

# THE ANTI-HUNGER

May 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.

### \*\*\* AHAC PARTY \*\*\*

It's time for another fun AHAC event!

Join us for  
**Storytelling and a Potluck.**

Bring a friend and  
a poem or story to share.

**Tuesday, May 11 at 6PM  
at Crossroads Urban Center**

For more Information  
call AHAC @ 364-7765



Above: There were many people in attendance

To find out how you can get involved in the fight to fully restore vision and dental benefits to Medicaid call AHAC at 364-7765.

### AHAC MEMBERS TESTIFY AT PUBLIC HEARING

On April 29 ten members of the Anti-Hunger Action Committee testified at a public hearing concerning the proposal to partially restore of dental benefits with the \$1 million they were given by the Utah Legislature.

The Department of Health proposed that it will cover only X-rays, fillings and root canals for an estimated nine months. Exams were not part of the proposal. AHAC members didn't see the logic in this. During testimony, Dan Smith commented, "I can't diagnose myself. I can't afford to make credit card payments."

Members of AHAC strongly suggested during testimony that the Department of Health include exams in Medicaid coverage and keep careful records of their experiences with the partial restoration, so that next year legislators will be better informed.

If you or someone you know is on Medicaid and is having dental problems you should schedule a dental appointment in the first week of July, when this partial restoration begins. When the money given to the Department of Health for dental benefits is gone they will close down the benefit again.



Above: Dan Smith testifies at public hearing.



### A Message From AHAC Co-Chair Darla Ball:

There are a lot of us out there on Medicaid who have one disability or the other. We need our eyes checked at least once a year, and if need be get glasses.

How are we to do this if we can't get your help? I don't think we're asking for much. Write or call your legislator or go to the capitol with us. Let the legislators know we need our glasses.

I know if we work together we are most likely to win this fight. So help us-- we can't do this alone. We need your help and we need your voice.

## 3 Numbers to Remember

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

## Dioramas by Joe Coult



*The Lost Bay* by J. Coult



*Old Time Park* by J. Coult



"When I was a kid my nieces and nephews always wanted to play cars and I would have to make them up little villages. So I've been doing it ever since." Joe would also like to add: "If you do art work I have a challenge for you. Put it in the newsletter!"



*Lost in the Woods* by J. Coult



## AHAC Member Profile: **Chris Atkins**

Hi, my name is Chris Atkins. I came to Salt Lake City in 1998 to work. A lot was going on as we were preparing for the 2002 Olympics. My job was already lined up so I didn't have to look for work. I started at slightly above carpenter wage and even though I was not doing well on the personal front, I was steadily getting raises and advancing in my job. I worked very hard at my job and my last full year at the job I had been promoted to department supervisor and made \$55,000 gross income that year. I am living proof that money does not make you happy.

Even though I was doing well at work I was continuing a downward spiral personally. I grew up in an abusive environment where physical, emotional and sexual exploitation was around every corner. Growing up in the 60's and 70's I turned to the most popular way to medicate, sex, drugs and rock n' roll. These things gave me temporary relief from the hurt and pain I felt deep inside. These were bad choices but the easiest way I knew to. I was a survivor long before it became a hit TV show, and in real life there is no glamour.

It's just tough-- whether at the beginning, middle or in the end if all you are doing is surviving. I was taught to "suck it up" and keep on going, pull yourself up by your own boot straps. That's what I thought I was doing, but the truth is that surviving is just that, it is not really living-- it's just getting by. Survive.

By the time I reached Salt Lake City at age 42, I was in so much pain from the past (including my own choices) that I wanted to die. Doing well at my job was the only thing that kept me going. I didn't feel worthy of the money so I threw it away and wasted it. In the spring of 2001 my "job" wasn't enough to keep me going. I left my job and hit the streets and struggled with whether I wanted to live or die. I know many of the Homeless by face if not by name.

In the spring of 2003 I made a decision to go back to church and seek my higher power who I choose to call God. I started to actually "work" a 12 step program where I sought a knowledge of the truth and acception accountability for my actions regardless of what had been done to me. While on probation I have and continue to pay restitution for a wrong I committed. I am now taking classes learning Spanish and am once again working a full time job. Sobriety and sanity

are two things I, "work to maintain every day." Growth and change are things I try to welcome into my life. It is not always easy but it is do-able with the help of my higher power. I have not always felt endeared to Salt Lake City, but I can truthfully say that this city is also one of "brotherly love". There are opportunities for personal growth no matter what your religious background or problem. This community, as diverse as it is, has come together, unified, in an effort to heal, educate and empower the individual.

One of the things I have learned is that regardless of what someone else does, every day I have the POWER to make my CHOICES for my own life. Through the programs available here, I am CHOOSING to leave the pain and sorrow of yesterday behind, reaching out for a better life through CHANGE. The same healing, education and empowerment are available for anyone who so chooses. It's hard work but it's worth it. The question is: "What do you choose today?"

### Douglas Cotant's Joke of the Month

When I was working at Sorenson Research, we were stamping lot numbers on all these pouches and one went through with no number on it. The supervisor came in and said "Watch your lot numbers!" and so I said to him "Well, what channel are they on?"



**"UNTITLED" BY MARY TORGERSON**

### The War

by Joe Coult

It's raining in this terrible land today.  
The bombs have stopped for now  
This war is far from being over, will it  
ever end?  
I have friends all around me, Then they  
are gone!  
Thats the wounds of war, the rain  
washes their blood away, though its  
always on my hands.  
The bombs have stopped for now, when  
will they start again?  
So my love, I don't have long to say  
I love you my dear!!!

.....  
• AHAC has put together a  
• **Medicaid letter writing**  
• **packet** that will be  
• available to anyone who wants to  
• host a letter writing event for this  
• issue with a few of their friends.  
• **For more info:** contact AHAC at  
• 364-7765  
• .....

### *Support the New Minimum Wage Bill Today*

Bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate last week to increase the minimum wage by more than \$1.50 over two years. The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2004 would increase the wage from its current level of **\$5.15/hour** to **\$5.85/hour** two months after enactment, to **\$6.45/hour** one year later, and to **\$7.00/hour** one year after that.

**Call Senator Hatch's Office (524-4380) or  
Senator Bennett's Office (524-5933) and tell their staff:**

1. It has been almost 7 years since the last increase in the minimum wage, the second longest period since its introduction in 1938.
2. Americans working full time should not have to live below the poverty level, yet that is exactly what individuals and families who earn the minimum wage are faced with every day.
3. It is time to give the lowest income workers in the country a long overdue raise so they can be closer to earning a decent living. **Please support the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2004.**