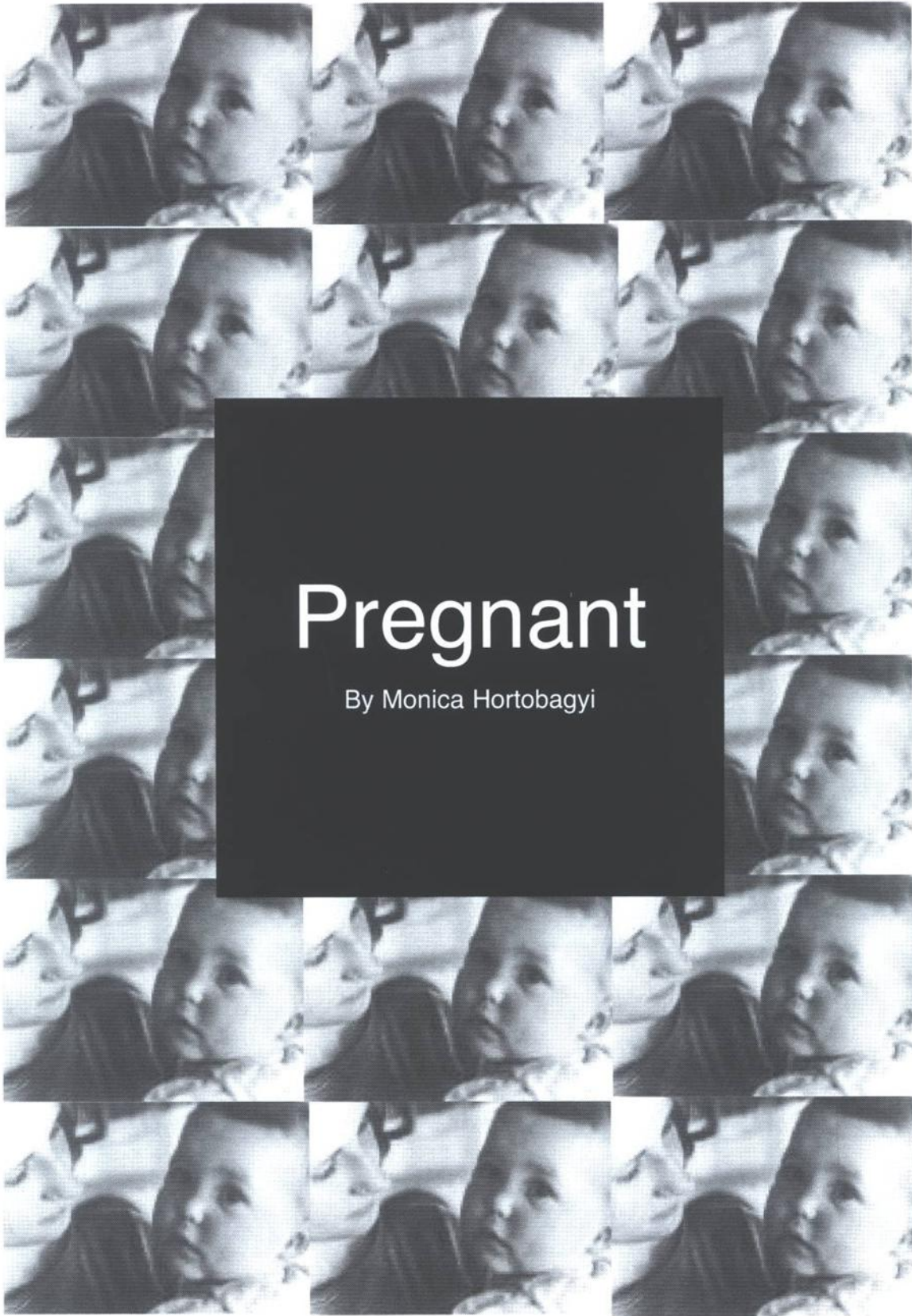
-Susan Saltmarsh,
Project Vida energy
worker

Images courtesy of innerharmonywellness.com

Women's



Issues



Pregnant

By Monica Hortobagyi

Pasha Bohlen still laughs when she thinks back to her days in college. Before she switched her major from engineering to nursing, she tried to discourage people from becoming a nurse and advocated medical school instead.

"I guess I was influenced by the stereotypes on TV during the '70s and '80s that showed nurses bringing coffee to the doctors," said Bohlen, who graduated nursing school from University of Texas San Antonio Health Science Center. "It was only after I took an interest test in college that my call to nursing was confirmed and I decided to switch." Bohlen, 40, has worked as a pre-natal nurse for 16 years, spending the last two years with Chicago's CareFirst Pregnancy Center on South Michigan Avenue.

"This is a dream job for me," Bohlen said, "it's both a job and a ministrate."

CareFirst pregnancy centers offer a palette of resources to women who think they may be pregnant, and to the boyfriends, friends or family members who additionally seek support. Pregnancy tests, ultrasounds and confidential counseling are among the center's free services, which also include:

- Information about a pregnant woman's options.
- A 24-hour counseling hotline.
- Referrals for medical and legal assistance.
- Pregnancy supplies such as maternity and baby clothes, furniture and other needs.
- Preparation for Parenthood classes and Life Skills classes.
- Post-abortion counseling/support groups.

"We are about educating and informing anyone who comes in, knowing that, in the end, it's their choice," said Kischea Taylor, 27, assistant director of CareFirst's Northside Center in Rogers Park. "We are about loving men and women where they're at, and meeting the needs that we can meet."

"I tell myself, this is worth it every day," said Debra Webb, client services manager and director of both the Loop Center and Northside locations. "It's not about the money our services are free. It's about helping people in need, encouraging them to be all that they can be, teaching them to be responsible, and helping them to make the right decisions."

Webb, 34, who started with CareFirst as a volunteer and has held the director's position for six years, worked with a young, female college student a few years ago who was considering abortion because of her health problems and fears of delaying schooling. The young woman (whose identity was not



"Just because a young person has a baby doesn't mean it's a negative thing."

-Debra Webb, client services manager and director at CareFirst



released in keeping with the confidentiality policy) scheduled numerous appointments with doctors for her health evaluations and eventually received a doctor's approval to continue with the pregnancy, although carrying the child to term would require many follow-up appointments. During the remaining months of her pregnancy, her boyfriend abandoned her.

"I am so glad our center could support her," said Webb, a graduate of Loyola University Chicago's Business program and a current student at Jane Addams School of Social Work. "She and I spoke every week during her pregnancy, if not in person, then by phone."

Today, the young woman's illness is in remission, her graduation is in May and her daughter is 3 years old.

"Just because a young person has a baby doesn't mean it's a negative thing," Webb said. "We've seen a lot of girls grow in maturity, responsibility and self-assurance."

Walking with the young women through the physical and emotional changes accompanying the client's decision are some of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of the staff and volunteers' jobs.

"I'm here to listen and I take it all in with them," Taylor said, "so finding a balance can be challenging and sometimes I do get emotional burnout. But seeing their lives change is what brings me back day after day, and living my faith is what allows me to give."

Taylor worked with a 15-year-old client who was in 7th grade and was three or four months pregnant. She was in an abusive relationship, her mom was a drug-user and the client did not even have the stability of a home, as she had been out on the streets since she was 6 or 7 years old. Taylor stuck by her through the pregnancy and after the young woman had her baby, she returned to school and lost contact with Taylor for six months. Upon resurfacing, the young woman told Taylor that she had been getting her life together, was now going to church and becoming, in Taylor's words, "a totally different person." Several months passed and the young woman returned, pregnant again.

"I was obviously frustrated for her," Taylor said, "but she didn't let the pregnancy hold her back."

The young woman is now 19 years old. She recently received her high school diploma, moved into her own apartment where she, at last, created the stability she had lacked before.

"She saw she deserved more," Taylor said, "and that's what success is for us when our clients realize I do have worth! Let me act on that. It's not that everything's perfect in their lives, but that they're making strides toward their goals."



SEXISM AND BIRTH CONTROL

Opinion

By Kenya Kidder



As of Jan. 1, 2004, women in Illinois were relieved from paying for costly birth control. The state passed a bill requiring insurance companies, which already offer prescription drug benefits, to include contraceptives. However, 30 states still do not require drug companies to cover contraceptive drugs and devices in their coverage plans.



A new study has found that the number of drug companies which cover contraceptives is three times higher than a decade ago. But this is not good enough; all women deserve affordable birth control. Insurance companies and governments at the state and national level perpetuate unequal treatment toward women by allowing such an outrageous omission.



It should not have taken over three decades for the state to enact a law that requires insurance companies to cover contraceptives. Also, it should not take a state or federal law to accomplish this goal.



Insurance companies and the state's slow enactment on this issue only prove women are shortchanged and treated unequally. Two months after Viagra, a drug to treat male erectile dysfunction, was released onto the market, over half of the country's insurance companies offered men some sort of coverage or reimbursement. So why shouldn't birth control be covered?



Most insurance companies cover prenatal care, delivery and post-natal care. Yet their reluctance to cover birth control is ridiculous. More than half of the 6.3 million pregnancies in the United States are unplanned. It would seem that insurance companies would want to stop unwanted pregnancies because this would be less costly than paying for a child to be born.

Some might argue that including contraceptives in an insurance plan would be more costly to companies; however, cost analyses have shown that if health insurance policies were to include coverage for these contraceptive supplies, costs to employers would be minimal — as little as \$1.43 per employee per month.

Contraceptives are costly; on average

birth control pills can cost \$40 a month. This makes contraceptives unavailable to many women, thus resulting in unwanted pregnancies. I know I have heard from women on more than one occasion that they were on the pill, but stopped taking it because they could not afford the medication.

Why didn't they use alternative contraceptive choices? Many do, but these women are forced to resort to less effective measures, such as condoms. The Pill, for example, is 99 percent effective when used correctly. And unlike condoms, pills normally do not lose effectiveness with age or break, and are less likely to be defective upon purchase.

Contraceptives are a basic part of health care for many women, so it is only right if insurance companies pay for these drugs. They provide coverage for most other prescription drugs so why not contraceptives?

If there were a male birth control pill, I would bet that insurance companies would not hesitate to pay for this drug. This is more than just a corporate issue; this is about providing women with equality.

Women of reproductive age currently spend 68 percent more in out-of-pocket health care costs than men. Much of the gender gap in expenses is due to reproductive health-related supplies and services. Including contraceptives in insurance plans would perhaps cut down on the number of unwanted pregnancies.

More than half of unintended pregnancies end in abortion, and, as stated earlier, more than half of all pregnancies are unplanned.

There is a clear correlation between unwanted pregnancies and insurance company's refusal to cover contraceptives. To prevent unwanted pregnancies and abortions, the nation must make contraceptives accessible to women. But this means making contraceptives affordable. The answer to making contraceptives affordable lies within the ability of insurance companies.

Also, some women use contraceptives for medical purposes. Not covering such medication in their coverage plans, insurance companies are preventing these women from a basic health care necessity.

The bottom line is that contraceptives are part of basic health care for most women, and far too many insurance policies unnecessarily exclude this vital coverage.

CONTRACEPTIVES AND THE CHURCH

By Ally Dowds

All my life, I have been raised as a Catholic— a practicing Catholic. I went to Catholic grade school, high school and now a Jesuit university. My religion is something that defines me, but does not control my view on every aspect on life. I have been taught many of the teachings of my faith, but there are some that contradict my own personal beliefs — birth control is one of them.

The Catholic Church simply states that any form or “act that interferes or tries to change natural happenings is intrinsically evil.” But evil is such a strong adjective to give anything. How can a medication that serves various women’s needs be considered evil?

The reason for the church’s label is because it believes that birth control or any other form of contraceptives interferes with God’s plan for marriage — to produce children. Birth control is also seen as anti-child because it is preventing a woman from conceiving. The use of contraceptives by people is not because they do not want children in the future but most likely because they want to prevent unplanned pregnancies. Why not use birth control if an individual cannot afford a child at that moment in her life or believes she is too young to have children; a couple has children and does not want another child; or if that individual isn’t planning on having children? This personal choice should not be prohibited by any one, even the Catholic Church.

The common misperception is that birth control is used by women to interfere with the natural process of conception. However, the medication is also used for other daily, necessary means such as: acne, severe menstrual cramping, regulation of periods, and protection against endometrial and ovarian cancer, migraine headaches and osteoporosis.

Since 1916, when Margaret Sanger opened the nation’s first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, women have been provided with an alternative to abortion. Today, statistics have shown a dramatic decline in abortion by 11 percent among women and 39 percent among teenage girls. These percentages alone

should encourage the church’s acceptance on birth control.

The use of birth control is a smart decision. made by women today. The church would argue, however, that instead of using birth control, a medication that radically defies God’s teachings, a couple should refrain from sexual intercourse. But how is that command justified? If a couple is in love, they are entitled to the freedom to make their own decisions in life; teachings from the Bible, words written thousands of years ago and not always meant to be taken literally, should not dictate the way a person must live.

Birth control should not be viewed as harmful or a disgrace to one’s religion because it does nothing but aide a woman in life. It is impossible to deny birth control’s significance in women’s health when you see the ever-increasing decline in abortion, especially among teenage girls. More importantly, I feel that it is a person’s own personal decision to choose what they do to their own body. Who are we to say that a woman’s choice to use birth control is wrong?

Can a pill that helps prevent cancer and dramatically decreases the number of abortions ever be considered evil or immoral? I think not.

Opinion



Impoverished women find their home at Deborah's Place

By Ally Dowds



Marlene Walton (left) helps one of the women participants (right) at Deborah's Place fill out important paperwork.

Photo courtesy of Ally Dowds

Imagine having the opportunity to help a person find her first job, or the chance to see the look on her face when she has accomplished a task she thought impossible.

Imagine having the opportunity to help women realize their dreams and potential, just by being a body to lean on, offering a word of advice, or providing an ear to listen.

For Marlene Walton, she does not have to imagine what these opportunities would feel like, she lives them.

Since September 2001, Walton has dedicated her life to serving women at Deborah's Place, a women's shelter on West Jackson Boulevard in Chicago. Each day, Walton offers both moral and physical support to underprivileged women in need of guidance. Working at the women's shelter was not a job that Walton just "fell into;" it was a profession she had envisioned herself being a part of.

"I always knew I wanted to work with the homeless," Walton said. "My family grew up helping people, so I guess I'm living on the family tradition. Being able to work with women [at Deborah's Place] is also a plus."

Walton pursued her goal by attending Southern Illinois University, where she

graduated with a degree in social justice and worked at an overnight shelter.

However, while working at the shelter, Walton realized she not only wanted to provide the homeless with just a place to stay, she wanted to provide them with the necessary resources to bettering their lives.

"The shelter [Walton worked at] in college was more of an overnight shelter; it was only open from 11 p.m. to 8 a.m.," Walton said. "This is what drove me to Deborah's Place. They try to make the participants not feel like just a number or another body."

When researching Deborah's Place, Walton, 26, was most impressed and drawn to this particular shelter because of its emphasis on women issues and focus on women empowerment.

Deborah's Place is geared toward aiding underprivileged women, offering employment and educational services and housing opportunities.

Walton works at the Patty Crowley Apartments branch of Deborah's place, located on North Sedgwick Street, where their main focus is supplying homeless women with a place to live, referrals and advocacy programs.

"[Deborah's Place's] main objective is helping women with the transition from homeless to housing," Walton said. "ing women with the transition from homeless to housing," Walton said.

As the housing care manager, Walton helps the Deborah's Place participants in activities like arts and crafts, tutoring, and even a GED program where women attend a classroom-like setting and receive an education. According to Walton, her most important job is to be a dependable figure for the women to rely on, a person to vent to, and just being someone who cares.

"She is working at all hours to develop new, innovative programs and workshops for the women to participate in and be educated by," Michele Fontaine, Marlene's 21-year-old sister, said. "I will never forget when she stayed up all night cooking for the ladies so they would have a home-cooked meal for Thanksgiving dinner."

At the end of the day, it is the women's appreciation and realization of their own potential that reaffirms why Walton dedicates her time and self to the shelter.

"The fact that I help women realize their dreams and potential and in the process gain self-esteem, is what is important to me," Walton said.

One of the most memorable moments for Walton was helping a participant receive necessary health benefits from her job. Walton remembers how even though this woman's health had begun to severely deteriorate, she

refused to stop working. After much suffering, Walton noticed the woman practically gave up on herself. With some help from fellow employees, Walton was able to provide proper health care for the ailing woman and eventually assisted the woman in finding permanent housing.

"Some of the other staff and I helped her get health-care because she wasn't receiving benefits from her job because she didn't know [about them]," Walton said. "We also helped her find housing outside [of Deborah's Place]."

Devona Bass, a friend of Walton's for over 10 years says that it is Walton's unbiased perception of these women that truly demonstrates her dedication to the program.

"Marlene helps the women to recognize that although they may have made mistakes in their past, they are much stronger than they think and they have the ability to get past those mistakes and move forward with their lives," Bass said.

Today, the South Side resident continues her daily service to the women that she has not only helped, but whom have helped Walton realize how precious life is.

"Just speaking to the women and hearing their stories, you learn a lot about life," Walton said. "I have learned what to do and what not to do. I realized that anything from your health to income could be here one day and not the next. Don't take things for granted."

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Working MOMS:

Alternate schedules and communication key to success

By Monica Hortobagyi

Even before the sun rises, Tonise Paul reports to work--from home. The CEO of BBDO-Chicago and mother of two teenagers starts her day at 4 a.m. organizing herself, completing any work projects that can be achieved outside of the office, and addressing any home-related concerns before leaving to drop her kids off at school. She arrives at her Michigan Avenue office at 9:30 a.m.

"By that point, I feel like it's already noon in my day," said Paul, 47, who stays until 7:00 p.m. before joining her family at home.

Paul is one of the millions of women in the work force attending to a career and a family. According to the Bureau of Labor report "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook," more than 26 million mothers with children under age 18, or 72.2 percent of women in this category, were employed in 2003.

Some experts are relating the presence of three-out-of-four moms in the work force to national concerns, such as child obesity. In the 2003 third-quarter edition of Chicago Federal Reserve Bank's "Economic Perspectives," senior economist Kristin Butcher published controversial findings claiming that child obesity directly correlates with the hours a mother spends away from home in households earning more than \$50,000 annually. She argues that a mother's reduced time with her children ultimately affects the quality of nutrition she is able to offer them, and her increased absence from the home places the



responsibility of her kids' children's exercise and snack choices in a potentially uninformed or indifferent caretaker's hands. Other experts (and many working moms themselves) praise women's presence in the workforce as beneficial, not only financially or representatively for their children, but for our culture as a whole.

"It's better for society when women are fully integrated and productive," said Dr. Laura Miller, 51, associate professor of anthropology at Loyola University Chicago. "Middle class women sitting at home and depending on male labor is a weird American idea. In other cultures, like the hunter-gatherers, the woman produces alongside the male."

In a labor force that still has residual strains of gender discrimination, employed mothers have adapted to an indifferent system by rearranging their schedules, in some cases, and tightening their prioritizing skills.



Laura Burdick, 36, a registered nurse and mother of two elementary-aged children, picked up two 12-hour operating room shifts on the weekends in order to be a support for her children during the week.

"It's tough being able to find quality-time with my spouse when his days off are when I go to work, but we've hired a babysitter every Friday night [so that we can] spend some time alone together," said Burdick, who has worked weekend shifts for 13 months. "Working outside the house is a matter of finding a balance in your life and determining what's important to you. I could choose not to work...but because my husband and I want a new car or a nice vacation, I'm motivated to do so."

Paul takes a different approach to integrating her work and family life.

"Balance suggests that there's an equilibrium: that when one side of the scale goes down, the other goes up; but reality looks more like a pendulum, swinging between home and work," said Paul, who will step out of any meeting to answer calls from her kids. "There's not enough time in the day or week to do well everything that's important for everyone that's important. I try to define my world in terms of my relationships with my children, with my husband, and with my mother; a real need at home trumps any business need."

Kathy Casillas, 31, a registered representative and office manager for Raymond James Financial Services and a mother since March, voices the tension many women feel between achieving excellence in their careers and remaining connected to their families.

"Having a baby forces you to reprioritize everything," Casillas said. "There are struggles since you don't want your boss to think you're less (of an employee) because you're a mother, but you don't want to forget about your family either. You want to be the best you can be in every area."

Employed mothers emphasize the importance of organizational and communication skills for maintaining a successful career while simultaneously nurturing a family unit.

"I think a lot of women struggle because there isn't a routine – there isn't something the kids and the spouse can count on each day," said Casillas, verbally ticking off her daily routine in half-hour increments of time. "Kids are comfortable when they know what to expect. Routine may sound boring to other people but it's what estab-

lishes the family unit." Burdick goes one step further.

"Each house is like a little business where you manage the income and communicate with the other 'employees.' We all have our jobs," said Burdick, who describes her various roles as breadwinner, 'house manager,' equal partner in marriage, coach, cook and social director.

Recent evaluations of workplace friendliness and flexibility for mothers, like "The 100 Best Companies for Working Mothers 2004" published by Working Mother Media, have encouraged presidents and CEOs of companies to brainstorm ways in which their employees with families might feel better served and, in turn, offer more productivity back to the company. Services like on-site child care, flex-scheduling options, job-protected parental leave, and even lactation support services for nursing mothers distinguish such corporations as Discovery Communications Inc., IBM, Prudential Financial and even Illinois' Abbott Laboratories.

As the workplace evolves into a friendlier environment for working mothers with added services, the employed mother may feel that work and family are less at odds and more easily integrated with each other in the near future.

Burdick blends her commitments by working an alternate schedule and by focusing on the communication at home. Paul anchors the demands of her career by using "time connections," spending every free moment connecting with her family by phone or even with daily errands.

Casillas emphasizes the importance of organization through routine to maximize the quality time spent with her

family. Keeping her eyes on the big picture also helps her find peace within a day's chaos.

"It's a little less about yourself and a little more about the greater good of your family," Casillas said.

"I want to show my daughter that I'm a mommy, but that I'm an independent woman aside from being a mommy and a wife. I want to give her the strength to become her own person, her own woman. Ultimately, I feel very blessed to be working for an employer who understands my priorities."



"I want to show my daughter that I'm a mommy, but that I'm an independent woman aside from being a mommy and a wife."

-Kathy Casillas

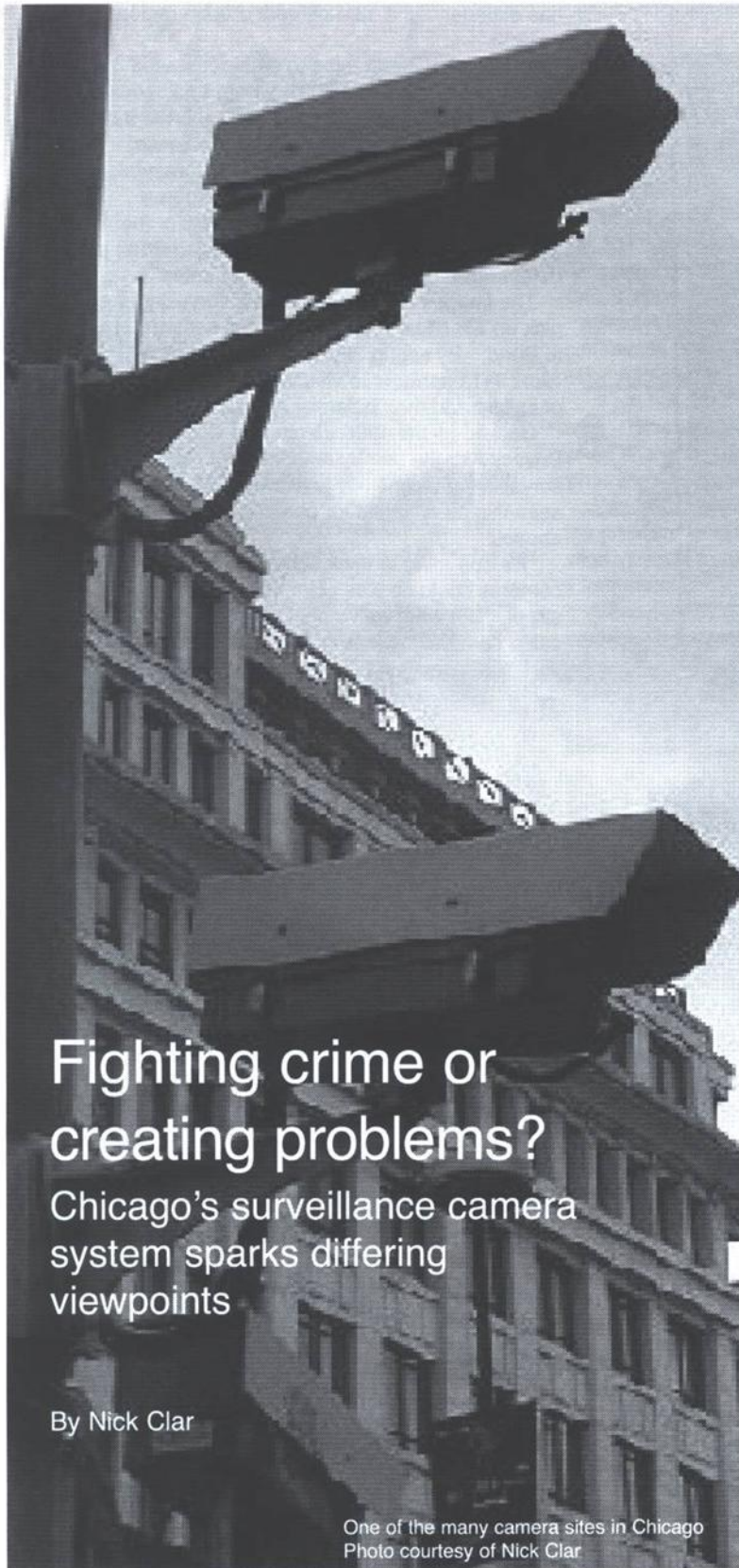




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Fighting crime or creating problems?

Chicago's surveillance camera system sparks differing viewpoints

By Nick Clar

One of the many camera sites in Chicago
Photo courtesy of Nick Clar

Enjoying downtown Chicago's structural magnificence from a sightseeing boat on the Chicago River this past August, passengers were unexpectedly bombarded from above by something neither their ticket stub or tour guide had forewarned. As the unsuspecting sightseers passed underneath the Kenzie Street bridge, a stopped bus unloaded stored fecal matter upon them. However, with video surveillance cameras stationed nearby, police were able to determine the alleged perpetrator to be the bus driver for the rock group, Dave Mathews Band.

In a post 911 environment, every known precaution is considered and applied to appease the fears of communities nationwide, even to simply deter people from using Chicago's waterways as toilets. Residents may also become more receptive to the use of public surveillance cameras because of the nation-leading 599 reported homicides in Chicago in 2003.

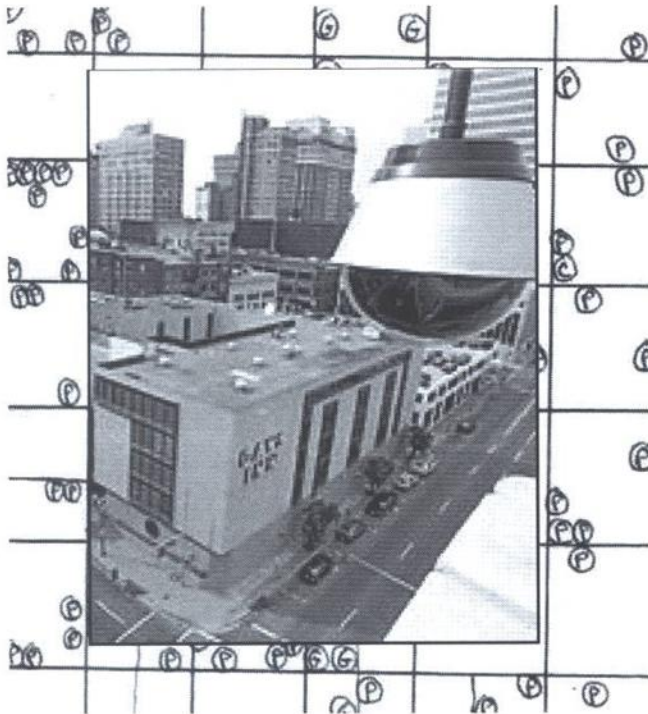
Yet the regulation of crime and sense of safety come at a price; nothing in this world is free.

With major systems already installed in London, New York, Vancouver and Chicago, closed circuit television (CCTV) surveillance systems have boomed since Sept. 11. The company, Extreme CCTV, which had stock quotes of 75 cents in 2000, saw a dramatic change to \$3.34 in 2004, increasing 250 percent. And in a field that is getting larger and more competitive, cities like Chicago are merely providing the fuel by upgrading their security systems.

"Cameras are the equivalent of hundreds of sets of eyes," Mayor Richard Daley said. "They are the next best thing to having police officers stationed at every potential trouble spot."

In early September, Daley unveiled his plans for Chicago to install more than 2,000 additional public surveillance cameras to assist detecting potential crime and terrorism. The project, expected to be completed in 2006, costs \$5.1 million from the federal homeland security grant, and will proliferate the innumerable amount of private, traffic, police and government cameras already in existence.

This added security doesn't bode well with all. Organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union vehemently oppose these "big brother" surveillance



cameras; an allusion to George Orwell's novel "1984" where residents live in the utopian city, Oceania, at the price of their individual rights and freedom. "These technological experiments attempt to claim that these cameras are the magical equation to fix everything," Edward Yohnka, director of communications with ACLU of Illinois said. "That almost never turns out to be the case."

Instead of decreasing crime rates, many suggest there will be a mere displacement of crime to areas where cameras are not installed or are unable to probe.

"There are longitudinal studies in London which show crime rates unaltered by cameras," Yohnka said. "What has happened is that crime has moved to other areas where the cameras don't exist. And oftentimes the people tasked with monitoring them get tired and miss things, simply because the physical strain of sitting and staring at cameras is, at best, difficult."

Catrina Peoples, 23, of Chicago's West Side does not feel any safer with cameras monitoring her every move. Not a deterrent of crime, the beefed security has merely prevented her from seeing friends. Peoples also does not believe a reduction of crime will result.

"These cameras aren't going to prevent anything because the drug dealers here are smart and will find a way around them," Peoples said. "Sometimes I'll want to hang out with people I know on the corner who deal drugs. But with cameras near, I may be monitored and eventually harassed simply for associating with these guys."

However, critics' assessment of allocating crime elsewhere does not coincide with released police criminal reports and studies in Chicago and other cities utilizing similar surveillance technology. London, one of the first to install public cameras,

has experienced a 13.4 percent drop in regional crime in 1998.

In Chicago, crime rates to date decreased 3.4 percent from 2003. From 1991, where total index crime was 323,909 to 2003 with 184,789 reported incidents, Chicago experienced a 57 percent decrease.

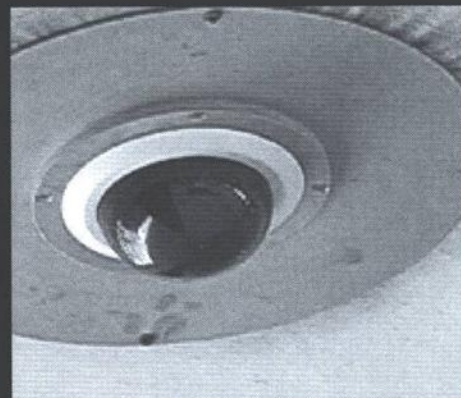
"It's a safeguard," Monique Bond, communications director of the Chicago Office of Emergency Management said. "People want more of them everywhere because of their (surveillance cameras) ability to deter crime. It makes me feel a lot safer."

The images that the 2,000 new surveillance cameras pick up will all be routed to 911 call centers, according to Bond. By spring 2006, these cameras will allow 911 operators to visually pin point exact locations of callers and their potential offenders.

Backed by the 1986 Electronics Communications Privacy Act, the use by authorities of rapidly growing surveillance technology is allowed. However, the ACLU sees this as an outlet for potential 4th Amendment abuses.

"It's one thing to think about abuses when all the cameras could do was point down an alleyway or street. But what we've begun to see are more sophisticated cameras; able to be pointed and positioned in a variety of directions," Yohnka said. "So where does this stop? What's the break point?"

"Cameras are the equivalent of hundreds of sets of eyes. They are the next best thing to having police officers stationed at every potential trouble spot."
-Mayor Richard Daley



Another of Chicago's watchful eyes
Photographs courtesy of Nick Clar

Gooning

teens take the streets

By Joanna Manieri

Stephen Sebelski is a strapping young athlete and a member of Loyola University Chicago's track team. So he usually feels confident and safe walking in most neighborhoods of Chicago. But Sebelski, 21, was taking a stroll in April in the familiar surroundings of his Rogers Park neighborhood when he suddenly was attacked.

"I was alone, walking west on Lunt, and a kid [who looked to be] late middle school, early high school, hit me in the back of the head," Sebelski said. "There were 6-10 other kids clustered behind him, and one of them jumped forward and socked me in the face. I was kind of confused as to what was going on and didn't really know what I ought to do."

Sebelski began yelling, "What the [expletive] are you doing? What the [expletive] is going on here?" A second youth then began swinging at Sebelski, who was able to dodge the offender's fist. He escaped by running back to his apartment.

Sebelski called the Chicago Police Department and filed a report. The police told Sebelski that he did the right thing by running away. They warned that if he had swung back at them, all of his attackers would have joined in the assault.

Police also informed Sebelski that he had been the victim of "gooning," a recent phenomenon in Chicago where a gang of youths inexplicably attack pedestrians. The youths, roaming in gangs of 20-25, single out male pedestrians to attack, but the motive is unclear. There are no apparent gang connections and the victims are not robbed.

There have been seven such attacks in the past year in Rogers Park, the last occurring in August.

"Basically, it's just a group finding an individual and they start beating on [him]," said Alderman Joe Moore of the 49th Ward. "There doesn't appear to be a particular pattern. Older victims, younger victims, there doesn't seem to be a focus on [any one] group of individuals.

"[The victims] tended to span the races, and were not all old feeble people or down-and-out people, there wasn't any real victim type so to speak," Moore said. "Young, old, one guy was with his kids. Generally speaking though, they tended to be alone."

The group involved in the gooning is usually a gathering of 20-25 individuals at one time, most ranging in age from 13 to 19.

"I think the only real common theme was unmotivated, unprovoked attacks," Moore said. "They didn't arise from an argument; there was no robbing of valuables."

Police have made arrests. One of the victims was able to identify two adult offenders, when shown photographs of suspects in the neighborhood, according to Chicago

Police Officer Steve Cohen. The suspects, both 19, admitted to the crimes and then implicated juveniles who were involved.

The arrests and the arrival of cold weather apparently have eliminated the threat. But gooning has created fears among Rogers Park residents because of the arbitrary nature of the attacks, and the anticipation that they will resurface with the arrival of warmer weather.

These attacks have led Rogers Park community members to rally together, staging anti-crime marches and street corner sit-outs. "They are doing what the community should do when there is a spike in crime, they are coming out from behind closed doors," Moore said.

"That is one of the strengths of the Rogers Park community, people get involved."

A group called Rogers Park Neighbors recently formed. It joins and complements other "block clubs" in the area that have been in existence.

"In the neighborhood, there are about a half-dozen active block clubs," said Michael Land, a staff member in Moore's office.

According to Land, members discuss issues concerning their neighborhood and immediate surroundings. On average, the block clubs may consist of 10 people at a meeting. However, recently these organizations have taken on renewed vigor since the attacks began. It is estimated by Moore

that the number of community members participating in these organizations is in the hundreds. Even if residents do not belong to one of these groups, that doesn't mean they aren't doing anything to protect themselves.

"I'm definitely more conscious of what's going on around me now," said Sebelski, who was approached by a gang of gooners a second time, but ran off before he was touched.

"When I'm walking around at night, even if I'm with someone else, I'm always looking ahead, behind, and around for people or movement," he said. "If I see a situation coming that looks like trouble, I try to avoid it. If I can't avoid it, I think about a possible escape route."

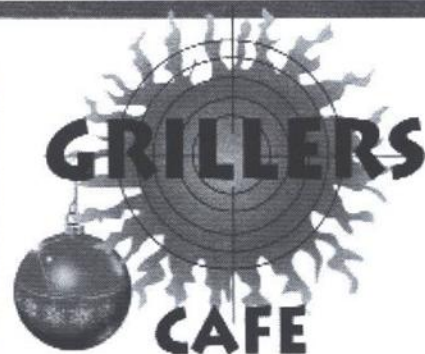
Moore and the local community groups are trying to make things safer so that residents won't have to think about escape routes when they walk the streets.

"The streets and the sidewalks belong to the good people of Rogers Park--people who respect their neighbors and love their neighborhood," Moore said. "We will not allow gang members and the few who want to commit crimes to control the streets."



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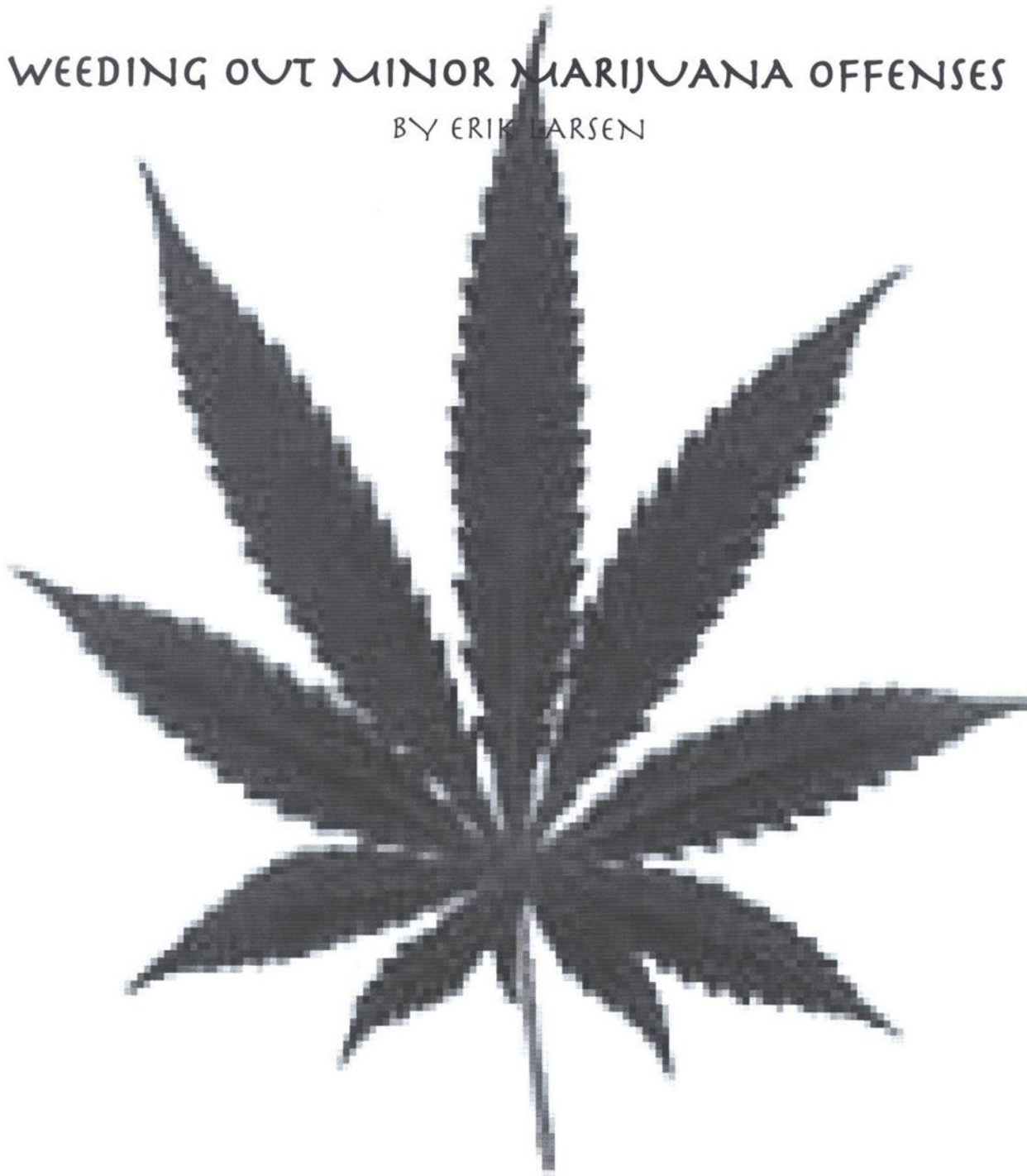
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cooked on garlic bread with french onion sauce, lettuce, tomato & onion
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served on garlic bread
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WEEDING OUT MINOR MARIJUANA OFFENSES

BY ERIK LARSEN



Red and blue lights flash in your rear-view mirror.

Panic spreads over you as you rush to hide the small bag of marijuana sitting in the passenger seat of your car in the glove compartment. As you pull over, you suddenly realize that in a matter of minutes, you could be handcuffed in the back of a police car on your way to jail for possession of marijuana. As the police officer strolls up to your open window and asks you to step out of the vehicle, you know the end is near. He pulls the plastic bag out of the glove compartment. You are doomed.

Or are you?

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley recently announced support for police officers to give citations to people caught with minimal amounts of marijuana instead of arresting them and prosecuting them in court at a late date.

While Chicago officials like Daley are still considering the means and details of the proposed change, the concept has been widely practiced throughout the Chicago suburbs for decades. The change comes in response to Wentworth District police sergeant Thomas Donegan's suggestion, as well as a careful analysis by the City of Chicago of court cases involving minor marijuana offences.

Donegan's proposal suggests changing Chicago's law so that, "adults with small amounts of marijuana are issued a municipal citation and have a stiff fine levied against them. The result would be an unclogging of the criminal court docket."

More than 8,000 people were arrested last year in Chicago for possessing less than two-and-a-half grams of marijuana. But 94 percent of these cases were dropped. Also, marijuana arrests have increased by more than 12 percent since 2003, according to the Associated Press. "Something is wrong" if officers spend two to four hours to process such marijuana cases, and they are regularly tossed out, Chicago Police spokesman Robert Cargie said. "Certainly the issue of successful prosecutions will be examined," Cargie said. "There are some obvious problems that need some sort of solution." Junior Edward Yang, 20, a student at the Illinois Institute of Technology, thinks that the new proposal has its advantages and disadvantages. "If this [court prosecution for minor marijuana offences] is a common occurrence, then it'll save the judicial system lots of time to deal with higher order prosecution," Yang said. "But it also might be a sign to people who smoke [marijuana] that it's becoming 'more OK' to smoke marijuana."

Although the ticketing process does seem to carry with it a minor slap on the wrist, this option would only be practiced for first-time offenders or minor cases of possession. In many suburbs, ticketed offenders still have to

resolve their cases in civil court, pay a fine, or are forced to do community service, all in lieu of time in jail.

Donegan has proposed that the city give citations to any offenders caught with less than 30 grams of marijuana, but many suburbs that practice marijuana ticketing, including Winnetka, Naperville and Glenview, give out tickets to offenders caught with less than 10 grams. City officials are still reportedly mulling over the details, but no conclusions have been reached.

According to state law, criminal violations, even misdemeanors involving 10 or less grams of marijuana, are subject to \$1,500 in fines and up to six months in jail. Due to the lack of criminal prosecution and the severity of the minor marijuana offences, Daley is determined to help Chicago follow the lead of its suburban counterparts. This decision also could affect minors and college students who rely on financial aid for college. Many universities across the country don't give financial aid or pull aid from students with drug offences. But with the new proposal, drug offences would no longer be a crippling burden on potential financial aid rewards.

"It's not done for the purposes of generating money. Its purpose is education."

-Jeffery Randall
Glenview village
attorney

The purpose of the suburban ordinances on marijuana ticketing, according to Glenview village attorney Jeffrey Randall, is instruction. "It's not done for the purposes of generating money," Randall said. "Its purpose is education - teaching the offender a lesson." However, there are some dissenters to new Chicago proposal.

The U.S. Department of Justice states that: "Marijuana remains the most widely available and abused drug in Illinois, spanning a wide spectrum of age, racial and socioeconomic groups." This raises an important question in the growing trend in Chicago marijuana abuse: If more people are buying and abusing the drug, would decreasing the penalty on minor offenses

lead to even more rampant abuse of marijuana? "Marijuana abuse by young people [in Illinois] increased dramatically since the early 1990s," according to the National Drug Intelligence Center, a U.S. government research institution. "Over the past 10 years, marijuana abuse by eighth-grade students tripled. In 1998, more than 21 percent of all eighth-grade students, 37 percent of all 10th-grade students, and nearly 42 percent of all 12th-grade students in Illinois reported using marijuana in the past year." Despite the trend of marijuana abuse in Chicago, Daley's resolution to lessen minor infractions is a progressive decision for the city of Chicago.

The ruling presents an opportunity to unclog the jammed courts and the jammed bank accounts of the city. So remember, the next time you see those flashing lights in your rear view mirror, a fine, not jail time, might be in your future.



ONE DRINK TOO MANY

By Ally Dowds

As 20-year-old Jay Feeney pounded back beer after beer, he thought he was just having a good time with friends. Soon, things became blurry, and the last thing Feeney remembered was chugging yet another beer. The next morning was a rough one for Feeney. Startled by the sight of vomit in his trashcan, Feeney asked his roommate what had happened. Before he could say a word, Feeney was informed how he had not only gotten in a fight with his best friend, but had also vomited all over himself and the bathroom and later passed out—all events of which Feeney had no recollection.

Binge or excessive drinking is not an uncommon weekend activity among students on college campuses. Drinking becomes a tool to relieve stress or just a means to “have fun,” but what many college students ignore are the dangers and high risks involved in binge drinking.

“I don’t see a problem with drinking,” junior Katie Bradshaw, 20, a DePaul University student, said. “College students are going to drink regardless, [but] if it’s more accepted then they won’t



binge as much. Excessive drinking is maybe only a problem for the first few weeks of school for freshman because they are discovering their freedom."

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, binge drinking has been classically diagnosed as "... consuming five or more drinks in a row [one sitting] for boys and four or more in a row for girls."

However, many health officials, such as Susan Cushman, Loyola University's alcohol and drug prevention coordinator, believe "binge drinking" is an outdated term that cannot apply to everyone and all situations.

"Some people have problems with that, and I guess I'm kind of one of them because binge drinking has a very negative connotation," Cushman said. "You think people [are] getting wild and drunk and out of control. But how do you define one sitting? [If] a woman is out from 9 p.m. until 3 a.m. ... and she has four drinks over six hours, she's probably not feeling drunk and out of control."

However, for some students, one "sitting" of excessive drinking can lead to drastic and horrifying results.

Two years ago, Jenna and Megan, both 20, whose names have been changed for privacy reasons, found one of themselves in the back of an ambulance after a night of excessive drinking.

"We went to a club and we knew the bartender and he kept on giving us shots," Jenna said. "I didn't realize how many we were all drinking."

After leaving the club, Jenna and her other friends were unable to locate Megan because one of them had gotten sick in the street. However minutes later, Jenna said, Megan appeared with her finger tightly wrapped in tissues.

"She was just standing there blankly saying, 'my finger fell off' as the top half of her finger dangled," Jenna said. "It took her a few minutes to realize what had just happened. If Megan hadn't been so drunk she probably wouldn't have slammed her finger in the [dorm] door or reacted as calmly as she did."

Incidences like this have caused college administrators to coin binge drinking as the most prevalent problem on campus. In a 1999 research conducted by Harvard University's School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, results showed that of the focus group surveyed, 44 percent of the participants partook in binge drinking two weeks prior to the survey. Fifty-one percent of the men drank the five or

more drinks and 40 percent of women drank four or more drinks in an attempt to "get drunk." The study found that of its participants, about 1 in 4 students admitted to excessive drinking three or more times a week, while 1 in 5 students declared that they abstained from drinking alcohol.

Cushman states that factors like stress relief, social pressures and emotional reasons are what influence whether or not a person drinks in college.

"Someone whose immediate social circle where drinking is usually the primary focus for being social, they are more likely to drink in that fashion," Cushman said. "It has a lot to do with peer influences; also what are the expectations of the university as a whole. What kind of messages are students getting from the campus, faculty and the neighborhood? It is very socially acceptable ... that people use the drug alcohol, even those who are underage."

Junior Matthew Krummel, 20, a Loyola University student, feels that college students engage in binge drinking because it is considered the norm.

"I think for most it's because that is the status quo," he said. "Everyone has this preconceived notion that you go to parties and you drink and get drunk. [New students] follow the status quo to become accepted and find their niche."

Although news articles and broadcasts and special interests groups emphasize that excessive drinking consistently increases among teenagers and college students, recent studies have shown a decline in binge drinking between 1980 and 2003. On a Alcohol Problems and Solutions Web site, written by Professor David J. Hanson, Ph.D from the State University of New York, among college campuses in the United States there has been a "35 percent reduction in heavy drinking, a 31 percent reduction in alcohol-related injuries to self, and a 54 percent reduction in alcohol-related injuries to others."

There are still college students that abuse alcohol, but regardless of presented evidence and facts that binge drinking has decreased, the notion of binge drinking on college campuses continues to be exaggerated and

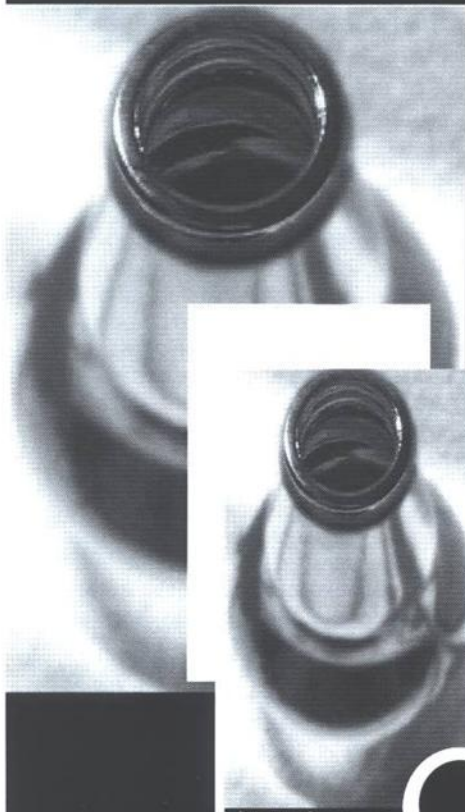


misrepresented. What many people do not realize is that it is actually abstinence from drinking alcohol that is on the rise, not binge drinking, Cushman said.

"I really haven't seen a rise in excessive drinking," Cushman said. "The percentage of students who are drinking excessively hasn't gone up. It is being polarized; there more students who are abstaining completely from alcohol and there also more students who are binge drinking more frequently. Most college students don't drink to get drunk. Most of the people are drinking nothing or in moderation."

Krummel does not understand why college students associate drinking with having a "good time."

"When it's hard to find a useful positive as a result from doing something, it's hard to support it," he said. "How many times do you have to hear about people getting really drunk, getting in fights and arrested, or falling off[apartment] balconies. Bad things happen when people drink a lot."



DRINKING AGE DEBATE

Opinion

By Lauren Bishop

I embrace my youth. I can remember being at kindergarten one day looking out of the bright red plastic window of the mini Playskool house and being pretty darn satisfied with my life. I really just didn't want to grow up. Despite the feeling of euphoria in my simple life, I got older, and dreaded it more and more every year.

This is why I was caught quite off guard recently when I had feelings of anticipation and excitement the weeks and days before my 21st birthday. Why was I in such a hurry to turn 21? I knew my excitement was not about that fact that

I could legally drink. Like most my age, I had had a drink or two before my 21st. I was also not consumed with the idea of going to bars all the time once I turned 21. So I started to think about the drinking age in America.

By the age of 18 one can vote, smoke cigarettes, drive, be summoned to serve jury duty, get a college education, have a career, serve in the army, and be drafted into war. It seems that at 18 one is considered a full adult, holding all of the same responsibilities and rights that a 50 year old would. That is, except for being able to consume alcohol.

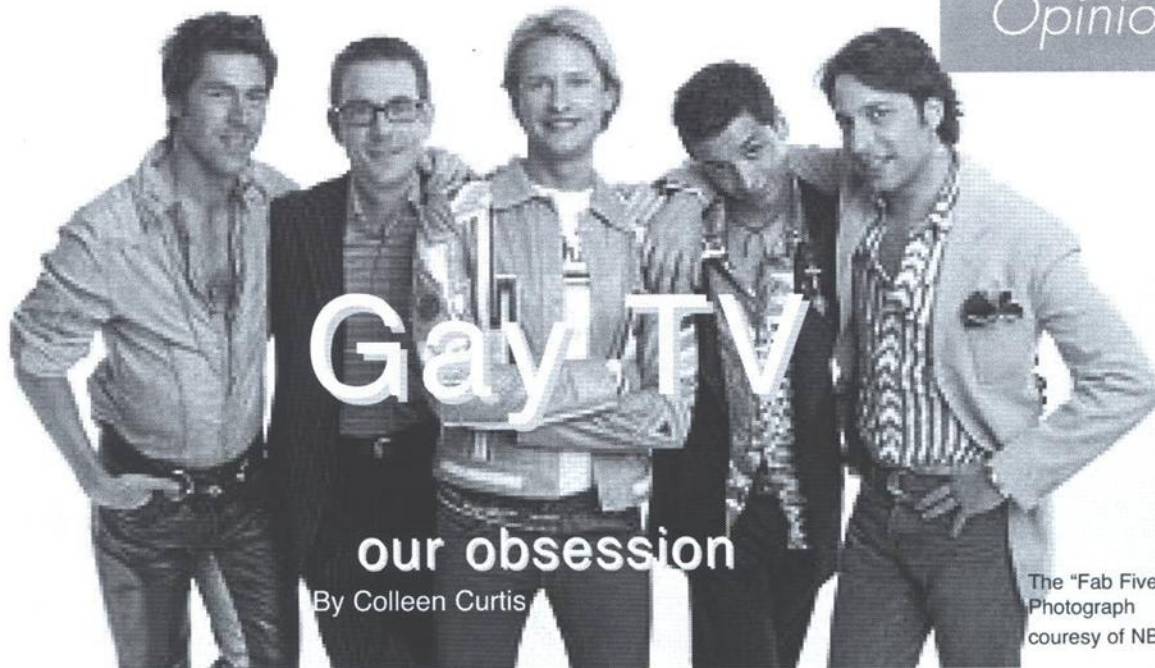
I realized the reason I was so excited to turn 21 was that it meant I would be a 'complete' adult and citizen. It was a matter of feeling entitled to all and not just most of the rights my country offers.

The fact that all rights are awarded and responsibilities extended by age 18, besides being able to drink alcohol, just doesn't make sense. Before I turned 21 I had taken part in political rallies and petitions. I had voted in state elections, and I voted in the last presidential election. In fact, I voted as an absentee in my home state of Ohio because I thought my vote would count that much more if I did so. If the government trusts that we are responsible enough to make important political decisions, and to represent and serve our country, why don't they trust that we are mature enough to drink?

One of my friends lives in Paris and came to the United States to go to college. She has explained how different it was coming to a country that doesn't allow people to drink until they are 21. In France, and many other European countries kids are raised from a young age drinking wine at meals and on all sorts of occasions. It is integrated into the culture, which makes it familiar and less taboo. She explained to me that she and her friends didn't even think of abusing alcohol. It is embraced but for that very reason not abused.

I have a hard time believing that our laws on drinking are accomplishing what they set out to when considering just how many people, especially young people, abuse alcohol or have alcohol addictions in the United States. Truth is, if American society made less of a fuss about alcohol (in terms of laws) and instead educated and integrated, less people would be tempted to abuse it.

If an American is fit to fulfill every duty and responsibility that this country asks of him then he should also be able to tip up a beer in celebration of the duties he performs. As much as some of us would like, we aren't in kindergarten anymore, and we shouldn't be treated like we are.



Gay TV

our obsession

By Colleen Curtis

The "Fab Five"
Photograph
courtesy of NBC

Any television-watching American will have noticed an increase in homosexual-centered programming on cable and network programming over the past few years. "Will and Grace" debuted several years ago on network giant NBC, and this year alone has been nominated for 12 Emmys, a true testament to the public's approval of the show's blatant homosexual comedy. "Will and Grace's" popularity seems to have spawned an awakening in the media.

The cable station Bravo!, the mastermind behind "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," has been acquired by, and will also run on NBC in special appearances. Also on Bravo! is "Boy Meets Boy," a gay version of ABC's hit reality show, "The Bachelor."

At first glance these shows seem to be a step in the right direction for the gay community. But are they really an avenue to gain acceptance for homosexuals, or just an exploitation of homosexuality by a media that furthers stereotypes?

Television and society have been making a transition from nuclear families to alternative lifestyles, television being a window into the American soul. Shows like "Family Ties" and "Full House" ran in the '80s and early '90s, but the genre has become scarce and unprofitable for television networks. Now there is an onslaught of reality television and a mass presentation of alternative lifestyles. Unwed mothers, single fathers, varying races, friends living with friends, blended families and now, the hysterical "gay-way" of living are running on televisions nationwide. This transition proves that Americans are becoming more accepting and tolerant of homosexuality.

Or are we just poking fun at the flamboyant, feminine nature of the "Fab Five" and other new gay celebs?

That is indeed what I think is happening. Society is not learning to accept homosexuality. Instead, it is learning to laugh at the stereotypical gay nature. It is hip and trendy

now to be a gay male, whereas several years ago network executives wouldn't have dreamed of putting five gay men together to prance around and "remake" straight guys in a highly coveted prime time slot. The social and political issues involving homosexuality are not important to Hollywood, it is whether or not they can turn a profit. And sexual humor and behavior certainly sells. Don't get me wrong, I find "Queer Eye" just as amusing as the next heterosexual viewer, but I am not naive enough to think that this is what the gay community wants or deserves.

Homosexuals have been campaigning for years to gain acceptance and tolerance. These shows certainly expose the general public to a different lifestyle, but it is an inaccurate and flawed picture that is being portrayed. Not all gay men dance around and use feminine hand gestures. Not all gay men care about fashion, cooking and interior design. To think of it, not all homosexuals are men either, but by watching TV you'd never know this fact. America's newfound obsession with gay MEN is not only unfair to males, but it puts homosexual females and bisexuals on the back burner. I guess those groups just aren't funny enough to laugh at. The bottom line is these shows just further a negative and inaccurate stereotype about homosexuals, and are a hindrance to the gay movement.

Yes, exposure is exposure, but this type is not beneficial to anyone, regardless of sexual orientation.

Wanted!

Men to fill humble giving position

By Kathy Undas

Thousands of college students across the nation are completing their degrees with an eye toward the big payoff: a high paying job in a high profile profession.

Then there are students like Przemek Wojcik, 28, who are waiting for different types of rewards.

"Lawyers, doctors or teachers may earn high wages to satisfy their materialistic needs," Wojcik said, who is studying to be a priest at Mundelein Seminary.

"As a priest I am striving for a higher wage, a spiritual wage, working for the toughest boss that I know- God."

Rising unemployment rates has been a major topic of discussion in the United States. However, the unemployment figures are not homogeneous in all fields. For example, there are plenty of openings for the job of Catholic priests.

Candidates for priesthood have shown a sharp decline. According to the "Christian Post," a magazine that reports on the Catholic Church, "the Roman Catholic seminaries are experiencing the lowest enrollment rate in the college level category since 1968." The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate has reported that, "enrollment in post-college Roman Catholic seminaries dropped by 4 percent in just this past year."

The Archdiocese of Chicago is a prime example of the tremendous need for new candidates for priesthood. The archdiocese is one of the largest in the United States, which serves more than 2.4 million Catholics in Cook and Lake Counties. It has a total of 375 parishes and the largest Catholic school system in the country. A system of this extent that provides almost 2,000 masses a week for the public is managing to subsist with only about 800 priests, of which 200 are close to retirement.

The greatest need of religious candidates lies in open positions for pastors within the archdiocese. The Rev. Thomas May, pastor of St. John Brebeuf Church in Niles, feels blessed that he was selected to lead the numerous Polish/American/Filipino congregation.

"I was sent here because the pastor at that time was retiring and the congregation would be left without a leader,"

he said. "However, over the years I have learned not only to be a leader but also a part of the community, and a member of the holy family."

For many in what we might call the "regular" workforce, priesthood is not considered as an occupation but rather a calling to a different kind of life. At the same time one has to realize that taking this path in life also entails commitment, sacrifice and utmost devotion that at times may surmount the sacrifices that are made in other occupations. Candidates for priesthood must first go to an accredited college for four years, with at least two years of a focus in philosophy. After graduation they then go to a seminary for another four years of study and preparation to earn a master's degree in divinity.

However, this is only the beginning of their long journey, as priesthood involves a lifelong devotion to God, translating into no marriage or children and total abstinence, aside from the daily duties of masses, funeral, weddings and hospice visits.

With the drop in enrollment to seminaries continuing to increase, many archdioceses, including the Archdiocese of Chicago, have now begun to accept candidates from outside the United States. The Rev. Adam Galek, a priest at St. John Brebeuf church, was a priest in both Ukraine and Poland before he came to the United States.

"My brother and I decided that there were vast numbers of priests within Poland, and that our calling and skills could be put to better use within the United States, where there was a growing Polish-Catholic presence and a shortage of priests," Galek said.

However, even enlisting help of candidates for priesthood from other countries does not get to the root of the problem. The question still stands why there is a shortage of members of society who are willing to accept their calling and join the priesthood. The Rev. Joseph Noonan who is the Archdiocesan



Seminary Vocations Director working out of the University of St. Mary at the Mundelein Seminary said that there are specific ways in which college students are deterred from entering the priesthood.

"Accumulate wealth- that was the message that I listened to while going to college," Noonan said.

It was only after years of reevaluation that Noonan discovered, "that my materialistic value system and self-centered life goals, slowly but steadily became radically oriented toward Jesus."

At the same time, Noonan argues that the priesthood crisis is highly exaggerated by people who would like to diminish the strength of the Catholic Church. In his opinion there has actually been a small increase in the candidates for priesthood in Mundelein Seminary during the last 10 years. For Noonan, the problem in the supposed decline of candidates that some archdioceses may see lies outside the vocational system. "We have more priests now per practicing Catholic than we did in the 1960s, yet we still have many non practicing Catholics who make demands on the Church," Noonan said. "These are faith needs the Church is very happy to fulfill, yet it adds to the ministerial workload. So while the number of practicing Catholics has decreased in proportion to the decrease in the number of priests, the work of the priests has not declined proportionally. The drop in faith is the root to any priesthood vocation shortage."

ance counselor. Wojcik finished college in Poland and was well on his way to becoming a prominent lawyer, coming from a family with a history of members in the legal profession. After receiving his calling from God, Wojcik left his family and country to come to America in order to pursue what he believes is his true calling in life -to be a priest.

Wojcik left his family and country to come to America in order to pursue what he believes is his true calling in life -to be a priest.

"Many of the people who were my friends and even members of my close family thought that I was making a mistake," Wojcik said. "For them my decision to join the priesthood was something out of the ordinary and unpopular in everyday society."

For college students who have received their calling, the decision that has to be faced is extremely difficult. As trends show, more and more students feel compelled to enter the "normal" workforce where they know what is expected of them and the goal of their job is religiously emphasized: money and advancement in position. Wojcik has learned otherwise through his own experience.

"Unfortunately, we live in a world where money rules and nothing can be done about this point," Wojcik said. "However, I believe that people have to take into account more than materialistic pay off from their jobs. Spiritual wealth is my goal no matter what sacrifices I have made and will continue make in the future."



Photo courtesy of www.solt3.org

"Lawyers, doctors or teachers may earn high wages to satisfy their materialistic needs...As a priest I am striving for a higher wage, a spiritual wage, working for the toughest boss that I know- God."

-Przemek Wojcik, student at Mundelein Seminary



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Charity at a price

By Colleen Curtis

Trends reveal wealthy society's generosity isn't always free

The rich, powerful and influential citizens of Chicago sashay through the entranceway at the swanky Inter-Continental Hotel on a warm evening for the annual UNICEF ball.

The black ties of the men stand in stark contrast to the glitz and glam of the beautiful gowns worn by their dates. The champagne flows freely, and gourmet appetizers are presented on sterling silver trays to those mingling and looking for their tables.

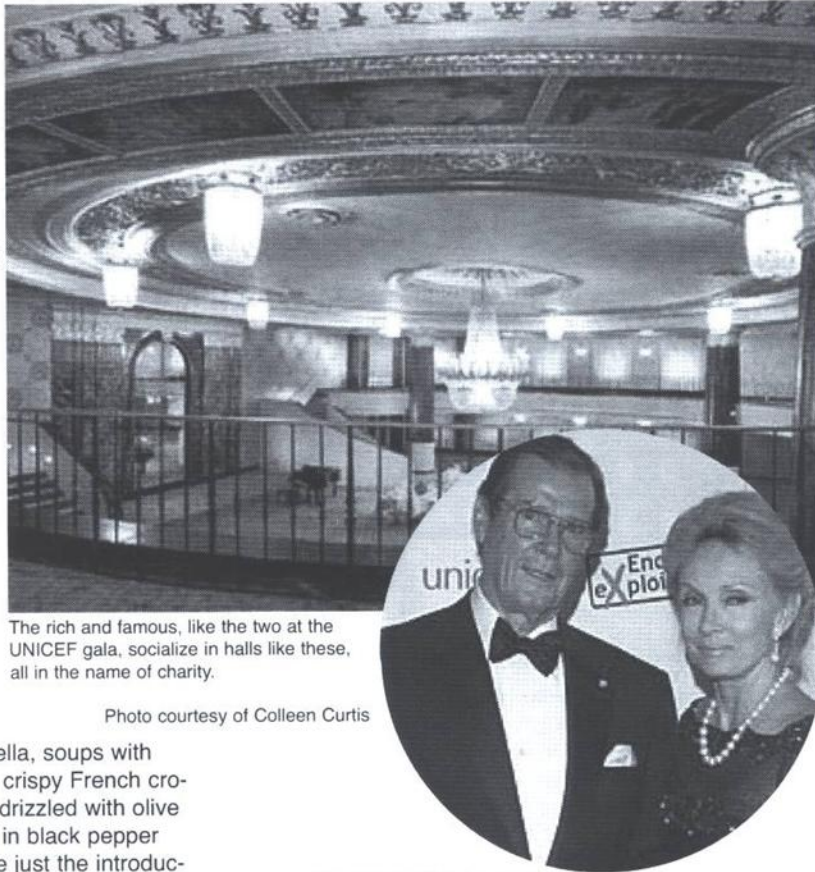
Once seated at tables adorned with flickering candles and arrangements of exotic flowers, the main event begins; dinner, an eight course meal of finely prepared selections by the most exquisite chefs. Salads garnished with arugula and fresh mozzarella, soups with wild mushrooms and smoked salmon, crispy French croquettes with basil and fresh tomatoes drizzled with olive oil, plates of seared ahi tuna wrapped in black pepper and served with horseradish sauce are just the introduction. A full catfish arrives at each table, filleted by the server and presented to each guest with their choice of fine wine.

Followed by dessert, with choices of vanilla cheesecake, banana cream pie, raspberry tart or chocolate mousse all served with piping hot coffee or cappuccino. Dancing, laughing and entertainment follow.

At \$500 per person, or \$2,000 per two-person private table, it seems fitting for each guest to be treated as royalty at an event such as this.

This could be one of the many galas benefitting a worthy cause across the city and nation. Extravagant events to lure the rich and powerful to donate to worthy causes are commonplace. Plights affecting millions of people around the world are helped by organizations that must solicit donations from wealthy citizens by providing auctions, entertainment and luxurious dinners at pricey venues. Another night on the town for these benefactors, of course, all in the name of helping a humanitarian cause.

58 "It's really kind of sad that the message of organi-



The rich and famous, like the two at the UNICEF gala, socialize in halls like these, all in the name of charity.

Photo courtesy of Colleen Curtis

zations like UNICEF are lost at these events," said Michelle Lillie, a 21-year-old Loyola UNICEF intern in Chicago who helped staff and organize the annual event. "Having the events are necessary for getting the donations, but I just wish people could give their money freely instead of in exchange for lavish prizes and entertainment."

Charitable organizations have had to raise funds for decades by relying on wealthy citizens. There are so many charities to pick from, that they are somewhat forced to compete for donations.

"Many charities in the U.S. descended from the days of inordinate wealth, as Gould, Fisk, Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, Carnegie, et al, shared their largess with the less fortunate," said Dr. J. T. Houk, CEO of the National Heritage Project, in his article Dregs or Dynamite. We called it "noblesse oblige" although in most cases they built personal ego monuments."

Living conditions around the world are plummet-

wealthy nations in the world, poverty is increasing. In 2001, the number of Americans hungry or at risk of hunger, was 33.6 million, up for 33.2 million in 2000 according to the USDA's Economic Research Service, Household Food Security in the United States report in 2001. Poverty is also on the rise in the United States. Between the years 2000 and 2001 poverty rose to 11.7 percent of the population (32.9 million people), up from 11.3 percent (31.6 million people).

Millions of people struggling to make ends meet in the United States and around the world rely on assistance from various charities, organizations and programs. In return, these programs rely on government and state funding, but mostly on the support of generous citizens to supply resources for those that need it.



UNICEF is mostly supported by donations, and nearly 90 percent go directly to assist suffering children around the world.

The only chance many people have for survival is through programs like UNICEF, and in turn UNICEF's survival is dependent on donations. The answer seems clear. Those who have money to spare do so, organizations put the money to good use, and those who need assistance benefit and hopefully prosper.

So, where do the big parties, lavish auctions and extravagant celebrations come into play?

"There has to be a benefit for people to donate money. If we want the richest of the rich to give us their money, we have to provide something in return. Whether it be social exposure or clout, entertainment or a

night out, it seems that they need an excuse to be generous," Lillie says.

The gap between rich and poor continues to grow. The rich are getting richer, and the poor poorer. Isn't this incentive enough to donate to

"Fame and fortune has some clear benefits in certain roles with UNICEF.

Celebrities attract attention, so they are in a position to focus the world's eyes on the needs of children..."

*-Carol Bellamy
Executive Director of
UNICEF*

charities? Obviously not.

"The 13,000 richest families in the

United States now have almost as much income as the 20 million poorest. And those 13,000 families have incomes 300 times that of average families," liberal economist Paul Krugman wrote in the New York Times Magazine. With this growing gap of wealth in the United States, it's not hard to see why the richest of the rich must be tempted with tasty meals and swanky

ballrooms to support social programs that aid the poor.

"To them it's just another grand, or

"If we want the richest of the rich to give us their money, we have to provide something in return."

*-Michelle Lille
UNICEF intern*

another Porsche, but to UNICEF and other charities, it's what keeps the organization from going under. If

glitzy gets the donations, glitzy is what we'll keep doing," Lillie added.

The humanitarian facade also attracts celebrities to these

events and organizations.

"Fame and fortune has some clear benefits in certain roles with UNICEF. Celebrities attract attention, so they are in a position to focus the world's eyes on the needs of children, both in their own countries at charity events and by visiting field projects and emergency programs abroad," said Executive Director of UNICEF, Carol Bellamy.

But as the patrons of UNICEF's annual ball exited the Inter-Continental Hotel and waited for their BMWs and Mercedes to be pulled around perhaps they didn't see the woman in the alley begging for food. Maybe they miss the man a few blocks away selling Streetwise to afford to stay in his half-way shelter for another night. It's possible with all the champagne and dancing and wonderful food that they were simply



too tired to notice. But, maybe they just never look.

"It is easy to write a check, but much harder to look at the real problems facing Americans and promise to do something to put an end to it," Lillie said.

"Charity is more about motivation, and less about money than people think."

Are wealthy citizens and celebrities too anxious to be seen as humanitarian, and less concerned with the charity's work and purpose? Mike Bygrave, British author and international ambassador for UNICEF agrees.

"Too often the glitz and the glamour swamps any seriousness of purpose at these [charity fundraiser] events."

Recycling programs

Opinion

getting trashed

By Joanna Manieri

Some feel that Chicago's recycling program leaves something to be desired.

What if there was something that everyone — no matter what their race, color or gender, could enjoy and benefit from? Also, what if it was something that would not need any maintenance or up-keep? However, in order for it to survive it only asks one thing: that you would not take away from it except that which is necessity.

This "something" is the environment. As a society, we have taken advantage of all the resources we have been provided. And as a result, these resources may not be accessible to generations to come, ever.

Unfortunately, we have already ruined our future chances of being able to enjoy all the luxuries that have been previously provided.

According to Earth Crash Earth Spirit (eces.org), our environment is rapidly being destroyed; glaciers and ice sheets are melting as a result of global warming, extinction is eminent for one in four species in the near future and fish populations are depleted as a result of over-fishing. This all caused by the six billion people who occupy our planet taking and using irreplaceable resources.

If we keep using and abusing the way we have been, destruction of our natural resources is imminent. In Glacier National Park when it was founded in 1910, there



"Since this program has not been very successful, perhaps the city should look into alternate means of recycling that would make it easier on the residents."

were approximately 150 glaciers. Today, there are less than 30 as a result of global warming.

One way Chicagoans are fighting back is by implementing the Blue Bag recycling program that began in 1995. The idea still has not caught on. According to chicagorecycling.org, the Chicago Recycling Coalition found that only 20 percent of eligible households utilized the program.

The city has set its recycling goal at 12 percent for residential buildings. Each building is required to collect garbage separate from recyclable materials, and is only exempt if it can prove a hardship; the hardship being

defined as a 'lack of storage space.'

If a Chicago citizen would like to recycle through the Department of Streets and Sanitation, they must use the Blue Bag program, which requires residents to BUY blue bags at grocery, drug and hardware stores. These bags are the only ones approved for Chicago's Recycling Program that will be picked up.

Since this program has not been very successful, perhaps the city should look into alternate means of recycling that would make it easier on the residents.

For example, in my hometown of Oreland, Penn. residents are given a yellow bin to put recyclables such as glass and plastic, whereas paper recyclables are picked up in the paper bags that you get your groceries in from the store.

If the city of Chicago is serious about recycling, they should make it easier for residents to recycle. If they have to spend the extra money, aren't the long-term effects worth the benefits? I cannot help but believe that if there were a proposal for the construction of a new stadium for the Bears, the city would jump at that chance to improve its physical element. So shouldn't the same go for our natural resources?

Art as a tool for social justice

By Nora Vinson

Pam Ambrose, director of cultural affairs at Loyola University Chicago, is a strong believer in how art can be an effective tool for social justice. She discusses her job and her views on art with Mosaic.

Q: What is your background?

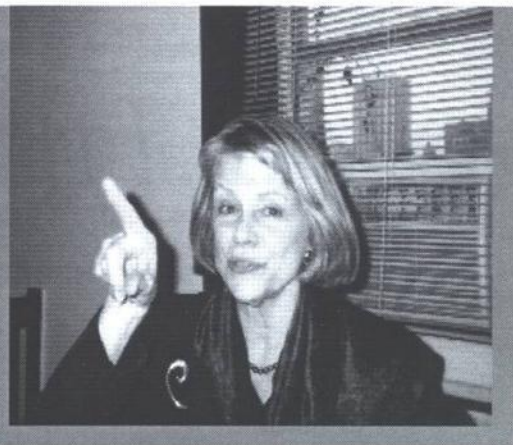
A: The visual arts and historic preservation. My background is really arts and business. I started actually as an artist – a sculptor. I quickly realized I was a mediocre sculptor but very good at organizing art exhibitions. I ended up studying arts and business in graduate school. I worked at two museums in New York City -- on the administrative side in special events and collector's programs -- essentially in the marketing end of the museum. From there I became the director of two art galleries in New York City. Therefore, much of my job had to do with sourcing out new, young talent, selling their work, getting them into new exhibitions, and cultivating a new client base.

Q: What does Loyola's Department of Cultural Affairs do?

A: Cultural Affairs is a new department for the university. And the role of this department is to expand and enhance the cultural identity of Loyola. So I'm involved directly with the construction and programming with Loyola University's Museum of Art. I'm involved in longer term projects that involve Piper Hall at the Lake Shore Campus, the main floor of which because this is a historical preservation project. I am also involved with a longer term project to the Mundelein building. So, I basically am interfacing in my job with other cultural colleagues, the press, certainly collectors and potential donors to the university. Art is a great way to get people involved because it is exciting.

Q: What is LUMA?

A: LUMA's the acronym for Loyola University's Museum of Art. We thought what a natural acronym especially when you're looking at it on letterhead because you can play on this whole idea of luminescence and luminosity. Just to have a nice title. The mission for the museum is an unusual one and that is that the museum will focus on exhibiting, displaying, and the educa-



Artwork on exhibit at the D'Arcy Museum of art at Loyola

tional programs that go along with the spiritual in art. We tried to find a unique niche for ourselves in terms of the cultural environment here in Chicago. And Chicago being a very diverse community and Loyola being a Jesuit university, it has a very strong component about spirituality. It seems that those two things were sort of a natural fit to a mission where we would be able to show multicultural, interfaith, expressions of visual art.

Q: What will be the opening exhibitions?

A: We're going to open October 8 2005 with an exhibition called Caravaggio: The Impossible Exhibition. It's a unique exhibition of the master works of the artist Michelangelo Merisi Caravaggio. However, we are not exhibiting the original works of art. It's a very hi-tech approach. Perhaps even controversial approach to what an art exhibition should be. The images that we will be showing which is close to 69 are very hi-tech, hi-resolution digital photography that was done in Italy. It's called the impossible exhibition because there is no possibility to assemble all the works of this old master artist. People do not want to own them. They are too fragile, too delicate, and too expensive. The cost of insurance and shipping is outrageously high. So here's an opportunity for people to hear and see all these works by Caravaggio with a wonderful sort of x-ray effect this digital technology has. You will be able to see the under-painting the artist did.

Q: Where is the art to be displayed?

A: The museum will be located at 820 North Michigan Avenue which is the Lewis Towers building. Art will be displayed on the first floor, our main floor, the second floor and third floor with additional space for art installation on the 13th floor.

Q: Do you enjoy your job?

A: Well I've had a pretty exciting life I have to say. I mean, one thing about working in the visual arts, is that you meet very interesting people. Art -- It broadens our perceptions of the world. It reflects the contemporary issues of the day -- AIDS, gender issues, the revolution. Art makes our lives richer.

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Creating Community through cuisine

By Ashlea Adelegan

On the corner of Clark and Lawrence is a restaurant that, true to the tradition of its home land, is much more. B&Q Afro-Root Cuisine is more than a place where Nigerian natives and others that are fans of the delicious cuisine come to eat and partake in community. With praises in news articles and features on television programs, more recently on a local ABC special, B&Q Afro-Root Cuisine is a staple in the Chicago community.

The atmosphere of the restaurant is that of an old, familiar place. When you come in, no matter what the staff is doing, you are greeted by several "hellos" and "welcomes" by them, as well as by fellow patrons before you reach your seat--not to mention the fact that this restaurant offers a cozy and warm setting surrounding its guests.

The owners of B&Q have had the restaurant for a little over four years now, but it is a very popular staple in the Chicago Nigerian scene. The owners, Briggs and Queen (B&Q) Imarhiagbe, are Nigerian natives that have traveled the world, their stops including Paris, Brussels and

London, but they have found a resting place here in Chicago to establish their restaurant.

"When we first came to America, we lived in Atlanta, but I knew it was not for me, I just didn't like it," said Queen Imarhiagbe. "But although it was hard to open my business at



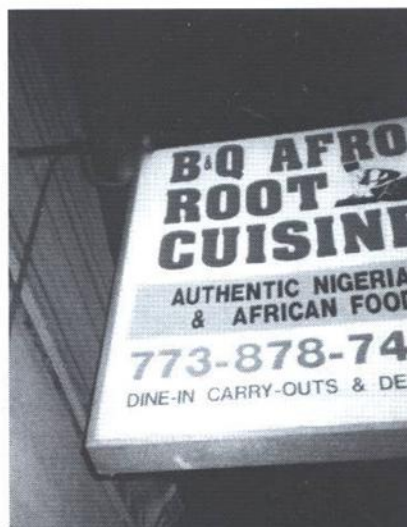
Restaurant patrons at B&Q enjoy traditional Nigerian food in a welcoming atmosphere.

Photo courtesy of Ashlea Adelegan

first, things have worked out great in Chicago."

Eating at B&Q is very much a social gathering rather than just a meal. In keeping with tradition from Nigeria, the tables are closer to one another so that guests can converse on various topics, from politics to entertainment.

And the food speaks for itself. The menu is an excellent sampling of many Nigerian delicacies such as jollof rice, which is a rice dish mixed with a sauce of tomatoes,



onion, peppers and special spices. Moi moi is a side dish that is mixed of finely grinded beans, eggs, onions, and a special blended sauce that is oven baked. Queen and Briggs' favorite dish is pounded yam and egusi. Pounded yam is a popular Nigerian meal. The yam is literally pounded as the name implies into a fine powder and then with boiling water it creates a dough-like substance that you eat with different types of stews. Egusi, which Briggs and Queen also like, is made from melon seed combined with spinach, a stew mixed of tomatoes, onions, and special blended seasonings.

The food is made fresh, and while you are waiting to eat, there will be music to listen to by famous Nigerian musicians such as Fela Kuti, or you can watch a movie from a selection of Nigerian features.

The prices are extremely affordable; most range from \$8 to \$10 for an entrée. B&Q Afro Root Cuisine is located at 4802 North Clark Street and is open from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon-10 p.m. Sunday.



Nestled between the crowded streets of Lincoln Park is a slice of paradise for the stomach. Here diners can savor the distinct taste of local Hawaiian cuisine without leaving Chicago, at the newly opened "Aloha Grill." The restaurant, located on 2534 North Clark Street, was opened in August by three friends who moved from Hawaii to Chicago to start the business.

"We thought it would be a good idea to bring local [Hawaiian] food to Chicago. As far as I know, we are the only restaurant like this," said Steven Lau, co-owner of Aloha Grill. Most of the menu revolves around one of Hawaii's most famous creations: the plate lunch.

A typical plate lunch is comprised of two scoops of rice, one scoop of macaroni salad and an entrée like kalua pork, barbecued beef or chicken katsu. It is the meal of choice in Hawaii and represents a blend of cuisine just as diverse as the people there. It can incorporate Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Hawaiian and American dishes, among others.

The restaurant is tiny yet comfortable, with seating for roughly 25 people. About half of Aloha Grill's business is take-out, according to Lau, but for those hoping to get a full Hawaiian experience, dining in is the way to go. The walls are covered with vintage and modern Hawaiian posters, and recorded music of Izrael Kamakawiwo'ole, a legendary Hawaiian singer, sets the laid back mood with soft Hawaiian melodies.

Because the restaurant is so new, Lau is still unsure how Chicagoans will react to this new type of food.

"Business so far is good," said Lau. "Hopefully word-of-mouth and repeat customers will keep us going."

When Aloha Grill first opened, one man came in over eight times in one week, according to Lau.

"He kept ordering something different every time he came in. He was trying to taste everything on our menu," Lau said.

The prices at Aloha Grill are very reasonable, with the average meal costing around \$8. As a bonus, the portions are so generous that customers can stretch a plate lunch order over two meals or share one with a friend.

The barbecued mixed plate is by far the most popular item on the menu, according to Lau. It's a plate lunch style dish with an entrée combination of Korean short ribs, barbecued chicken and teriyaki beef.

Another eye-catcher on the menu is the Spam musubi, a lightly grilled slice of Spam served atop rice and wrapped in seaweed. While some people opt to steer clear of the canned meat, others like first-time diner Clarence Purdy have decided to be a little more daring.

"I wasn't sure exactly what to expect," said Purdy. "It's surprisingly really good though. I've had Spam before, but never like this."

One should expect no less from a true Hawaiian restaurant. In Hawaii, Spam is a true part of island culture. Hawaii leads the nation in per capita Spam consumption, with over 6.7 million cans sold annually in Hawaii, which equals 5.5 cans per year per person, according to Hormel Foods, creator of Spam.

"I've basically lived off of Spam musubi my entire life, so I was excited to find this place [Aloha Grill] because it makes me feel a little less homesick," said Summer Manuma, 18, who moved from Hawaii to Chicago this year. "The Spam musubi is good."

Discover the true “essence” of India

By Monica Hortobagyi



Essence of India serves a variety of traditional Indian food like that shown above.

Step into the cozy “Essence of India” restaurant on the corner of North Lincoln and West Wilson Avenues in Chicago and prepare to embark on a culinary voyage marked by perfect service and mouth-watering flavors. The dimly lit and well-decorated dining room with a dozen tables exhales its authenticity in exciting dishes and regional artwork.

First-time restaurant owners Satya Das and Sherry Blabolil-Das, a husband-and-wife team, opened the restaurant’s doors at 4601 N. Lincoln Ave. on July 24, 2004 with the hope of offering a “culinary and cultural passage to India.” Immersing patrons in the “essence” of India by serving authentic meals and sharing original works of art is their goal.

With the subtle backdrop of Indian music, savor the sweet creaminess of a mango lassi drink alongside the fluffy texture of the tandoori leavened bread, Naan; Try the tender Chicken Milai Kabob, the chef’s specialty, or the spicy sauce of Goan Lamb. Raita, a refreshing blend of yogurt, cucumber, herbs and spices, complements the spicy flavors of a wide-variety of meat dishes. End your meal on a sweet note with the pastry Gulab Jamun. The 85-item menu, with entrees ranging from \$8.95–\$19.95, offers an assortment of options to please even the most conservative of eaters.

First-time and returning patrons praise the personal service that distinguishes the culinary experience at Essence of India. Das and Blabolil-Das engage customers in conversation, asking how their experience has

been and spending a few minutes with each table.

“The people who work [at Essence of India] are very personable and they take the time to welcome said Valerie Flores, 21, a Loyola University student who has eaten at the restaurant twice.

The service is attentive, yet unobtrusive. On a typical Saturday night, Das and Blabolil-Das welcome an estimated 150 people to dine in the red-carpeted comfort of their home-like environment.

“First-time and returning patrons praise the personal service...at Essence of India. Das and Blabolil-Das engage customers in conversation, asking how their experience has been and spending a few minutes with each table.”

“Business is increasing every day,” Das said. Even on a Monday night, almost all of the tables are filled and the room is alive with the soft hum of conversation and spicy scents from steaming dishes. Das recommends arriving before 6:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday nights to avoid the potential 45-minute wait. Customers are seated on a first-come first-serve basis and no reservations are accepted.

“When I think of Essence of India, I think of a really relaxed atmosphere where you’re able to enjoy the company you’re with, amazing food, authentic tastes and service with a smile,” Flores said.

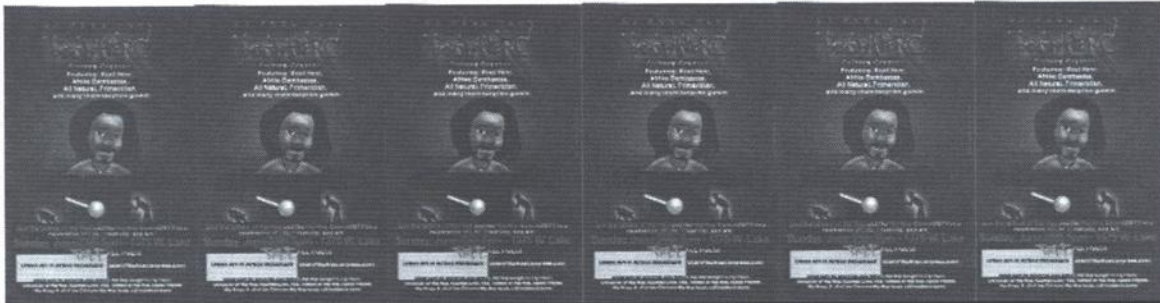
The menu explains that the meaning of essence is “that which makes something what it is.” By maintaining a level of excellence in not only the restaurant’s food but the service as well, Das and Blabolil-Das ensure that their patrons walk away not only with an understanding of the essence of Indian food and culture, but also with the essence of what every dining experience should be: an intimate, service-oriented and flavorful encounter.

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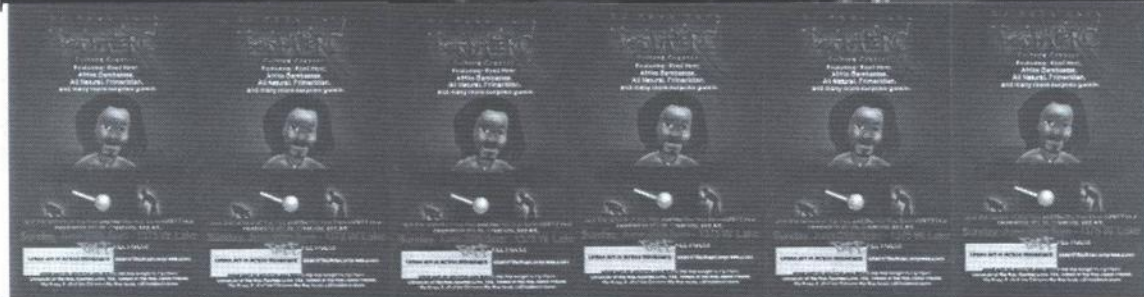
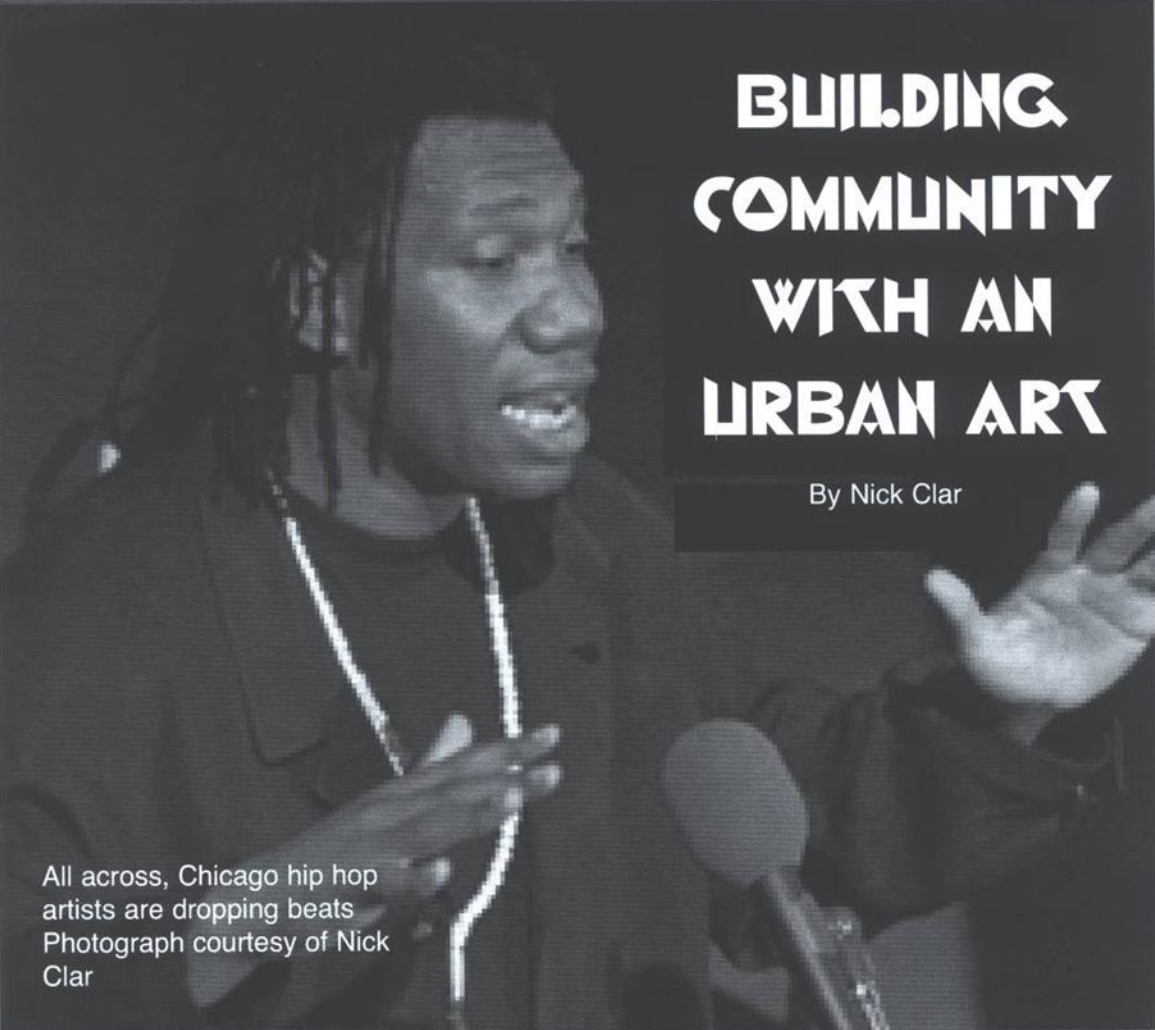
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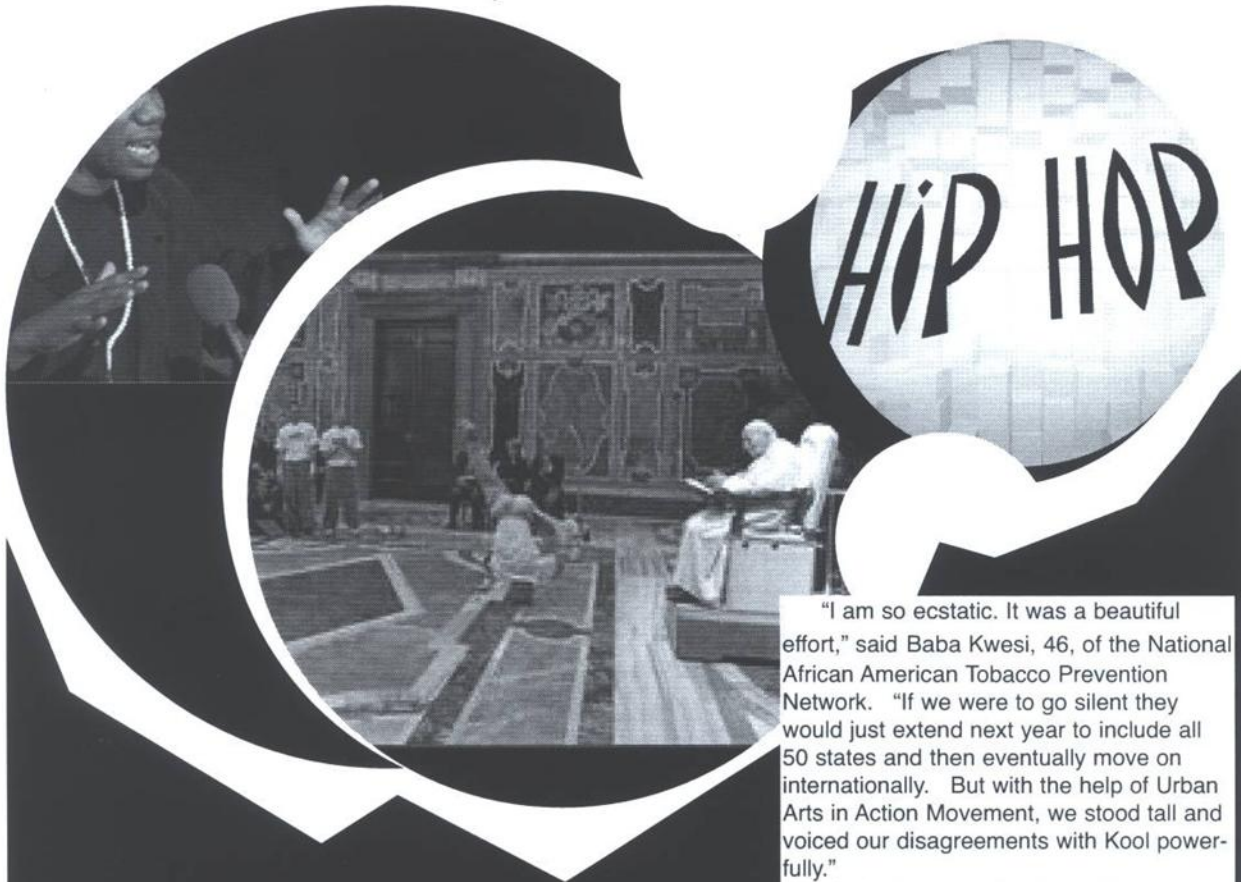


BUILDING COMMUNITY WITH AN URBAN ART

By Nick Clar

All across, Chicago hip hop artists are dropping beats
Photograph courtesy of Nick Clar





Melodic chants, rhythmic drumming and condemning posters and t-shirts were the weapons protestors equipped themselves with as they faced their formidable opponent – Kool cigarettes.

The protestors, comprised of the National African American Tobacco Prevention Network, church and community leaders and Urban Arts in Action Movement, a social, conscious Chicago Hip hop organization, all had their hands full as Kool, developed by Brown & Williamson, was hosting the final round of their 6th annual, nation-wide Kool Mixx DJ competition at the Vic Theater in Chicago.

Unafraid and unrelenting, protestors emphasized awareness of the negative effects of smoking and how Kool was specifically marketing to the urban youth, or Hip hop community.

"Hip hop is bigger than just the music," said Joe Narvae, 23, recent Loyola University Chicago graduate who attended the protestor's celebratory after-party the following day.

Though the DJ championship wasn't halted, Ranjit Bhagwat, 23, and Asad Jafri, 24, among the other protesting leaders, remained optimistic of their results.

"I am so ecstatic. It was a beautiful effort," said Baba Kwesi, 46, of the National African American Tobacco Prevention Network. "If we were to go silent they would just extend next year to include all 50 states and then eventually move on internationally. But with the help of Urban Arts in Action Movement, we stood tall and voiced our disagreements with Kool powerfully."

Seeking to inspire, unite and elevate while preserving Hip hop, Urban Arts in Action Movement doesn't look to build something new rather connect something already existing. And though now 30 years old, Hip hop has only recently been recognized as an international culture of peace and prosperity on May 16, 2001 by the United Nations in New York City.

What began as a response to the removal of arts and music funding in the public school system of New York City, Hip hop's creative, free expression unloaded unto the street, much to the dismay of city officials and authority heads, through graffiti art, break dancing, emceeing and DJ'ing. Also in efforts to combat gang violence, many of the founders of Hip hop fostered its growth towards an alternative form of competition.

"Chicago is the place for this to happen. We have such a rich history of community organizing and people coming together; the Black Panthers did some of their most powerful work here. Hip hop is a move-

-ment like the Labor Movement," Bhagwat said. "I think now it's time to understand that Hip hop is a movement."

Urban Arts in Action Movement was spawned by Bhagwat and Jafri, initially as students at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Through uniting several existing clubs there in 2001, the Hip hop Congress chapter of a pre-existing, national organization was formed. The Hip hop congress would serve as the prototype for the eventual conception of the movement.

Their undergraduate studies ended and both found themselves in Chicago after an absence of five years. Then in late 2003, they decided to develop and nurture their brainchild in Chicago.

"Chicago Hip hop is fragmented and people want bridges to be built, yet no one is taking the initiative," Bhagwat said. "It doesn't take any special talent to organize a community; it just takes the decision of someone to organize."

Not simply providing a venue for artists and dancers to showcase their talent, meetings consist of brief history lessons of Chicago Hip hop presented by pioneers of the culture; those who were present during its inception in Chicago and helped guide it to today's state. This is then followed by open-ended discussions of organizing events, reaching out to broader audiences and teaching of the culture of Hip hop. Plans to battle Kool were inspired during these meetings.

"The only thing that can be done is going to be done by us, the Hip hop culture," Jafri said.

Being stuck between an older generation attempting to preserve their invented culture and younger generations who are simply looking for outlets of self-expression, Bhagwat and Jafri feel the obligation to begin the framework of bridging the gap.

"We don't just focus on the artistic aspects, though ever important," Jafri said. "But we need to realize that we have to organize and form a united front."

Not an organization that serves the community, by means of feeding the hungry or providing shelter for the homeless, Urban Arts in Action Movement remains a movement that is trying to create a community while broadening the general public's aspects of Hip hop beyond the radio and television.

"I want to see people form human relationships with each other because that's what a community is forged out of," Bhagwat said. "And we make zero money off of all this in the process."

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Hip Hop is in a State of Emergency

Manifesto:

- We are not trying to build something new; we are helping to unite what is already present.
- We are not "promoters." We wish to advance the entire Culture and we support all efforts which seek to do the same.
- We do not spark beef nor do we acknowledge it.
- We believe that Hip Hop will rise only with knowledge. Education will empower the people.
- We respect the diversity of our Culture and support all those who love the Culture like we do.
- We seek to create unity among all the elements and aspects of Hip Hop which still live and love the Culture.
- We are universal. We seek to create representation and connection for and between all factions of the Chicago Hip Hop community and beyond.
- Who are we? We are you. We are anyone who still cares about Hip Hop and wants to see it grow.

Mission Statement:

The Urban Art in Action Movement (UAAM) stands for the Culture and People of Hip Hop. We seek to educate, inspire, unite and elevate, while preserving Hip Hop Culture.

4 more info...

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