

SistersVOICE

A Quarterly Newsletter of Sisters Of The Road, 133 NW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97209

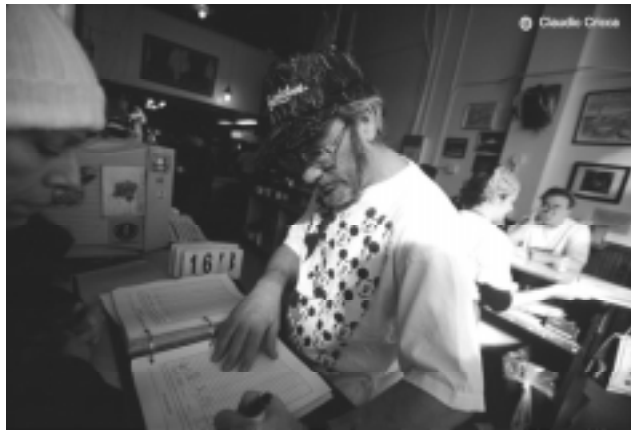
Volume 6, Issue 4: Winter, 2003

Our 25th Year Holiday Matching Grant Challenge!

By Debbie Fox, Development Manager

November 1st kicks off the ninth annual Holiday Matching Grant Challenge for Sisters Of The Road. We are looking forward to another great campaign in dedication of our 25th year thanks to gifts from individuals and businesses that support us in the community.

The Matching Grant Challenge started in October 1994 with one anonymous gift of \$4,000. That gift came with a few interesting strings attached-it was used to match donations at the rate of 50 cents to the dollar, the donations must be from individuals (it now includes businesses), and must be received between November 1st and December 31st.



And so the challenge began!

Every year since '94 the challenge has grown, and individual supporters have helped Sisters meet and then surpass the challenge amount. For

this year's Holiday Matching Grant Challenge we would like to challenge our supporters to help us meet our goal of a \$60,000 matching grant pool to be matched 50 cents to the dollar, to raise \$120,000 matched donations for a grand total of \$180,000! With the help of many supporters we can meet that goal! Know that your donation will be increased by 50 cents on each dollar.

The funds raised during this holiday campaign are crucial to running Sisters throughout the year. The funds help us meet the ongoing costs of serving 300 meals/day at the Café, support for long-term solutions to end homelessness, community organizing, job training and more.

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Our Mission:

Sisters Of The Road exists to build authentic relationships and alleviate the hunger of isolation in an atmosphere of non-violence and gentle personalism that nurtures the whole individual toward changes that will reach the root of his or her homelessness and poverty and end it forever.

Enjoy a meal at Sisters Of The Road Café. The Café is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 3:00pm. The last meal of the day is served at 2:45pm. Our administrative office is open 9:00am to 5:00pm.

*E-mail us at:
info@sistersoftheroadcafe.org.
call (503) 222-5694, or
FAX (503) 222-3028
www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org*

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"At Sisters Of The Road, there are no strangers, just friends we've never met."

Genny Nelson Has A New Job At Sisters Of The Road

by Genny Nelson

How many jobs can one woman have in the organization she helped start? It's not a trick question, it is a twenty-four year history.

In the first four months after we opened the Café, Sandy Gooch Sisters' other Founder, and I rotated the restaurant jobs in two shifts. The morning shift included cook, dishwasher, food and hospitality waitress, cashier, and the non-violence ambassador. The afternoon shift was all of the above plus the janitor job. The two men in our lives quickly learned that the afternoon shift usually included them, because it could go from 12 noon to 12 midnight on days when two and four inch hotel pans didn't get soaked beforehand. We religiously made cornbread from a recipe the Sisters of the Holy Names living at Marylhurst gave us. The lead cook baked large pans of it, the aroma met every customer at the door. There were always big quantities of rice and red beans cooked on the top of the stove. Our first customers rode the rails and talked about how you could hear Boxcar Bertha laughing in the hobo jungle outside Yuma, a few drank their coffee with white bread in it. And there were the young women who danced at the Star Theatre because it was the only job anyone would hire them for. The old pensioners, the new Vietnam Vets, and battered women were all regulars in Sisters. By March 1980 there were two additional employees. It wasn't until 1983 that the manager's collective decided to have only one of us cook, the one who really knew how. Utah Phillips always gives my cooking skills away: "In those early years they weren't coming in for what Genny called chili!" So you know I wasn't the one.

From the first day Sandy and I started learning how to create and direct a non-profit, and manage a business. We filled out IRS papers to become a tax exempt organization with an elderly, compassionate lawyer who prayed over us in his office. We filed incorporation papers with the State of Oregon as a non-profit cooperative restaurant.

Sandy brought the food industry background, and we both agreed that the people who perform the work ought to be empowered to make the decisions. I

brought the philosophies of non-violence and gentle personalism, and we mutually conceded that no one has a monopoly on the truth; so gifts, resources, wisdom and strengths would be shared back and forth between all of us, customers and staff. Everyone, staff, donors, volunteers, and especially our customers, unanimously declared that when hunger and poverty were eliminated, Sisters would simply be the best coffee house in town!

I became a grant writer in 1980. I holed up in one of our customers' rooms in the Butte Hotel above Sisters Of The Road Café. He had a manual about how to write Foundation Grants, and a quiet, empty

Continued next page.

25th Year Holiday Challenge

Continued from page one.

Please join us in the challenge! Help make this the most successful Matching Grant Challenge ever by sending a holiday gift to Sisters in November or December. Gifts in any amount from individuals and businesses are welcome, and a donation made in the name of a friend or relative is a wonderful gift idea. For questions or more information, contact Debbie Fox, Development Manager, at 222-5694x15. The 2003 Matching Grant Challenge ends on Tuesday, December 31, 2003 at 5:00 pm. Use the enclosed envelope (or be looking for a letter from us in the mail!) to make your holiday matched gift for Sisters today!

25th Year Matching Grant Drop-Off Sites

The following businesses will receive Matching Grant donations for Sisters Of The Road during the months of November and December.

My Coffee Spot, 4710A MLK Blvd. Open 7am- 2pm Monday - Friday

Horse Brass Pub, 4534 SE Belmont, 11am to 2:30 morning All Days

Touchstone Coffee House, 7631 NE Glisan, call for hours 262-7613

Food Front Cooperative Grocery, 2375 NW Thurman, Open 8am to 9pm All Days

Thank you businesses! If you would like to be a Matching Grant donation drop-off site, please call Monica Beemer at 503-222-5694, ext. 19.

room during the day. I have a copy of my first grant request, written like a combination history book and operations manual. It makes me laugh at myself sometimes, and always humbles me.

I started writing speeches and became Sisters' speaker's bureau in 1981, the same year I became a birthing coach for a customer whose baby was almost born on the Café's old, green linoleum floor.

“We recruit, educate and train, previously and currently homeless people, how to win authentic, immediate, and concrete improvements for their community.”

I honed facilitation skills at meetings, mentored our model of making decisions by consensus, co-authored the non-violence training materials we still use today, and helped design a utilitarian co-op model for a cash-strapped organization and its homeless members, enabling them to participate in the labor and decision making of the Café.

I left Sisters as an employee in 1984. In retrospect as a co-founder, I think I understood I needed to let go, so the organization could grow on its own. I returned as the operations manager in 1988. In 1990 I became the executive director. After open heart surgery in 1999, I shared the director position first with Steel Fixler and then two years later Monica Beemer made us a triumvirate. Last July 2003 I stepped down from the duties and responsibilities of helping to direct the entire organization. In Steel and Monica I truly participated in hiring better than myself.

I started community organizing in 1972, and brought that paradigm to the founding of Sisters Of The Road Café. Our non-profit restaurant resulted from hundreds of hours of conversations with homeless and low-income residents in the late 70's, Sandy and I listening carefully to what they believed their community needed. Sisters' remains today a real, immediate, and concrete improvement in poor and homeless peoples' lives.

So it is significant that also in July of 2003 my sole job became the direction of Sisters' Community Organizing Project. We recruit, educate and train, previously and currently homeless people, how to win authentic, immediate, and concrete improvements for their community. Community organizing gives them a sense of their own power, as hundreds of homeless citizens hold officials accountable for civil and human

rights violations. This ability and those numbers ensure that worthwhile change occurs in the way those in power transact their business as it relates to homelessness. People with homeless experience hope to transform these relationships with people in power, mutually moving from perceived opponents to genuine allies. Simultaneously housed and houseless members learn how to build and maintain a people's organization that is inclusive and direct action oriented.

I found a journal entry that I wrote in 1984 looking back on my experiences. In the beginning I felt like a pioneer. I took risks I didn't know I had it in me to take, helped birth babies and bury loved ones, worked harder than I had in my life, and put most of my energy into a vision instead of myself. Twenty four years later I feel like I am home.

Ten-Year Plan To End Homelessness

by Keith Vann, crossroads member

Earlier in 2003, the City of Portland's Bureau of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) received a federal grant to put together a 10-year plan to end homelessness. Building upon the tireless efforts of several volunteers, **crossroads** has secured a promise from City Commissioner Eric Sten that crossroads/Sisters will have ground-level involvement in the definition and direction of this ambitious effort.

For several months **crossroads** has been hosting meetings involving housed and homeless people to identify how a grassroots effort can best impact the City of Portland's goal of eliminating the institution of homelessness within 10 years. **crossroads** is intent upon integrating the expressed needs and desires of homeless and poor people into the design and implementation process over the entire lifespan of Portland's Ten-Year Plan To End Homelessness.

To end the institution of homelessness requires that our policies and beliefs uphold the right of every single person to:

- safe and comfortable housing
- a meaningful livelihood
- appropriate support resources
- dignified recovery from economic crisis

Please read more on the 10 Year Plan in the January *Sisters' Voice*.

Long-term solutions to homelessness:

The Community Organizing Research Project

By Monica Beemer, Director of Development & Finance

Sisters hopes to stimulate long-term solutions to homelessness across the nation by asking the experts, those experienced in homelessness, what are the solutions?

Description of the Community Organizing Project's Research Component:

■ Launched in October 2001, we are conducting **600 one to one interviews with previously and currently homeless individuals**, asking them to describe the breadth of their experiences and possible solutions to homelessness. Each interview is 2-3 hours long.

■ We will analyze this information, extrapolating common themes and possible directions for systemic change that we hope will impact public policy nationwide.

■ Uniqueness – this type of research has not been done to this degree in the United States - asking those with experience in homelessness the solutions to homelessness

Need for the Research Component:

After more than 24 years of demonstrating the success of Sisters Of The Road's community organizing model, the City of Portland turned to Sisters to develop a plan to identify and ultimately help solve the issues of homelessness and poverty in Portland. This project will not only document solutions to homelessness and poverty, it will provide a replicable model for other communities.

Portland City Commissioner Erik Sten states. "Homelessness is one of our community's most vexing problems and is a national epidemic... With as much as we have done, we cannot solve the homeless problem simply with social services, as important as these services are. We now need to take the next step and involve the people whose lives are most affected by homelessness and ask them to provide guidance and leadership. That is what Sisters Of The Road Café is all about – reflecting the dignity within so that people can flourish and make changes."

Sten further states, "Our initial response to the epidemic of homelessness has been to build shelters. Shelters are vitally important, especially when it's cold and rainy. But a shelter doesn't solve what

caused the person to be homeless in the first place. The Community Organizing Project working in collaboration with existing services and programs will begin with the development of the actual solutions – and solutions may be individualized for each person and their individual needs."

Impact of the Project:

Ultimately every man, woman and child who lives on little or no income and those of us that live one or two paychecks away from homelessness benefit from the experiences documented in this project and the systemic change that will occur because of it. The immediate beneficiaries of this work will be policy makers and homeless service providers. The information extrapolated from the interviews can be used to decide how resources get allocated for people who are homeless and what services get provided.

Project Goals:

■ Complete 600 one-to-one interviews. Including transcription, coding, and analysis.

■ Publish (3) documents resulting from the interviews:

A how to replicate this project manual

The results of this research project.

An anthology of photos and stories of individuals interviewed.

■ Support creation of long-term solutions to homelessness nationwide.

Current status of the Project:

■ 520 Interviews have been completed to date. Each is 2-3 hours in length.

■ 80 Interviews have been transcribed. We expect them all to be transcribed by April 2004.

■ The coding software is up and running. Coding takes 2 hours per interview. We have recruited volunteers to assist with this. Coding will be completed by September 2004.

■ The quantitative data from November 2001 – June 2003 will be analyzed by September 2003. The remaining quantitative data will be analyzed simultaneously with the completion of the interviews.

■ **With your support**, the entire research project will be completed and creating solutions across the country, in June 2006!

Project Staff and Qualifications:

■ Genny Nelson, Director, Community Organizing Project. Sisters Of The Road is committing 100% of the time and energy of its co-founder to this project.

■ Jamie Manuel, Project Associate.

■ Devin DiBernardo, Project Assistant

We need your help now! All donations will be matched 50 cents to the dollar in November and December – join us now with your support!

Using the models of non-violence, gentle-personalism and community organizing we are reaching the root causes of homelessness and poverty to end them forever in our community. Thank you for your commitment and partnership in this historic venture!

Customer Appreciation Day vs Holiday Meal

by Gwen Ivory Operations Manager

What has been known to most of us as Holiday Meal will take on a new look, or old if you will.

The history of this meal began when Sisters' staff and volunteers extended hospitality and a meal at no cost as a way of saying "Thank You" to our customers. What it has evolved into is what we all know as Holiday Meal; turkey with all the trimmings, Santa and toys for the kids, and a gift room where folks could come and get coats, hats hygiene items etc. While this may have seemed festive and in good will, the experience for our customers, volunteers and staff has been a mixed bag.

Our 2003 Holiday Meal will take place Friday December 19th from 10am-3pm at the Café. Please Join Us!

The gift room has evoked a steadily increasing level of violence. In our discussions about how to deal with the increasing violence Sisters' staff determined that the "give away" concept of the gift room is philosophically suspect. And the "Thank You" of sitting down and having a meal on us has been completely lost to the fervor of getting free goods. With that said, Sisters' staff are dedicating this Holiday Season to the reprisal of the "Customer Appreciation Meal." We will be turning our focus back to the hospitality of a meal that says "Thanks".

We would also like to honor the diversity of celebrations that occur during this time of year and

decorate the Café with many themes. There will also be live music so people can enjoy some entertainment with their celebratory dining experience.

We could use some help in decorating the Café. If you have interest, ideas or items to bring, please email or call Gwen at 503-222-5694 ext 16 or email gwen@sistersoftheroadcafe.org the Café. Thanks!

Room For All At OUR Table!

Kick-Off our 25th Year and Bring your voice to the Table

Sisters Of The Road is kicking off our 25th year with a special celebration and community discussion. Our theme for the year is *Room For All At Our Table* – referring to both the food table and the community decision making table. You are invited! Sisters is dedicating its 25th anniversary year to the innovative exploration of solutions that permanently address the root causes of homelessness, poverty and hunger in our community. Come give your input!

On Friday, November 7th from 5pm to 9pm we will be sharing food, music, celebration and discussion. For those interested, there will be discussions taking place at various parts of the celebration, facilitated by crossroads members, exploring ideas regarding long-term solutions to homelessness and poverty in our community. There will also be a presentation on the history of Sisters and an inspirational talk on the theme of *Room For All At Our Table* by Matt Hennessee, President & CEO of Quiktrak.

The event will also highlight the Community Organizing Research Project, which is unfolding new and innovative ideas for long-term solutions to homelessness in our community. Come see and hear what we are learning and find out the pioneering work that YOU are a part of!

Friday, November 7th 5:00pm to 9:00pm at the NW Neighborhood Cultural Center - 1819 NW Everett. Food will be provided. Presentations will take place from 6:30 to 7:00 pm and table discussions that you are invited to "jump on into" will be happening over the entire evening. Come participate! Parking is available behind the building or on the street. See you there!

This event is free to the public!

Please Welcome Sisters' New Board Member Karen Goen

by Debbie Fox, Development Manager



Karen has lived in Old/Town Chinatown for the past eight years and does Community Outreach for the Zimmerman Community Center and Central City Concern in two neighborhoods, the Pearl District and with Old/

Town Chinatown. Her biggest challenge is tying together two different diverse neighborhoods and cultures. She creates community activities that interest both low-income and higher income people of the neighborhood. Karen Goen was one the lead organizers of the neighborhood's successful Annual National Night Out August 5th party.

Karen went through Central City Concern's programs and after becoming sober in her recovery process she wanted to give back to the community and people who had been there for her. Karen has always been familiar with and admired Sister's work and philosophy for many years. Carl Roberts, Sister's Board Member, invited Karen to a Board Recruitment Dinner in March and she immediately jumped on the bandwagon and has been involved ever since! Karen was very active in coordinating, promoting and collaborating with Zimmerman Community Center for Sister's 1st Annual Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival. We are very lucky to have Karen on our board and look forward to building community with her in the neighborhood.

“From the depth of need and despair, people can work together, can organize themselves to solve their own problems and fill their own needs with dignity and strength.”

-Cesar Chavez

Sisters of the Road Cafe Inc. Changes Name to Sisters Of The Road

You may notice a change...In July of this year, Sisters' Board and Staff voted to change our name from Sisters of the Road Cafe Inc. to Sisters Of The Road as an acknowledgement and celebration of the work we do that is beyond the Café, including providing leadership in community organizing and creating long-term permanent solutions to homelessness and poverty. The Café continues to be an integral part of all that we do, offering hospitality, hot meals, job training and a safe place where everyone is treated with dignity.

Thank you for supporting Sisters of the Road Cafe Inc. for all these years and for continuing your commitment and support as we light the way to long-term solutions.

First Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival is a Success!

Thank you to all the musicians, volunteers, sponsors, supporters and people in attendance at the First Annual Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival that was held September 12th-14th. We had a great time and raised important funds for Sisters Of The Road! There were many, many highlights, but let's just say that our community came together to celebrate and support the spirit and work of Sisters with great music, delicious food, fun dancing and the company of each other – thank you! Let's do it again next year!

Save the Date! Utah Phillips returns for WinterFolk XVI Concert!

Sisters of the Road is proud to welcome back songwriter, storyteller and conscience of America, **Utah Phillips** to Portland's Aladdin Theater to perform at Winterfolk' XVI. Joining Utah for this year's concert will be Anne Weiss, Jim Page/Billy Oskay, Kevin Burke w/ Mike Beglen, Mark Ross, Tom May Trio, and Tillers Folly. The annual music fundraiser for Sisters is scheduled for 7 p.m. Saturday, January 31st, 2004 at the Aladdin Theatre. Tickets to this Folk-filled event are \$23 in advance, \$25 at the door, tickets will be available January 1st at the Aladdin Theater Box Office (3017 SE Milwauke Ave.) & Ticketmaster www.ticketmaster.com.

WAYS to GIVE

Sisters' Combined Federal Campaign is still going strong!

If you work for the federal government you can give now to Sisters during the annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)! The local campaign runs September 15th through December 15th. Sisters' four-digit code is 8230.

If you would like someone from Sister to come out for a presentation at your federal workplace call Debbie Fox at (503)222-5694ext 15. Thanks to the Bonneville Power Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers for inviting us to your workplaces & Campaign Kick-Off Parties!

Ways to Give over the Holidays:

■ **Make a monetary donation during our Matching Grant Challenge** (see enclosed envelope or use the holiday donation letter request you will receive in the mail anyway!). Your donation will be matched-50 cents to the dollar by local businesses and individuals. Your donations are crucial to the ongoing operating of Sisters during the whole year.

■ **Sponsor a day/week in the Café.** Rally your co-workers, church/synagogue, friends and others to sponsor the cost of one day's meals (\$500 for 250-300 meals) and volunteer together on that day.

■ **Consider making a holiday gift donation in honor of a friend, relative or loved one.** We will send out a special holiday gift card informing them of the gift to Sisters from you in their name.

■ **Give out Sisters' Meal Coupons as a gift to employees, relatives or friends.** Just \$2 each and we can send a Holiday Card on your behalf.

■ **Donate hygiene & food items:**

Hygiene Items needed include: Washcloths, razors, shaving cream, lotion, dental floss, shampoo, conditioner, feminine hygiene products, combs, deodorant.

Food: **Large** quantities of cheese, meat (USDA hamburger, poultry, pork), eggs, tuna, , flour, corn meal, pinto beans, jam, and cases of cans or large #10 cans.

***Speak your mind
even if your voice shakes.
—Maggie Kuhn***

Help Increase Our Sustaining Membership Monthly Income!

Sisters has set the goal of doubling the income we receive from Sisters' Sustaining Members, individuals and families who donate monthly through an easy, protected, electronic transfer of funds. These monthly contributions can be any amount. A \$5 a month gift becomes a \$60 a year donation, \$25 a month is equal to a \$300 gift over 12 months and \$100 a month is a \$1,200 gift over the year. Sustaining Members provide a regular, monthly income for Sisters Of The Road. It's easy and paperless.

Thank you to those of you who are currently Sustaining Members or have made the decision to become Sustaining Members. You provide the monthly income Sisters relies on to help us focus on the very important work we do. For those of you who may be interested in Sustaining Membership, and would like more information, please call Marilyn Lipko at (503) 222-5694, ext. 12 or go to our website at www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org for more information and an application. Thank you!

Planned Giving

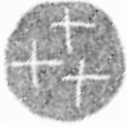
Remember Sisters Of The Road in your planned giving! We now have a Planned Giving Brochure & Sisters' Planned Gift Policies & Guidelines available. Call Monica Beemer, (503) 222-5694, ext. 19 for more information on the variety of opportunities for planned gifts for Sisters.

Donate On-line to Sisters

You can donate securely & easily to Sisters online. Just go to Sisters website at www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org and click on *ways to give*. Then click on the *donate now through the network for good* button and directions will follow—you just need a credit card, debit card or bank account number to donate. 100% of all donations go directly to Sisters.

Stock Gifts

Don't forget Stock Gifts this Holiday Season! Stocks are a great and easy way to donate to Sisters. Call Debbie Fox (503)222-5694 ext 15 for more information or to facilitate your Stock Gift Donation. Please notify Sisters staff if you make a stock donation or we may never know so we can thank you!



Sisters Of The Road
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Monica Beemer

Debbie Fox

Gwen Ivory

Genny Nelson

Keith Vann

Sisters' One Stop Shop!

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please send me the following items:

Meal Coupons: \$2 each

_____ Meal Coupons to give out to my family/friends/co-workers @ \$2 each = \$ _____

Syracuse Cultural Workers' Peace Calendars Featuring Sisters!: \$15 each

This calendar will be distributed nationally and highlights actions for peace and justice across the world. Go to www.syraculturalworkers.org for a month to month view of the calendar – we are April!

_____ Peace Calendars @ \$15 each = \$ _____

15th Anniversary Winterfolk CD's: \$15 each

_____ Featuring Utah Phillips, Tracy Grammar w/ Donny Wright, Chris Kennedy, Misty River, Kate Power & Steve Einhorn, Tom & Dylan May w/ Fuzzy Purcell and Andrew Calhoun.

WFXV CD's @ \$15 each = \$ _____

Donations in Honor Of: Name: _____ Amount: _____

All amounts – all tax deductible

Please send a card to the following and tell them a donation has been made in their honor: (copy this form or format to send more than two donations – thanks!)

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Occasion (circle) Holidays / Christmas / Just Because / Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Occasion (circle) Holidays / Christmas / Just Because / Other: _____

Mail to: Sisters Of the Road, 133 NW Sixth Avenue Portland, OR 97209

Thank you for your support of Sisters Of The Road!