



the **ANTI-HUNGER
ADVOCATE**

Brought to you by the Anti-Hunger Action Committee

March 2005

**Bush's Proposed Budget Cuts
into many Important Programs**

President Bush released his proposed budget on February 7. This proposal will cut into many programs that are crucial to the quality of life for many AHAC members. The budget explains only how the President's proposed cuts will affect programs in the fiscal year 2006, where there are \$18 billion in proposed cuts to programs. But this budget could continue to have an impact into the year 2010. This budget would cut over \$25 million dollars a year from Medicaid in Utah alone. Other programs that will be cut long-term include Low Income Home Energy Assistance, several housing programs, food stamps, and WIC. While right now both food stamps and WIC are shown to be fully funded in 2006, if there is a cap made to the program, it will decrease the number of people who can receive the benefits in future years. Already in the state of Utah, there have been 500 housing vouchers lost because of Section 8 cuts. This proposed budget only further reduces the amount of subsidized housing available, and means that more Utah families and low-income people will go without housing in the coming years.

AHAC Annual Meeting and Celebration!!!

Come join us for food, fun and a celebration for restoring the dental and vision benefits to Medicaid. Plus, we will have a surprise guest come speak to us as well. Be sure to mark your calendars now for this event!!!

Wednesday March 15, 5:30pm at Crossroads Urban Center, 347 South 400 East



Medicaid Day a Huge Success!!! Dental and Vision Benefits Restored to Medicaid!



Darla Ball gives an AHAC Valentine to Senator Valentine's assistant at Medicaid Day



AHAC Members, including Jack Foriska, lobby in the hall outside of the House Chambers for the restoration of dental and vision benefits at Medicaid Day

On February 16, AHAC Members gathered with others from around the area who are concerned about restoring dental and vision benefits to Medicaid. After these benefits were cut in 2002, we have been pushing to have them restored. The day was highlighted by a speech by Rep. Mascaro, who sponsored the original bills to restore the two services, an explanation of the budget process by Judi Hillman of Utah Issues, and a rendition of *My Funny Valentine* by our own Rudy Roca. During the past 2 years AHAC members have organized press conferences and demonstrations, called legislators on the phone, written letters to the Governor, organized nonpartisan candidate forums and worked very hard to restore these crucial benefits. Everyone who helped with those efforts deserves a big pat on the back. On Thursday, February 24, the House and Senate agreed on a budget that will fully restore dental and vision benefits. Congratulations and thanks for all your hard work!!!



Rep. Steve Mascaro, who sponsored the bills to restore dental and vision benefits to Medicaid, speaks to those gathered in the State Office Building.



AHAC Member David Hughes shows his passion for having dental and vision benefits to Medicaid restored.

UTA and the Fare Increase Proposal



Ed, Bill, Darla, and Billy hold up signs at the UTA Public Hearing regarding the fare increase.

Should public transportation be free?

Every time you buy something and pay sales tax in Salt Lake County you are giving money to the Utah Transit Authority. In 2003 UTA received almost \$104 million in sales tax money and provided almost \$87 million in transit services. During that same year UTA spent over \$33 million on operations support and administration. How much of that \$33 million was spent collecting fees, advertising and other marketing? This is an important question because UTA collected less than \$19 million dollars in fees that year.

Maybe it is time to ask whether people should pay any money for using public transportation. People do not pay a fee when they drive on roads even though we spend far more tax money on building and maintaining roads than we spend on public transportation. If more people rode the bus the roads would be less congested and we could spend less money building roads. The Logan Transit District charges no fees for use of their bus system. Why can't UTA do the same?

Jokes of the Month

by: Douglas Cotant



What did the necktie say to the hat?
You go on a head and I will hang around a while.

UTA held a public hearing on February 17. We attended the hearing and made our opinions known on the subject of fare increases. On Wednesday, February 23, we also attended the UTA Board of Directors meeting, where they decided to hold off on a fare increase until they either had more information justifying it, or could better understand the need for increasing the fares for the disabled and elderly. Because of this decision, we will be going again to the UTA Board Meeting on Wednesday, March 23. Call Elizabeth at Crossroads if you want more information or want to come join us! 801-364-7765

TAKE ACTION TO OPPOSE BUDGET CUTS!!

Contact Your Senators on March 2 and March 8 to ask them to protect children, older people, and families by opposing cuts to nutrition, health care and housing programs.

By toll-free telephone number: 1-800-247-2971. This toll-free number is provided for these days courtesy of the American Friends Service Committee.

By email: To send email our Senators go to their websites:
<http://hatch.senate.gov/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Offices.Contact>
bennett.senate.gov/contact/emailmain.html

By local telephone: The telephone numbers for the Salt Lake City district office for Utah's Senators are:

Senator Orrin Hatch: 524-4380
Senator Bob Bennett: 524-5933



It's not too late to get your **AHAC t-shirt!** We still have plenty of shirts left and you'll want to be sure you have one for our next action! They are \$8 and available in the office.



illustration by: David Hughes

Quotations from Dan Smith:

"...Religion has become divisive, quarrelsome and idiotic. Religion is the reason we have all this conflict in the world. We have squeezed God into the volume of a body and the span of a lifetime; given God a male identity, an ethnic background; made him a tribal chief and gone to war. Yet people are not ready to forsake their image of God. **-Deepak Chopra**

The *Anti-Hunger Advocate* is a monthly newsletter of the Anti-Hunger Action Committee (AHAC).

Our Mission: The Anti-Hunger Action Committee is a membership organization composed of and led by food pantry clients and their friends.

- We unite many different kinds of people served by food pantries in order to increase community involvement of low income Utahns.
- We educate Salt Lake County residents about available resources and issues facing food pantry clients.
- We organize food pantry clients and their friends to take action on their own behalf.
- We promote solutions to problems that cause hunger and poverty in the lives of our members.

Our Supporters: AHAC receives funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the United Methodist Church's Domestic Hunger and Poverty Program, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Hunger Grant Program, the United Church of Christ Hunger Action Fund, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger and the Crossroads Urban Center.

Submissions: To submit an item to the newsletter, please contact AHAC at Crossroads Urban Center, 364-7765.

Previous issues of the newsletter are available either at Crossroads, or online at: www.crossroads-u-c.org