

# **SLEEP-IN FOR THE HOMELESS PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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Meghan Holohan, Community Human Services

Cynthia James, Public Allies

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Beth Lawry, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Michael Lindsay, Department of Human Services

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Sean McDowell, WDVE

Mac McMahon, Community Human Services

Tom Mistick, Mistick, Inc.

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M. Shernell Smith, Carnegie Mellon University

Mike Stout, Steel Valley Printers

Sarah Wagner, Homeless Advocate

Adrienne Walnoha, Community Human Services

Rev. John Welch, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

## **EVERY DAY IN PITTSBURGH**

**2,130 people are homeless**

**26%** are children

**74%** are adults

**26%** are veterans

**9%** experienced domestic violence

**20%** are physically disabled

**22%** are seriously mentally ill

## **THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS SUPPORTED BY THE "SLEEP-IN"**

**220** will receive emergency shelter

**15** mentally ill will be housed

**20** families will have a home

**60** will live in dorm-style housing

**400** on the street will be fed/helped

**75** will receive rental assistance

**400** will receive medical supports

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Sleep-In for the Homeless October 17, 2008 at the City-County Building in Pittsburgh**

PITTSBURGH—In the City of Pittsburgh 2,130 men, women and children go to sleep at night without having a home. They call shelters, service programs, underpasses, abandoned warehouses, alleys or doorways their home. For those on the street, their bellies rumble with hunger, as they fight off pests like rats and bugs while struggling against the elements with little more than a blanket. As home foreclosures increase, many people are going from homeowner to homeless. With the influx of people finding themselves without permanent housing, resources become strapped and the newly homeless people have nowhere to turn. To increase a positive public response to tackling the issues of housing insecurity, Community Human Services Corporation [CHS] will host a Sleep-In for the Homeless on October 17, 2008.

"The housing crisis in the country has been ignored for far too long," said Adrienne Walnoha, executive director of CHS. "With the current issues surrounding mortgages, people are starting to understand the magnitude of the problem. We have seen homelessness growing for a decade with no end in sight and with these home foreclosures; we are just seeing a new face to an unrelenting problem. CHS is planning to use funds from the Sleep In to assist individuals and families with eviction prevention, temporary housing and real affordable permanent housing options."

CHS invited Pennsylvania State Senator Jane Orie to head the planning committee. Senator Orie, the Majority Whip, is a Republican from Pennsylvania's 40th district, which includes parts of Allegheny and Butler counties. Since first being elected to state government, Orie fought to reform health care and increase protection of abused women and mentally ill individuals.

"I am very pleased and honored to chair the Sleep-In for the Homeless. This event will help to raise both public awareness and funding to assist hundreds of people who have nowhere to call home," Orie said.

"Nationally, as many as 3.5 million people experience homelessness in a given year and the fastest growing segment is families with children. Working together, we need to find solutions to this growing problem and help those who are struggling to provide the basic essentials for themselves and their families. It is our obligation as a society to assist those who have nowhere else to turn and to provide them with the resources they need to live with dignity."

(continued)

Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and his staff have been generous partners to CHS. Additionally, the University of Pittsburgh, Carlow University, Point Park University, Duquesne University, Robert Morris University, LaRoche College, PNC Bank Foundation, and the Church Restoration Group have showed their commitment to the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County by agreeing to be sponsors for the Sleep-In.

“We are thrilled to have the universities sponsoring this event. As an Oakland based organization, the support of our local institutions is critical. Both universities have also assisted us in educating students about homelessness and its devastating impact on our community. With their financial support for the Sleep-In, we will be able to take that education and awareness raising to a much broader audience.”

Other local universities, individuals and organizations have stepped up to join the planning committee as they support this important event. They include Chatham University; Carnegie Mellon University; Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; Robert Morris University; Duquesne University; Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; Allegheny County Department of Human Services; Tonya Payne, Pittsburgh City Council; Michael Lamb, City of Pittsburgh; Steel Valley Printers; Thomas Merton Center; Mistick, Inc; Sean McDowell, WDVE; the Women and Girl’s Foundation; Highmark; Pittsburgh Allies; and the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

As part of the Sleep-In on October 17, CHS and its partners will present the Home is where the Heart is awards to individuals, businesses, community leaders, homeless service providers, elected officials, media, educators, foundations and churches. Applications for nominations will be accepted until October 1, 2008.

*For sponsorship information for the Sleep-In for the Homeless contact Diane McMahon at 412-621-4706 or [dmcMahon@chscorp.org](mailto:dmcMahon@chscorp.org). To learn how your organization can join the planning committee and sleep overnight to raise money and awareness to help homeless people call or e-mail Diane or log onto <http://www.chscorp.org/> and click on **Sleep-In for the Homeless** or **Home is where the Heart is**.*

**Community Human Services Corporation** seeks to enhance people’s lives and strengthen communities by providing opportunities to develop individual potential and by delivering comprehensive services that maximize the health and well-being of those it serves in South Oakland and the greater Pittsburgh area.

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