

THE HOMELESS VOICE

Florida's Largest Street Newspaper



COSAC Foundation | PO Box 292-577 Davie, FL 33329 | 954-924-3571



Moving On

Sean Cononie

In 2003, the city of Hollywood wanted us gone from our previous location, causing us to move without a choice. At that time we had no cash and asked you, our fellow supporters, to help us buy a new building. Through your generosity, we were able to raise \$400K to purchase a building and an additional \$900K was then donated to pay off the mortgage within a few years.

Over the time spent at our present location, we have encountered numerous problems with the nearby communities as well as the city of Hollywood. Now, the year is 2015 and we must once again move for reasons including to meet the needs of the surrounding community and because of the lack of correct services given to us by certain providers.

To prepare for this move, I developed a plan to get the city to help us relocate the main shelter to another place by asking them to buy our main shelter. After I told the city my plan to relocate the main shelter, the city of Hollywood contacted us stating that they no longer wanted any of our properties to be located in the city. They wanted to purchase not just our main shelter but all of our properties and even my own personal house. They have gone, to the extent of exiling me from ever living in the city of Hollywood for the next 30 years, which I don't think has ever happened before in the history of America.

Nonetheless, in order to keep our organization up and running, I have taken one for the team, giving up my own house and personal rentals. It is very clear that the city of Hollywood does not want the homeless, our organization, nor me in their region anymore. The city has given us \$5 million dollars for all of our

properties and have ordered us to leave by April 15, 2015. Despite all of these oppositions, we will continue to assist the homeless.

Concerning our next relocation, we will be going from providing 300 beds in Hollywood to possibly 800 beds in Central Florida. This time our facilities will be a low-income hotel for the poor. The new location won't be a shelter, instead we will have mini shelters throughout the state and once the person is stabilized they can go to one of our long term hotels. This will allow us to have many free beds wherever we want to. In fact, it will be less stressful for me. Those of you who know me know that most nights I stay at the Hollywood shelter and have lived there for almost 11 years, in which almost half the time I spent sleeping on the floor with Lois. Soon I think I will be able to take care of myself and go from working 7 days a week to 6 days a week and instead of 18 hours a day to maybe 10 hours a day. I can finally work on getting back into shape. I need to or there will be no Sean Cononie to run these places.

We will still have beds in our other building in Broward County and we

still will have the Homeless Voice except now it will be state-wide. We can never be in Hollywood except I did get the city to budge so that we can do emergency cold weather outreach in their city or if I personally feed a homeless person on the streets- as long as it is not in groups. I would not sign the contract unless they allowed those two exceptions.

After the city pays the Cosac Foundation \$3.2 million, I get paid for my personal property that the city made me sell, and I pay the \$2 million for the new place, we are left with some funds to help us move. The cost of moving people and starting over is going to be a lot. So this is the time I ask you to, once again, help us raise at least another \$500,000. Your support will help keep our medical outreach divisions in Broward and Dade counties open as well as fund us until we establish ourselves in our new location. We need each of you who buy our paper to

send in one check. If everyone sent in \$75 in the next 60 days this project would be able to run as smooth as possible.

The new place will have the following:

- * 125 rooms, making it 5 times bigger than our current building in Hollywood.
- * A hot tub and swimming pool for therapy
- * Restaurant
- * Gym
- * A Doctors office
- * Medical Outreach Service
- * A separate building for a 300 person church
- * Our own state-certified sewer system, eliminating the need to buy water & pay for sewer
- * Commercial laundry service
- * Rec Room
- * Classrooms
- * Office center with computer laptops

I would like to take the time to thank each and everyone of you for all the donations you have given us over the years to help our shelter system grow, help our Haiti division respond to the earthquake in a timely manner by delivering 70 doctors to Haiti just a few days after the earthquake hit, help our de-worming division in Haiti de-worm kids, and our medical outreach team in South Florida. We are the only agency that hits the streets, taking care of the homeless whether during times of cold weather or just routine medical check ups with a doctor on-board or by video. None of this would be possible without your support over the years. This new place will become a national model where others can learn how to do what we did and we hope it can reach one community at a time in the USA.

Please send your check to
COSAC Moving Fund
P.O. Box 292-577
Davie Florida 33329

I would like to take the time to thank each and everyone of you for all the donations you have given us over the years to help our shelter system grow

Our Purpose: To Help the Homeless Learn How to Help Themselves

~Monthly Angels~

Addias Eugene
Alicia Hernandez
Amparo Penuela
Angel Porras
Angela Martinez
Arellys Pod
Arturo & Amelia Rodriguez
Awake Inc.
Barbara DeSanto
Barbara Robinson
Basil & Sonja Gonsalves
Bill & Laura Fash
Bobbie Given
Charles & Tracy Rice
Coco Mindreau
Dalal Almeida
Daniel Guevara
David Reiff
Deco Illusions Inc
Donald & Rose Rieth
Donna Galloway

Donna Jesudowich
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Ellen Heron
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Ethel Smith
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Isa-Aura Rosenthal
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Maria Ortega
Maria's Birthday Wishes for The Homeless
Mark Duske
Mark Targett
Mary Parish
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Michael Prokop
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Victor Lanza
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Thank you for your support Angels! Your support keeps our doors open!

BECOME A MONTHLY ANGEL



Become a monthly angel and for only 50 cents per day, you can keep a homeless family off the streets.

Membership Benefits

- *Have piece of mind in knowing that you helped keep a homeless family off the streets.
- *You or your business name will appear in the Homeless Voice Newspaper, which currently has over 100,000 copies in circulation.

DONATE \$15 MONTHLY AT:
WWW.HVOICE.ORG/MEMBER

Or send your check to Angel Program * P.O. Box 292-577 * Davie, FL 33329

Dear Homeless Voice Readers:

We are the small non-profit that runs the #1 emergency and response shelter in South Florida. We serve, house, and care for 500 homeless every day, and have costs like any other business: water, power, rent, programs, staff and legal help.

The Homeless Voice is extremely effective. It is a place where anyone in need will get help. It is a safe place for people to go when they have nowhere else to turn. We take no government funds. We run on donations averaging about 33 cents.

If everyone reading this paper gave the price of a cup of coffee, our fundraising would be done. If helping people is important to you as it is important for us, take one minute to go online to www.hvoice.org and become a monthly angel. \$15 per month is what we need from You. Please help us forget fundraising and get back to Serving the Homeless. Thank you. Please visit: www.hvoice.org/member

Join Our Fleet of Monthly Angels Today:

Fill out this form and along with your check for \$15 mail to:

Monthly Angel Program
PO Box 292-577
Davie, FL 33329

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____







Cut along the line and mail in

About the COSAC Foundation

The COSAC Foundation was originally established in May 1997 to partner with other social service agencies, in the area, that provided help to the homeless population. COSAC also independently feeds the homeless or anyone in need of food. The COSAC Foundation opened its first homeless shelter in 1999 and named it



COSAC Quarters (the shelter money was raised by spare change). We have grown into a multifaceted agency that feeds, shelters, and arranges for each homeless person to receive the necessary access to social and noncompulsory religious services to enable a return to a self-reliant lifestyle. And for the small percentage of people incapable of living independent lives, we provide a caring and supportive environment for their long-term residency.

Our vision is to end discrimination against the homeless population and to develop such an effective network of services that we greatly reduce the time a person or family emerges out of homelessness back into self-reliance.



Homeless Voice Newspaper Staff

Publisher- Sean Cononie

Editor in Chief- Mark Targett **Executive Editor-** Sara Targett

www.HomelessVoice.org/contact

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We continue to lose street corners where we collect all of your generous donations. The cities are banning us and we need your support now more than ever. Please donate today at homelessvoice.org/donate



Looking for organized, energetic volunteers

For more details and to sign up visit:

hvoice.org/volunteer

HOMELESS VOICE

\$25

Buys a hot meal for ten people

\$50

Buys 2 bags of groceries for a homeless family

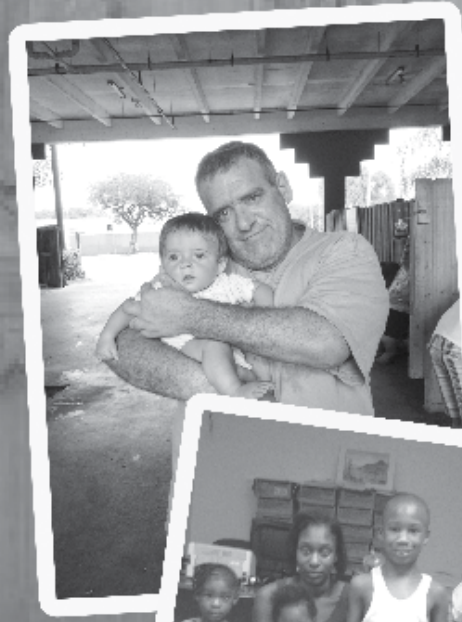
\$100

Buys a night in an emergency hotel accomodation for a homeless family



Photo by Destin Doran

www.hvoice.org | COSAC Foundation P.O. Box 292-577 | Davie, FL 33329



Don't Let
the Doors
Close on
These
Children

Meatless Monday! Barley, Fennel, And Beet Salad

Ingredients

SERVINGS: 6

2 cups cooked barley (from about 2/3 cup dried)

1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced

2 small golden beets, thinly sliced

1/4 small red onion, thinly sliced

1/2 cup chopped toasted almonds

1/2 cup torn fresh mint

1/2 cup olive oil

3 tablespoons Sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

Toss barley, fennel bulb, beets, red onion, almonds, and mint in a large bowl with oil and vinegar; season with salt and pepper.

To find more meatless recipes like this delicious salad visit www.bonappetit.com

Recipe by Alison Roman
Photograph by Christopher Testani



Trying to rest, in a tourist hotspot downtown-



Edysmar Diaz-Cruz

On Spirituality...the Unknown

It is times like these that we really need faith. Times when the future is unknown and seems as if it could spin in many different directions, most of them landing at some frightening conclusion.

I could be talking about the state of the world in these troubled times, or I could be talking about a personal spinning out of control, and the fears that accompany that., but I'm talking about The Homeless Voice. The shelter started by Sean Cononie and Mark Targett. We are moving quite a distance away and because of that we lose much of our staff, and some of our guests. Their presence will be missed and we wish them the very best in their future endeavors. Beginnings can be exciting, fun.

When we offer our work to God, it becomes Gods' work. The work at the shelter is living the gospel, it is the work of Jesus and when we do that we are never alone and never wrong. We need faith in these times of change, and we have faith because the work we do is holy. Pray with me my brothers and sisters that our move is a success and that we may be able to continue to carry out Gods' will. Peace and blessings to you, Deacon Bob



~ Cathy's Prayer List ~

- * Lorena
- * Lilly
- * Beth Ann
- * The Coakleys
- * Eddie Mercer
- * Bob
- * Michael Loffredo
- * Natacha Lewis
- * Steven Green
- * Josh Wynn
- * Bianca
- * James
- * Lois
- * Robert Tansey
- * Veronica & John
- * Carmen Cononie
- * Mary Summers

- * Cassandra Wilson
- * Charlene Duarte
- * Rusty Columbo
- * Devon Bailey & Family
- * Maria Dragon
- * Vemonda Lane & Family
- * Charlie
- * Mr. Mike
- * Tiffany
- * Dvora
- * Ed Giampietro
- * Kristan David Perez
- * Tommy & Joe
- * GERALYN
- * Little Ryan
- * Earnest Bowens & Family

To add a name to Cathy's Prayer List, call or text 954-410-6275

Coming Soon!

Lena's Loving Advice



Within the next few issues, we will be trying out the column
Lena's Loving Advice by Lena Larkin.

Please send in your problems for Lena to start answering them.

You can write directly to lenaslovingadvice@gmail.com

36 Hours.... 200 People... 200 Miles Away...



11:15 am the main crew gather in Operations to finalize the details for the day. The planning and packing phase is over and it's time to move. The phones now get forwarded to an answering service.
 I walk around trying to stay out of everyone's way. Some are milling about, most moving with purpose, but no one actually leaving yet.

The cafeteria is empty.
 13 years ago was the first time I walked into that building- helping with change, but really just hanging out with my boyfriend at the time, Mark. Memories flooded back and I remembered bitter sweetly all the people I had met and lost from this one place. Lois and Cathy especially.
 The halls are eerily quiet and empty.
 Residents sit in the parking lot waiting. Many are sad, leaving their home and entering into the unknown. Some huddle together and talk of other things, some stand alone deciding how they really feel. Excited, anxious, all feelings they all share.
 It's going to be a long trip, everyone needs snacks, coolers get filled, crew vans are gassed up. Let's get everyone there safely and smoothly as possible.
 Sean works great under pressure- hammer out the details so nothing is over looked. He'll leave a little after the busses. They'll take Us 27, nice and slow is the plan of attack.
 "It's been an experience in my lifetime," says Ginny with a smile, "you can't even imagine."
 Long time residents Sara and Jeremy say Princess, the little black dog that has gotten passed on from a former resident, had acted as a therapy dog this morning. The shelter has had an in house dog for as long as I can remember, so it seems fitting there is one here today.
 Many people need assistance onto the bus via a handicap lift, so the boarding process is slow and dragging. Mark says he's calm, but as the parking lot empties out, the mood gets heavier.
 Sean literally kisses his building goodbye, and laughs when he shares that with me- "I'll be on the ground bawling when they tear it down."
 Some residents are sunny optimists, treating today like a field trip, others like they've lost their best friend. The crew is moving right along following their orders from Sean and executing as usual- some occasionally offering a glimmer of how they are actually feeling.
 One woman decides to go out with a bang, waiting until the last minute to decide whether she is staying or going and then starts a few arguments hashing out old injuries. She reluctantly boards the bus.
 12:15- busses are loaded, and then pull away- the staff that are leaving later today or tomorrow wave from the sidewalk and most of the passengers wave back - everything will work out.
 60 Pizzas have been ordered for dinner once they arrive. That comfort food may help ease them into their new home. Food always helps.
 Scrap metal men have been waiting like vultures across the street and have no hesitation once the busses have left. They are sent away for the moment.
 We still have a whole other truck to fill.
 Sean needs to leave soon to be there when the busses arrive but he won't budge until he's sure everyone's belongings are safely stowed- it's a huge operation, a big responsibility and something his team has been helping him keep track of. Some of his closest staff will not be traveling on with everyone, a large detail that for the time being everyone seems happy to overlook.
 4:05- Arrived at the new place, and starting to settle in. It will be awhile before it feels like home, but they have each other and they will be just fine...



Insurance Benefits that prevents Homelessness!

After 30 years as an insurance agent, I am writing this article to share with you that I believe insurance products such as Critical Illness, Accident, Hospital, and Cancer Indemnity plans are more valuable than Health Insurance. Health Insurance is necessary but consider the following:

You're in a movie theatre and notice that your hospital administrator and your doctor are sitting in front of you with their families. Suddenly gunshots ring out and you jump up and take the administrator and his family to safety. You then return and take your doctor and his family to safety. Finally you come back for your family. REALLY?

Could you survive the catastrophic costs of a major illness? Even if you survive-could your finances survive? Fifty percent of all bankruptcies & home foreclosures are caused by such medical expenses, when 80% of them had health insurance.

Ask yourself this question? If faced with a critical illness-What are the most important monthly bills to pay? Would you and your family need help with the Mortgage, Out-of-Pocket medical expenses, car, food, electric, H2O, etc...? Or how about actually trying to pay your Health Insurance Premiums? This would definitely not be a good time to lapse that policy!

Supplemental policies pay cash directly to you, to be used anyway you choose. You can buy policies with \$5,000 to \$50,000 or more in benefits. Wouldn't you rather get a check instead of a get well card? Make sure you and YOUR FAMILY get PAID first.

Contact me, George Preacher, Certified Medical Insurance Consultant at 954-880-2240 for more information!

The Homeless Voice is looking for a group of volunteers to gather donations in our name. You can put teams together and raise funds or products for the shelter. We need a team to get together and make plans to search for products. We need one person to contact hotels to get sheets, blankets, bed spreads and LED light bulbs.

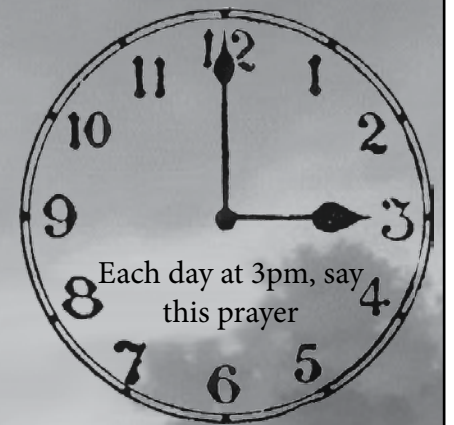
www.homelessvoice.org/volunteer



**If interested Please contact
954-924-3571**

*It is the Time of Day
To Make Cancer Go Away
Every Day at 3pm This Prayer We Shall Say*

*Dear Lord, we ask that you send us a cure
To make all our bodies pure
To the Devil we say
Your cancer is done
To Jesus we pray
For all cancers be gone
Dear Lord we claim
This in Your Holy Name*



It is our goal that this catches on and before you know it thousands will be praying each day for a world prayer to stop cancer and for there to be a cure for all cancers.

To my sweetheart, this is for you and know that I love you and thank you for helping me all these years making our shelter system grow and grow and not only helping me with the homeless but just being by my side all these years. I love you, you know who you are.

Love, Sean

Creating Jobs for Homeless in Barcelona

Joshua Crites

It is February and the streets are quiet compared to the summer. However; there are a number of tourists bustling around Barcelona taking in the sunshine, wine, food and culture. The city changed itself into one of the most dynamic and stylish capitals in the world. Year-round the city is alive, and always on the cutting edge of architecture, food, fashion, style, music and good times. Tourists from around the world come to see art by Picasso and Miró. Street performers and the sound of music fill the air. Architecture by Gaudi is attention grabbing. It is easy to come to Barcelona and fall in love with the city. Nevertheless; if you look closely, there are issues. Hidden behind the beauty of the city is an unsettling increase in the number of people living without housing. Homelessness in Barcelona is on the rise and the economic problems in Spain may make it worse before it can become better.

The financial crisis hit many low income families in Spain especially hard. According to the latest Trading Economics report, there are around 5.5 million Spanish workers unemployed compared to 1.7 million in 2007, shortly before the economic crash. The unemployment rate now stands at just under 24 percent. Spanish youth are really hurting, with over 50 percent of those under age 25 without work. Many jobs in the public sector were eliminated with almost 200,000 being cut in 2012 alone. Those lucky enough to keep a job often have seen cuts to their income and or benefits. Older people receiving a pension received cuts from 10%-20%.

Enter Lisa Grace and Hidden City Tours. Lisa worked as a market research consultant and has lived in Barcelona since 2004. After losing her job in 2012, she decided to make a change. In the spring of 2013, Lisa discovered an agency called Unseen Tours, a social Enterprise in London offering homeless walking tours. This gave her an idea. She believed Barcelona would be perfect for a homeless walking tour project. The city is one of the most visited spots in Europe and she believes there is also a increased consumer consciousness for responsible tourism. Lisa decided to use Barcelona's booming tourism economy to help put to work homeless individuals looking to improve their lives.

On this sunny but cool February day, I took a tour of Barcelona with Ramón. He met me in the city center where we took one of the most interesting city tours in memory. We touched on everything from the history

of Spain to issues faced by homeless in Barcelona and where they turn to for help and support. As we snaked our way through the streets we visited soup kitchens, places where homeless often go to sleep and spoke about the support systems in the city and where the system is lacking. The tour is done in a very respectful manner

to ensure nobody feels as if they are being looked upon. Throughout the tour Ramón told me personal stories about street life and how the financial crisis affected people from every category of life. Professionals lost jobs, spent their savings, and many ended up rough sleeping on the

street.

Ramón told me his personal story. He was born in Salamanca, Spain. Traveling is a passion for him and he lived in France and the USA. While in the USA he finished the Culinary Art School in New York City and worked in many high class restaurants. Throughout the tour, his love of cooking and food was evident. We stopped on several occasions to try olive oil, fresh cheeses or to learn about the various types of meat. Ramón then told me about how he became homeless. In 2008, he returned to Spain and came to Barcelona in search of work but struggled to find a permanent job. He worked several part time jobs but a combination of illness and lack of employment left Ramón homeless. Things

Hidden City Tours hires only homeless. Each guide goes through a serious of trainings that last 80-90 hours before giving any tours.

changed when his social worker heard about Hidden City Tours.

"When my social worker read about Hidden City Tours in the local newspaper she immediately suggested that I get in touch, so I called Lisa and the next day we met for an interview!" It is clear that

Ramón does not want anyone to feel sorry for him. He works hard and focuses his energy on his son who still lives in New York and his mother who is 86 years old. He believes the job allows him the opportunity to live a dignified life and meet interesting people from all around the world. He is now living in a shared flat and continues to work on improving his situation.

Hidden City Tours hires only homeless. Each guide goes through a serious of trainings that last 80-90 hours before giving any tours. If a guide's english needs help, the company sends them to english courses weekly to improve speaking. The company currently offers four tours including one by Ramón that focuses on food. He leads groups through one of Europe's largest markets, while giving tips on picking local and seasonal products. In particular Ramon helps visitors find the best quality while looking at Spanish ham, cheese, meat and game, fresh fish and seafood. In total there are five guides working for the

company right now. The tours are offered in Spanish, German, French and English.

As with any city trying to cut back on homelessness, jobs and housing units are key. Every job counts and innovative ideas that take advantage of a city's economic advantages to help

homeless is smart. While many jobs are being cut in cities across the world, some cities are lucky enough to be hot beds for tourism. Training homeless to gives homeless tours is now happening in a few European cities. Is this an idea that could be used in US cities? I believe it is an idea worth exploring. As long as the mission is helping homeless and returning as much profit to them as possible, cities with high tourism rates should examine creating similar jobs.

You can visit <http://www.hiddencitytours.com/> for more information or contact Lisa at lisa.grace@hiddencitytours.com

Josh Crites is currently a German Chancellor Fellow researching social housing and homeless programs in Germany and the EU. He worked with the Tacoma and Seattle Housing Authorities before being selected for the fellowship by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He can be reached at jcrites007@gmail.com and his blogs on social housing and homeless can be found at <https://jcrites007.wordpress.com/>



NOTES FROM THE ROBYN'S NEST

By Robyn (expressly written for the courageous residents of C.O.S.A.C., another nest that God built)

“Home is where the heart is”... We've all heard this platitude a time or two. It's purpose, I imagine, is meant to bring our minds in line with the truth that “home” is more than a physical base camp to where we retreat at day's end. Ideally, “home” is also the secure seat of our rest, respite and relief from the cold, cruel world... a safe haven within which to think, to feel and dream, to plan and purpose the future in our minds and to question in our hearts the why's and why-nots of our lives, where we laugh out loud and cry in private, entertain ourselves by our hobbies, and interact with others in a caring community of supportive folks who reflect our goodness back to us,...oh, and I can't forget food!...Home is the place where we eat good grub and fall asleep with a full belly! And the list of noble blessings a true and idyllic “home” affords us goes on.

Is not the home of our hearts the place where our sense of belonging and identity originates; the source of supply out of which the strength to endure and press forward may be drawn? Every one of us can contribute to a discussion on the source of our indomitable human spirits because our “house-less, apartment-less” experiences can broaden and enrich such a discussion...whether or not we have allowed the pain and rejection to be stepping stones or stumbling blocks to our greater awareness of the human struggle and eventual personal victory or defeat.

So, who are you, Robyn, and why are your notes from your nest relevant to our nest at 1203 N. Federal Hwy, Hollywood, FL, USA?...

Well, hear me out, for my credentials to speak into your lives, though we are still strangers, is the common denominator of...(drum roll, please) you guessed it!...homelessness. And because home is where the heart is and we never lose our hearts,...I say, “house-lessness”, which is closer to the factual truth, in my opinion.

Last May, I was house-less in NJ and searching for some venue through which to share my story of being house-less across four states in as many years, and what I learned that might benefit and encourage others in a similar situation. Compliments of a Google search over the Internet, I discovered The Homeless Voice. A kind, gentlemen staffer invited me to submit up to a 400 word essay on my experience. At this very moment, I am already over 300 words and must finish my brief introduction and whet your appetites for more notes from my Robyn's nest next month. I cannot, in 400 words or less, share the wealth of the breadth and scope of the life skills, self-discovery, revelation knowledge of a loving Creator, the many dehumanizing, sometimes harrowing, sometimes tragic and oft humorous situations in which I found myself, along with greater understanding of the human struggle with which this testimony has equipped me! Please allow me creative license to cross the 400 word limitation and to coin new terminology describing my house-less experience. I will need another invitation to continue to share my experience, strength and hope as a professional “hotel-hopping”,

“couch and car-surfing” indigent, and at other times a live-in caregiver to seniors with end-stage dementia, adults living with developmental disabilities...and most recently...a butt and nose-wiping “Mary Poppins” nanny... all to earn a place to stay and shelter from the great outdoors!

...My personal “crunch time crisis” catapulting me into this new lifestyle was manifold and attributable to paying NJ child support, as well as complications from an abusive marriage and other poor life choices. What contributed to making poor life choices? The usual factors...physical and sexual abuse beginning in childhood, a dysfunctional family of origin, PTSD, and subsequent self-medication of soul pain through addiction and co-dependency issues along with other sundry assorted mental health signs and symptoms

spanning the first four decades of my life. Whether or not it is by nature or nurture, by my own dumb doing or by circumstances in my life and environment beyond my control,... the question is not, “What came first, the chicken or the egg?”, but rather, “Can faith and prayer sustain us as we 'stay in the solution' and, ever so slowly, raise us out of shifting sands onto a firm foundation of sound mind and joy? As we lay hold of recovery through self-honesty, willingness to be accountable for our part, forgiving others for their parts, and receiving help through an attitude of gratitude when it arrives sometimes in unlikely packages, through unlikely people, places and things,... the eyes of our hearts begin to enlarge and we gain a higher view, a larger more empowering perspective about ourselves and others that ushers in healing.

Looking beneath the surface of my life, complexities of a spiritual nature involving my free will, the Hand of a loving God, and the gnarly hand of that great hacker of our souls- our spiritually evil nemesis, a.k.a. The Destroyer- were stirring the pot of my convoluted, complicated, chaotic and confusing life pushing me further and farther into bondage to slavery to my emotions! What evil meant for harm, in accordance with and commandeering my self-will run riotous, our heavenly Parent used for my good, when I acquiesced to the Potter's loving pressure in a refining process separating the impurities of my soul from the eternal and redeeming qualities of my spirit. And this process of refine-



home is where the heart is and we never lose our hearts,...I say, “house-lessness”, which is closer to the factual truth

True and lasting healing come when first we deal with the dilemma of darkness and ill-will lurking in our own, individual hearts.

ment required I see the proverbial glass half full instead of half empty, to stop agreeing with what the world judges as stumbling blocks and proof of incompetency. As the mists began to clear, what I thought had been only stumbling blocks were very clearly now become stepping stones...stepping stones of adversity had been shaping me, building character and leading to greater victory. I cannot write truthfully from any orientation other than faith in a loving Creator through the gift of forgiveness given unto men, the Atonement made for our fallen nature. True and lasting healing come when first we deal with the dilemma of darkness and ill-will lurking in our own, individual hearts. The folks who judge our house-lessness are simply and shallowly looking at our circumstances from above the surface of our lives through a glass dim and dark, and have not honestly appraised their own lack. The helpers, those laborers God sends our way to pull us out of our despair, have the eyes of their hearts enlarged to look below the surface of our lives and confess, “There, but for the grace of God, go I.” As the miracle of our redemption occurs, we are ready to begin to give a helping hand and pass the love of God on to others in need. Another aptly fitting metaphor would be that those who judge us negatively for the straits in which we find ourselves in a house-less season of our

lives, are looking up from beneath the tapestry of our lives at all the loose ends, mismatched threads and seemingly sad bends, when our God Who created us from Love... looks down upon the top from above at a beautiful mosaic and weaving of unique and artistic design. Our

worth comes from what our Creator says about us anyway, not the opinion of Man.

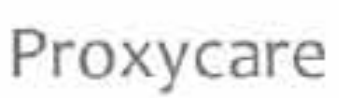
Please invite me back to share more of my testimony and insights, my hope and my heart, to encourage and bless others. Because of God's grace and tender mercies, I have more “notes from the Robyn's nest”. God bless all readers, great and small. And remember, house-lessness is a state of mind...both for the house-less have-nots and the house-full have-lots! This state of mind determines whether house-lessness is a stumbling block or a stepping stone to a future home!

Robyn, presently in KY, February 2015

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