

# Sisters' VOICE

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

Volume 8, Issue 2: May, 2005

## Photovoice Premiere!

By Caroline Petrich and Monica Beemer

What is it like to have no home to go to in Portland, Oregon? For those of us with windows, doors and places to rest ourselves, it is important to never forget that well over 4,000 individuals in our very own community sleep outside each and every night. What can we do?

The PhotoVoice Project can help us know what to do!

Join us for the Premiere of the PhotoVoice Project, in which people experiencing homelessness have chronicled their lives with cameras. These photos will be shown for the first time on Sunday, May 22 at



Photo by Jeremy Johnson, Photovoice Participant

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## “Window In To My World”

By Patrick Nolen, Photovoice participant and this issue's “Sharing Power” columnist

When I was first exposed to the PhotoVoice project, I wasn't really sure how to react. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but I was pretty sure I was going to return a bunch of pictures worth less than the film they were printed from. Giving me a toss-away camera and setting me loose on the city did not seem a recipe for success. I soon realized that it was a great way to let people see a window in to my world.

Sitting down and thinking of a strategy of attack on this project, I faced my first and major worry: How do I take a picture of a person, and maintain their dignity. Taking a picture of a person sleeping in a bus shelter, when all he has is a blanket and a shopping cart filled with his few meager possessions, can be rather scary. Do you take the picture? Is it decent to steal part of his soul while he sleeps, unaware of what you are doing? These thoughts went through my mind the first few times I clicked the shutter.

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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.*

*Cross Class Lines! Eat a meal at Sisters Of The Road! 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.  
info@sistersoftheroad.org  
call (503) 222-5694  
FAX (503) 222-3028  
www.sistersoftheroad.org*

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

the Native American Student and Community Center (710 SW Jackson Avenue) on the Portland State University campus. The opening will begin at Noon with a fundraising reception, tickets are \$50; at 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. the exhibit will be open to the public – suggested donation \$5-10, no one will be turned away. to purchase tickets, call (503) 222-5694 ext. 12, or buy them on-line at [www.sistersoftheroad.org](http://www.sistersoftheroad.org).

The Photovoice Project is part of Sisters' Research Project, a landmark research study on homelessness and possible solutions. In addition, Sisters has conducted 600 face-to-face interviews with people who are or have been homeless. Up to three hours long, the audiotaped interviews have been transcribed and submitted for analysis to the University of Washington Urban Studies Program in Tacoma.

"The PhotoVoice Project, combined with the interviews, offers a powerful and compelling testimony about homelessness in our community," comments Monica Beemer, Sisters' Director. "How often do housed people get to hear what life on the street—day to day—is really like? I think PhotoVoice has the power to unite and inspire us to create long-term, community-based solutions to end homelessness."

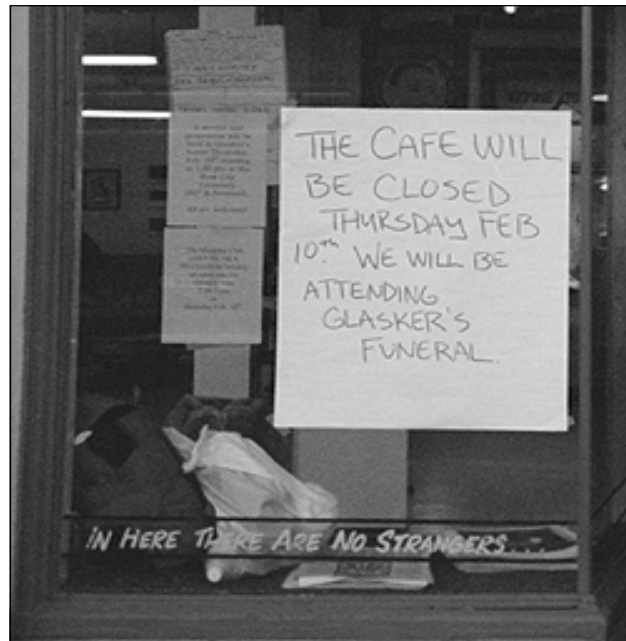
PhotoVoice tells the stories of people like Doug Chandler and Brynn Athens, whose photographs will be part of the exhibit. "Our goal is to break down stereotypes about homelessness and show how people on the street are real people whose lives are as complex and rich as those who are housed," Beemer explains, pointing out that Chandler, for example, who collects returnable bottles and cans for a living also reads the magazine 'Art in America' every month.

Sisters' plan for sharing the research findings with the public at large is to later this year publish an anthology of the photographs and stories and also to reach out to communities across Oregon through a traveling exhibit and presentation. "We hope to bring this to at least 10,000 students and 20,000 members of the general public, specifically churches, businesses and other community groups," Beemer says.



*Photo by Brynn Athens, PhotoVoice Participant*

Looking back, my original idea was to take pictures of my "family." I don't use this word in the traditional sense, or even the typical "street family" definition. Instead, I mean the people that I see every day, the people that I tell of my achievements and failures. They are the people who smile when I tell a joke, and who have tears well when I feel pain.



*Photo by Patrick Nolen. Sign in Sisters' window the day of Glasker's funeral.*

It took me a few shots before I realized that not only would I not have enough frames for all of them, but that I would be taking pictures of people that we already all knew, and realized were important to us all.

To me, the most powerful shot I took, was the day of Glasker's funeral. The shot was originally supposed to be of the café window with a sign stating they were closed for the day. When they closed, there are 300 meals not served, and dozens of people who are forced to change what little stability they have in their day to go find a meal elsewhere. After taking the picture, and the more I thought about it, and looked at it later, I realized: This isn't a picture of the café being closed, this is a picture of my family mourning the loss of a member.

Looking back at the PhotoVoice project, and my part in it, I must say I am proud. Proud because I feel it did meet up to its goal of providing a view from the inside of homelessness in Portland. I hope when people view my, and others' pictures, they will think, "You know, this guy is just like me."

# Glasker Rankin Jr., 1954- 2005

By Orion Gray



This year, Sisters' community suffered a terrible loss, when Glasker Rankin, our Cashier, died. Glasker was beloved and inspirational to staff, customers, and volunteers alike. We are so proud of him. You can read more about Glasker's life on our website, [www.sistersoftheroad.org](http://www.sistersoftheroad.org), under the Work Force Development link.

He is survived by his loving sister, Louise Thompson of Portland Oregon; his three nieces, Kim Elliott, Rhonda Stevens and Lateshia Causey; and three nephews, Nolan Steward, Galen Harden and Herman Harden Jr. He was preceded in death by his Mother, Mrs. Lottie Mae Parson; his father Glasker Rankin, Sr.; his two brothers, Ricky Ray Rankin and Willis Colquitt; and a sister, Wilma Jean Mays.

Before he died, Sisters' supporter Linda Ross Swanson helped Glasker prepare a Wisdom Will. Here is an excerpt from it: "I'd like to be remembered as the Glasker that changed his life and got clean and stayed clean for a reasonable amount of time before he passed away. That he stared showing a lot of respect and empathy for others and that he continuously helped people in any way that he could and didn't mind doing it. That's something. That's what I pray for every morning before I continue on my journey. God put me in the position to help people, whether it's helping someone with information, or helping someone with bus fare, or giving someone 50 cents for a phone call. Just helping somebody. Some how. Some way. When I do this, help somebody, I don't do it for anything in return, not even a "thank you" because I believe in Jesus Christ with all my heart and my thanks comes from him. With Love, Glasker Rankin. Amen."

Glasker died clean and sober on February 7, 2005, but at Sisters we feel his spirit with us every day.

## What is Systemic Change?

**Systemic Change at Sisters Of The Road:** Is a creative process that honors the interconnect-edness of all parts of a system and transforms it at a deep and lasting level.

**Our Vision:** Sisters Of The Road envisions a community where all people are valued. This value is expressed through the sharing of power and responsibility, and each person's access to healthy food, safe housing, health care, and meaningful work that contributes to the well-being of ones self and community.

**Our Approach:** Sisters Of The Road works toward this vision through the changing of hearts and minds - by building authentic relationships, sharing our vision, and providing information that transforms perceptions:

- ❖ Within the Sisters community: Staff, Volunteers, Customers, Donors, & other Sisters' supporters.
- ❖ In the larger Portland community - Housed and Unhoused residents of Portland.
- ❖ Within policy-making and enforcement groups – City Council, City offices and bureaus, Portland Police Bureau, etc.

**Keep informed of Sisters' Systemic Change!** We are currently building a database of community members, housed and houseless, who would like to stay informed and involved in issues related to ending homelessness and poverty in Portland and across the nation. If you would like to be on our systemic change mailing list, email [marilyn@sistersoftheroad.org](mailto:marilyn@sistersoftheroad.org), or call her at 503-222-5694, ext. 12 with your name, email, etc.



*Share the Dream March, 2005*

# Systemic Change: Keeping it Real

*Learn what Sisters' cross-class community has been doing to promote Systemic Change!*

## **Sisters Represents on City Steering and Pilot Projects**

*by Carl Welch and Genny Nelson*

Carl Welch and Genny Nelson represent Sisters Of The Road/ **crossroads** at Mayor Tom Potter's Downtown/Old Town/ Chinatown Steering Committee and Pilot Project Oversight Committee. These two committees evolved from former Mayor Vera Katz's Livability Group initiated in the summer of 2004.

The purpose of the Steering Committee is to assure that Portland's central city is a safe place to live, work, shop, visit, and enjoy entertainment; and to reduce local homelessness and poverty, or improve the living conditions of those experiencing such.

The purpose of the Pilot Project Oversight Committee is to ensure that a request for proposals to reduce local homelessness and poverty happens; that the staffs for these pilot projects establish measurable outcomes; that twice-monthly reports on those outcomes are reviewed; and that the results at the end of the twelve month project period are evaluated and reported to the public. By incubating innovations for ending homelessness, Portland can transform the adage: "If you always think what you've always thought, you'll always get what you've always got."

Currently Carl is the only person on these committees with experience of homelessness. He had this to share: "I realize that one person can't accurately represent such a vast and diverse population as the homeless. However, I hope that by knowing what I can't do, it is a useful tool to some degree. One of my responsibilities is to carefully respond to questions directed towards me about homelessness. Another is to humanize homeless people and caution others about stereotyping. To do justice to the needs of the homeless we need a larger number of homeless people involved in the decision making process. The homeless should know they are valued as equal and active participants at the table and not subordinates to be controlled."



*Systemic Change Visioning group members: Gina Cadenasso, Terrence Killian, Genny Nelson, T, Patrick Nolen, Carl Welch*

## **Sisters' Involvement in Portland's 10-Year Plan**

*by Keith Vann and Genny Nelson*

On November 19, 2003, more than 60 community advocates, service providers, grantors, and local government officials convened to create a 10-year plan to end homelessness in Portland and Multnomah County. As the recipient of more than \$9.2M in federal funding for homeless services in 2003, Portland was one of the first cities federally mandated to produce such a plan.

Two primary bodies were designated to inform and guide the planning process. The first, the Citizens Commission, would make final plan recommendations to the City and County. The second, the Coordinating Committee, would compile ongoing workgroup input from both local homeless service providers and concerned citizens.

Sisters Of The Road/ **crossroads** was instrumental in getting homeless representation on the 18-member Citizens Commission. Without Sister's hard work and persistence, the homeless community would have had no voice at all on a commission tasked with solving the very problems they face. I was proud to be recommended by them for this important position.

The announcement, on December 20, 2004, of Portland's latest homeless plan was long overdue. Homelessness here had surpassed crisis levels.



*Carl Welch*

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Currently over 2300 people sleep outside on any given night. Hundreds of visibly homeless people fill benches, bus stops, doorways, and sidewalks throughout the Downtown and Old Town/ Chinatown neighborhoods. In large part, these folks are the primary constituents of Sisters Of The Road Café, and our unique community for now over 25 years.

Well before November 19, 2003, Sisters Of The Road/ **crossroads** had identified several key concerns we believed imperative for a successful 10-year plan to end homelessness in Portland and Multnomah County. In

particular, we were convinced that the final plan would be remiss if it did not target the barriers that prevent so many of our constituents from escaping a vicious cycle of homelessness. It is a core belief of Sisters that homelessness cannot truly be ended without identifying and addressing the underlying unique factors that force each person from their home.

The 10-year plan contains Sisters preliminary report of our research with people who have a direct experience of homelessness, including barriers they face.

Additionally, we created a draft vision statement for the Citizens Commission that advocated for a systemic approach; with the championing of **crossroads** member Dan Newth we crafted a consumer feedback mechanism that is included in the plan, and if funded will become a systemic change instrument; and further we outlined methodology with examples for testing innovative, out-of-the-box, ideas via 12 month pilot projects that address immediate and long term solutions to homelessness.

Mayor Potter has included \$500,000 in his July '05-June '06 budget for the remaining six months of the initial three pilot projects begun in January 2005, and for the first six months of new pilots in both Downtown/Old Town/Chinatown and inner Southeast neighborhoods. Representatives from Sisters Of The Road/ **crossroads** sit on the Committee that is charged with oversight and evaluation of outcomes for these pilot projects.



*Keith Vann*

We at Sisters remain optimistic that with mutual cooperation and persistence, Portland can ultimately craft solutions which ensure that having an affordable home is the inalienable right of every Portlander.

*Keith Vann is a local homeless advocate and former software specialist who recently experienced being homeless. He has been an active volunteer with Sisters Of The Road since March 2003.*

## **Sisters' Research: Let the Analysis Begin!**

*By Gina Cadenasso*

Sisters Of The Road's research project has progressed to a new level of completion. We are excited to have the database in the hands of the team at University of Washington's Urban Studies department in Tacoma, who will begin analysis of the data this spring.

This winter we focused on completing the coding process which involved reading each transcript for every interview and entering excerpts into the appropriate categories within the database. This was a very time-consuming process and it is great to have this part of the work finished so that the data can now be used!

Dan Newth, whom is very active in homeless advocacy work throughout the City, and whom is also a photographer in the Photovoice project, has used the data to help inform a group currently researching the possibility of a day center for the City. With our easy-to-use database, we were able to get

Dan all the information that interviewees reported about day centers in a matter of minutes. He was able to create a document from the data that summarizes what people have suggested or reported in their interviews, including their direct quotes. To have so much information at our fingertips is great, and to be able to put it to use is invaluable.

On St. Patrick's Day, a group of us from Sisters took a road trip to Tacoma to meet with Lisa Hoffman, Ph.D., and Brian Coffey, Ph.D., the two professors analyzing the research results. We also



*Gina Cadenasso*

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were able to meet their database developer, Rakkha Sen, and have a quick demonstration of all the ways we will be able to retrieve information. Over lunch, Terrence Killian and Lisa Hawash, PSU interns working on the Photovoice project, shared with us some of the photos that have been taken. Drs. Hoffman and Coffey were able to see how the two projects complement each other and can be used together for powerful results. All in all, it was an excellent visit and we all were really happy to get to go on a road trip. Sharing our excitement with one another really helped invigorate us for the work ahead!

## **Cafe Awarded Best Comfort Food 2005!**

*By Orion Gray*

Sisters was awarded Best Comfort Food by the AOL CityGuide "City's Best 2005" poll. More than 1,000,000 on-line votes were cast for this year's City's Best nominees by visitors to AOL CityGuide, the nation's leading online local entertainment guide. Those votes, combined with the AOL CityGuide's nation-wide editorial team, ultimately determined the winners and rankings. Lists of winners were published in January 2005. CityGuide says that winners are often chosen because of a consistent reputation for value that has been upheld and polished over many years.

"You'd be hard pressed to find a better cup of coffee for a quarter or a meal for a \$1.25 anywhere," they write. "Nowhere else will you see street brothers and sisters sitting alongside struggling renters and mortgage holders while enjoying a good comforting meal."

To read the whole review, go to: <http://www.aolcityguide.com/portland/entertainment/venue.adp?sbid=111283895>.

## **Hoedown Lowdown!**

*By Monica Beemer and Orion Gray*

One thing we can all agree on: there's just not enough square dancing in the world today. To that end, we'd like to remind you to save the date for The Hoedown & Auction, our biggest fundraiser of the year! The 2005 Hoedown will be held Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at the Oregon Zoo, Cascade Crest

Ballroom. Music is being performed by the fabulous Uncle Earl and Columbia Blue, we'll have square dance instruction, and we're going to yee-haw it up until they take away our boots. There will be unique and extraordinary auction items!

Prices are as follows and all include hosted wine and beer: \$75 Individual ticket; \$1000 Patron Tables of 10 (Capacity: 400 people or 40 tables); \$600 Support Tables of 10.

Our Financial Goal is to raise \$75,000 gross; \$52,000 net for the great work of Sisters!

If you'd like to get involved with planning and carrying out this fun event, either on a planning committee or the day-of, please email Orion@[sistersoftheroad.org](mailto:sistersoftheroad.org). We need help with decorating, securing auction items, advertising/marketing, selling tickets and more. Faith and business groups are invited to volunteer, too!



*Sisters' 25th Anniversary Quilt!*

## **Thar She Blows! New Website Launched**

Avast ye, thar be a new website sailing the internet high seas. Working with Kurt Deutscher at Netraising, Sisters launched its new website April 11<sup>th</sup>. The new site is brighter, lovelier, easier to use, and has loads of current information about the Sisters community. It's built so that Sisters' staff can upload the most up-to-the-minute information and images! We hope you'll check it out, at the same address as before, [www.sistersoftheroad.org](http://www.sistersoftheroad.org).



Arrrrrrrrrr!

[www.sistersoftheroad.org](http://www.sistersoftheroad.org)

# ***Someday That Ship's Gonna Sail***

By Orion Gray

By popular demand, we are printing the lyrics to a song that Utah Phillips sang in February at Winterfolk 17, "Ship's Gonna Sail Someday." By way of introducing it, he told a story about his experience helping to start a Peace Center in his home town, Nevada City. The day after the last presidential election, the peace organizers came into a general meeting to discuss what went wrong, and they were "draggin' their tails . . . just so depressed . . . it was so awful, some people dissolved into tears. And I just couldn't let that happen," he said.

He got fired up and reminded the group that early organizers like Mother Jones and Joe Hill who had fought for women's rights in the 40s, for the 8 hour-day, and for safe working conditions, had all had to fight year after year: "It took a long time. We're in it for a long haul, it's not as simple as a change of administration, but a *systemic change*, the way that we do things, the way that we use our lives, the way that we use our labor.

"And there's a lot of loose talk: 'I'm gonna go to Canada! I'm gonna go to New Zealand!' And I think about those women in the Lawrence textile strike, in 1912, immigrant women . . . dying at the average age of 26 because of dust in the weave rooms. Did they walk away from it, did they go back to Canada, to their homelands? No sir, they fought, and they organized, and they won . . . We *can* win! We *can* win!

"And then I got them all singing that song . . . and I wanna sing it, especially now. About Sojourner Truth, and Joe Hill, and Eugene Deb . . . They were all building a ship: a nail here, a plank here. None of them ever believed they were gonna sail on that ship, but it was no excuse to not build it. When they got too old to do that anymore, they passed the tools and the skills on to the younger ones, and they kept on building. And those tools and skills got passed on to us. And someday that ship is gonna sail. It *will!*"

## **Someday That Ship Gonna Sail**

By U. Utah Phillips

Sojourner Truth said, "Ain't I a woman?"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Mother Jones said, "No child labor!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Joe Hill said, "Don't mourn, organize."  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Gene Deb said, "Well, there's a soul in prison!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

We're working on a ship, may never sail on it,  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday  
Working on a ship, may never sail on it,  
Gonna build it anyway.

Marie Sugar said, "Sit down, sit down!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Paul Robeson said, "I won't stop singin'!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Martin Luther said, "I have a dream!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Malcolm X said, "Power to the people!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

We're working on a ship, may never sail on it,  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday  
Working on a ship, may never sail on it,  
Gonna build it anyway.

Cesar Chavez said, "Viva la Huelga!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Dorothy said, "Swords into plowshares!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Judy Barry said, "No compromise!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Daniel Berrigan said, "No more atom bombs!"  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Working on a ship, may never sail on it,  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday  
Working on a ship, may never sail on it,  
Gonna build it anyway.

They're all gone, and we're still building,  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday  
With hand and heart, and mind and muscle.  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday

Working on a ship, may never sail on it,  
Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday  
Working on a ship, may never sail on it,  
Gonna build it anyway.



Sisters Of The Road  
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- Genny Nelson
- Patrick Nolen
- Caroline Petrich
- Keith Vann
- Carl Welch

**Wishlist**

We're jonesin' for a couple things to help us do our good work! Call (503) 222-5694 about a donation of the following:



✓ In-focus projector, for example, an InFocus LP70+; but most bright, small projectors would be great! For more information about projectors we could use, contact Terrence at tkpunk@msn.com.

- ✓ Projector screen on a stand
- ✓ Water filtration system
- ✓ Stereo
- ✓ Video camera
- ✓ Bulletin board materials



**Your name is safe with us!**

We will never sell your name or information to anyone else. We collect it only to process your kind donations, and to send you news about what we're up to. That's all! If you have further questions, please contact Marilyn Lipko at (502) 222-5694, ext. 12, or marilyn@sistersoftheroad.org.

**Legacy of Hope**

Send a message of hope into the future with your planned gift! Your legacy will become a living part of Sisters Of The Road. There are many benefits for those who make a planned gift. Please call Monica to learn more, at (503) 222-5694, ext. 19. Sisters' legal name is Sisters Of The Road, and our tax ID number is 93-0748169.

**Taking Stock**

A note to those considering donating stock to Sisters: Your donations of stock are always appreciated! Our DTC # is 0418; our Account # is 8814718212054. If you are going to transfer stock, it would be very helpful if you gave us a ring or dropped us a line and let us know: contact Margi at (503) 222-5694 ext. 11, or margi@sistersoftheroad.org. Thank-you!

**Don't Walk By Looking At Your Feet! Cross Class Lines, Give Meal Coupons!**

**Meal Coupons:** \$2 each. Please send me #\_\_\_\_\_ Meal Coupons to give out to my family/friends/co-workers @ \$2 each = \$\_\_\_\_\_ Total, plus .37 for postage

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**There would be no Sisters Of The Road without you!**