

# THE ANTI-HUNGER

June 2004

# ADVOCATE

Brought to you by the Anti-Hunger Action Committee of Crossroads Urban Center  
347 South 400 East, Salt Lake City 1-888-747-8482 or 364-7765

The Anti-Hunger Action Committee (AHAC) organizes low-income individuals and their allies to take action on their own behalf to improve the social safety net and promote better jobs.

## Salt Lake City Sets up Homeless Court

by Joe Hudson

Salt Lake City has problems with how it treats the homeless. In a study conducted by the Anti-Hunger Action Committee (AHAC) last Fall, we found that over half the homeless people we interviewed had received a ticket in the past six months.

When homeless people receive tickets for things like sitting on the sidewalk, they feel like they're being treated like criminals for no reason. As a solution, AHAC is collaborating with other organizations and Salt



Left: Joe Hudson works on this story

Lake City's government, to help to develop a better relationship between the homeless and the rest of the community.

One attempt to deal with this problem that we are excited about is the City setting up a Homeless Court. The Homeless Court was established in May 2004 at the Weigand Center. You can go to Homeless Court on Fridays from 1 to

4 PM. If you get a ticket for a minor violation, like trespassing or sitting on the sidewalk, you can come to the Weigand Center to sign up on a list to see a judge before 9:30 AM. If one does not have the money to pay for a ticket, one has the option of doing community service. This court appears to be people friendly.

If we all work together on the solution, then we can eliminate some of the headaches with the homeless situation. Having a Homeless Court in the downtown area will be one of the biggest solutions to the problem.



## May AHAC Event a Success

On May 11, AHAC members gathered for a potluck and storytelling event. Over 30 people were in attendance. Members shared stories and poems, and ate some delicious food brought by AHAC members.

### Public Hearing for Medicaid Budget for Next Year

Thursday, June 17 Room 114 of  
Cannon Health Building at 288 N.  
1460 W.  
Salt Lake City

This is a great opportunity for AHAC members to voice their concerns about changes they would like to see to next years Medicaid budget.

# Poverty Wages, Dignity and Elections

by Bill Tibbitts, AHAC Director

The minimum wage is too low. A single mother with one child working full time earning \$5.15 per hour will be \$1,749 below the poverty level this year. Someone who is working full time should not have to worry about how she is going to feed her child or keep a roof over that child's head.

The United States Senate is currently looking at a bill that would address this problem by raising the minimum wage to \$7.00 per hour over the next two years. On May 26 AHAC cosponsored a call-in day to both of Utah's Senators supporting this bill. Over the summer AHAC members will continue to support this bill in every way we can.

The federal government is not the only level of government that can do something about poverty level wages. This month Salt Lake City's Mayor, Rocky Anderson, is going to sign an executive order that will give a preference on city contracts to companies that pay

decent wages. AHAC has been heavily involved in the effort to promote this executive order and we plan to invite all of our members to be in the room when the Mayor signs it. During the coming year AHAC members will lead efforts to convince Salt Lake County to follow Salt Lake City's example on this issue.

Of course, raising wage levels does not help people who are currently out of work. For the past several months AHAC has been working to improve the way that the Salt Lake City Police Department interacts with people who are homeless. I recently had a conversation with someone who reminded me that the best way to improve the treatment of the homeless was to find them jobs.

Many people who are homeless have limited work experience or are beginning to have difficulty performing physical work that was easy for them when they were younger. With training and the right opportunities these human beings could find work and feel a sense of dignity in their lives.

For that to happen, local government officials and business leaders will have to learn to stop seeing the homeless as a problem and begin to see them as their neighbors, and as a potentially valuable resource.

2004 is a crucial year for raising these important issues. Everyone knows that there are national elections this year but not everyone realizes that: 1) every member of the Utah House of Representatives is up for reelection, 2) half the members of the Utah Senate are up for reelection, and, 3) the Salt Lake County Mayor and several County Council Members are also up for reelection. This summer and fall there will be several opportunities to meet with the candidates who are running for office in your neighborhood and ask them what they are going to do about these issues. If you would like to join AHAC in raising these issues please give us a call at 364-7765 and ask how you can get involved.

## Medicaid Packets Now Available!

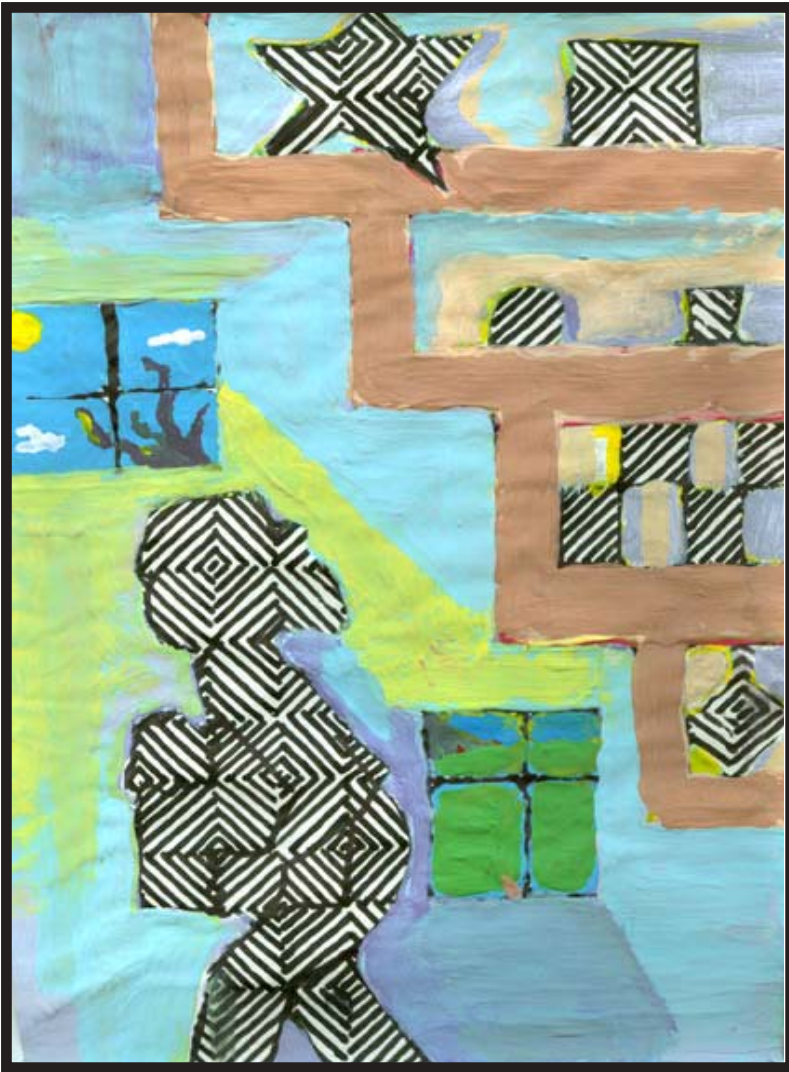
Writing a letter to your state senators is an effective and easy way to voice your opinion on matters that are important to you, like Utah's Medicaid budget problem.

When you have your letters written, bring them by and we will post them for you. We have already received letters from members of AHAC who got their friends to write letters.

Chris Atkins shares his experience:

"What I did was where I live I had an ice cream party (with bananas!) While they were there, people wrote letters. Then at work I asked a couple people that I knew. It wasn't hard at all. The thing is just contacting the people you know and talking to them. I'm hoping it can change things. I did my best."

*Stop by Crossroads Urban Center and pick up one of AHAC's Medicaid Letter Writing Packets. For more information call AHAC at 364-7765.*



**“LOOKING INSIDE OUT” BY MARY TORGERSON**

## Spring

Today’s weather delivered spring  
 Jubilation, wonderous elations  
 Thawing, warming winters frigid sting  
 Seeds of life releases life  
 Flowers offer their scented spice

Birds chirping singing love songs  
 An annual conspiracy to build a home  
 This is where the juveniles are grown  
 At last winter’s finished  
 Now nature can replenish

Cold’s dominance today is weaken  
 Prodigal spring returns sweeten  
 The uncrowning of covered domes  
 The tender gender’s skin is shown  
 Spring nurtures Nature’s love

Wicked winter conceled the sun  
 Cabin fever obsconded fun  
 Short cold days now are lengthen  
 All species are re-generated  
 Life again grows, strengthen

### Message from AHAC Co-Chair



Hi there, this is Joe Coult one of the AHAC’s co-chairs. When you do things with AHAC, do you get hungry? I know I do. So do what I do pack a lunch. I still have that challenge for all of you. Help keep the newsletter strong, put your arts and crafts in it.

### 3 Numbers to Remember

1. Crossroads Urban Center: **364-7765**
2. 211/ Information and Referral: at **211** or **978-3333**
3. Dept. of Workforce Services Customer Relations: **526-4390**

The fluttering, bustling and buzzing of,  
 Butterflies, bees and ladybugs  
 Blooming grass, trees and scrubs  
 Perennial spring’s essence is sewn  
 It’s the omniscient’s design  
 Life goes on

- Sam King

**Mark your calendars, the 2nd Annual AHAC Barbecue is coming up on July 13th at 5:30 pm at Liberty Park.**



## Douglas Cotant's Joke of the Month

Q: Why did the skeleton go to the movies by himself?

A: Cause he had no body!

**Were it not for you,  
I could not be,  
You are the essence  
Of my reality...  
Nourishing and  
nurturing  
Teaching and loving me  
You've made me strong  
Loving me  
unconditionally  
Although it's taken  
forever  
To say what I must say  
I really love you Mom,  
Today and everyday.**

**- Sam King**

## *Gardening: A Rewarding Hobby*

*by Rudy Roca*

I grew up in the Phillipines, and ever since I was a kid I loved to do a garden. I'm a born gardener, enjoying working in the dirt. Gardening is a beautiful hobby that one can find enjoyment and at the same time appreciate the beauty of nature. It also gives you full satisfaction, seeing your plants grow from a seed to a big plant and in this way you commune with nature.



There is a saying which runs "The best things in life are free" and this is it in gardening. I spent hours looking to the magnificent bloom of the tulips in Spring, the exotic beauty and the tantalizing colors of the climbing and bush roses and the blooming exquisite purple clematis. The geraniums are starting to bloom and the gorgeous phlox will be blooming by summer and so with the asters and petunias.

Gardening has a therapeutic effect on us and in my case it is a therapy to me. So I encourage you to start a small garden if you don't have one.

**Come to the Utah Issues Community Solutions Conference  
June 10th and 11th!**

**\*\*\*AHAC is Sponsoring a panel on June 11th at 9:45 AM on  
The Role of Public Transportation in Reducing Poverty.\*\*\***

**The event is free of charge and on Friday there will be a free lunch if you  
register before June 4th.**

**To Register:**

**Call: AHAC at 364-7765 for a registration form or**

**Online: at [www.utahissues.org](http://www.utahissues.org)**