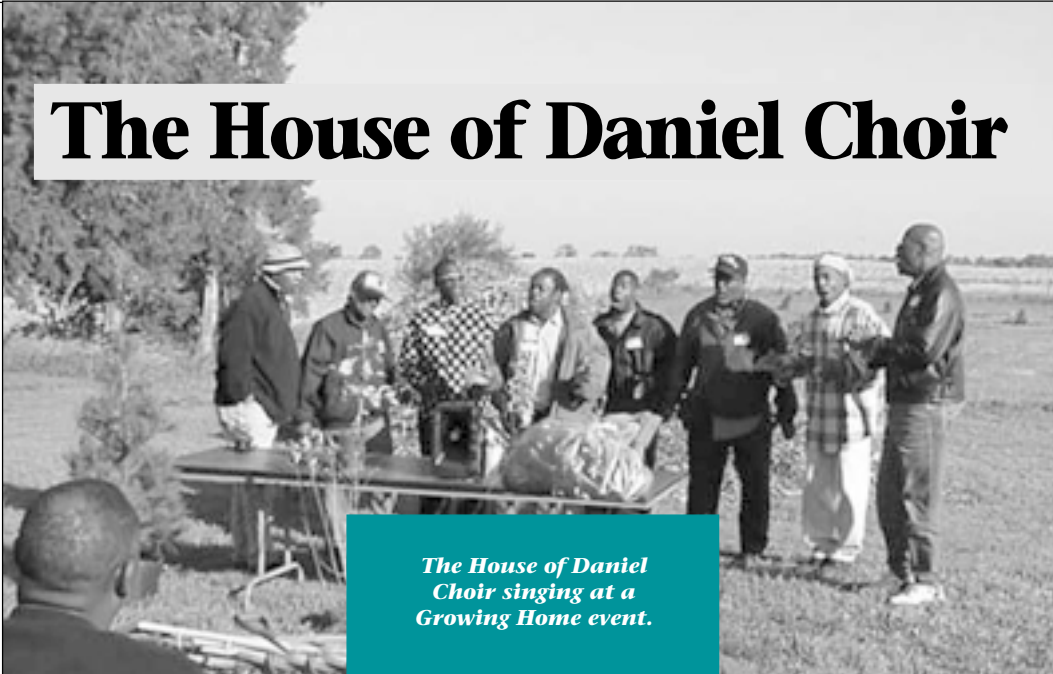




## The House of Daniel Choir



The House of Daniel Choir singing at a Growing Home event.

The House of Daniel, founded in 1992 by the Reverend Daniel L. Vinson, is a transitional shelter for homeless men located on the west side of Chicago. It has a capacity for 50 men who have entered the program to get their lives together and gain self-sufficiency. The residents are primarily African American.

In early 1993, some men at the shelter began to sing gospel songs as a way to ease their pain and practice their religion. This informal beginning led to the creation of the House of Daniel Choir. At any given time, 7 to 12 men sing in the choir. Through dedication and practice, the choir has grown into a professional group that sings in tight harmonies and has an impressive presence.

Having established a reputation, the House of Daniel Choir is frequently

requested to perform by nonprofits and other organizations in metropolitan Chicago. The choir sings at churches, banks, nursing homes and park festivals; on WTTW 11 and Channel 9; and in many other venues.

On numerous occasions, the choir has sung at CCH events, including a CCH rally in the rotunda at the state capitol. Recently the choir sang at a tree-planting event in LaSalle County on farmland owned by Growing Home, an organic farm / job training program being incubated by CCH. After hearing the group sing at this event, the local U.S. Department of Agriculture Department invited them to sing at its upcoming annual meeting.

The choir members are, for the most part, men who have spent years trying to overcome their addictions. Many have "hit bottom" before

entering the House of Daniel after trying a host of other programs. They all stated that the House of Daniel and their faith in God have given them hope and a chance to create new lives. Many have done so. About half the choir members now live independently but still sing in the choir. They have developed close bonds with each other, and singing provides them with inspiration and greater self-esteem.

The choir recently recorded a CD they hope to sell, with the proceeds going to support the House of Daniel Shelter.

Present choir members include Reggie Evans, Larry M. Grayson, Thomas Harris, Marvin D. Hayes, Moses B. Karn Jr., Minister Harvey Lee Thomas, Joe Harris, Michael McCullum, Darryl Haygood, Robert McClellan and choir leader Spencer Goulsby Jr.

## Two Studies on Youth Homelessness

Two recent studies shed light on the realities of youth homelessness in Illinois and the United States. In September the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) released *Youth on the Streets and on Their Own: Youth Homelessness in Illinois*. That same month the University of Pennsylvania released *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico*.

The CCH study reports that approximately 26,000 youth in Illinois experience homelessness each year. Homeless youth are between the ages of 14 and 21, have left home because of serious family problems, and are not in a safe and stable living situation.

For example, Margo, now 20, first became homeless at age 10 when her mother abandoned her and her

*Continued on page 2*

## INSIDE

**John Donahue:**  
HOMELESSNESS:  
A National Tragedy

**Policy Paper:**  
War and Homelessness

**News Briefs:**  
■ Donor Profile  
■ Brand New Beginnings  
■ Doublet-King Appointment

**YOUTH STUDIES**

*Continued from page 1*

siblings. Separated from her brothers and sisters, Margo stayed with friends and family for as long as possible but eventually was forced onto the streets and then found shelter in an abandoned building for two years. "When I was homeless I was barely able to survive. I did whatever I needed to do to make it, including having sex for money," she said. She now resides at a transitional living program called New Phoenix, where she is focused on getting a job and an education.

---

*Among other findings, the CCH study revealed that available housing resources for homeless youth do not come close to meeting the need for these services.*

---

Among other findings, the CCH study revealed that available housing resources for homeless youth do not come close to meeting the need for these services. In response, CCH has organized

No Youth Alone: The Campaign to End Youth Homelessness in Illinois. The campaign seeks to double annual state funding for homeless-youth programs to \$8 million for fiscal year 2003.

The University of Pennsylvania study estimates that, in the United States, 162,000 homeless youth (30 percent of shelter youth and 70 percent of street youth) are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. The average age of entry into prostitution for girls is 12 to 14 and 11 to 13 for boys.

The Pennsylvania study revealed that the majority of homeless youth engage in prostitution for a survival need such as a meal or a place to stay. Of those interviewed for the study, the majority revealed extreme levels of sexual (61 percent of girls and 19 percent of boys), physical and emotional abuse before leaving home. They also experienced acute levels of violence, such as repeated rapes, beatings and torture at the hands of pimps and customers. This study is available at [www.upenn.caster.ssw.edu](http://www.upenn.caster.ssw.edu).

CCH has organized the Prostitution Alternatives Roundtable to address the many forms of commercial sexual exploitation of youth and adults in Chicago.

# HOMELESSNESS: A National Tragedy

**JOHN DONAHUE**

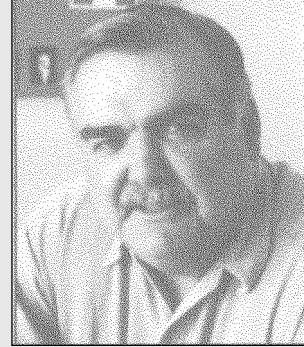


Photo by Julie Dworkin

When evaluating the effects of September 11 on our country it is important for us to consider how the most vulnerable among us, poor and homeless families, will be impacted by a federal government now focused on

security issues and "the war on terrorism." We are deeply concerned that increased military spending will result in fewer resources for domestic programs and, ultimately, in increased homelessness. For example, last year nearly 80,000 new Section 8 vouchers were issued to provide rent subsidies for low-income tenants; this year there will be fewer than 30,000.

In just a few weeks after September 11, over \$1 billion was raised to help the 6,000 families who had lost loved ones in the attacks. This was an appropriate and caring response to a horrible tragedy. Homelessness has been a national tragedy for many years, yet few people in this country make it a priority in terms of their personal contributions or in the way they would like to see their tax dollars spent.

Part of the reason for the lack of concern is that homelessness is portrayed in the media as an individual problem and homeless people are portrayed as lazy and not wanting to work. For people to want our nation to address homelessness, they need to understand that many homeless people do

work and that systemic problems contribute to homelessness, such as the lack of affordable housing and living-wage jobs. People also need to recognize that if enough resources were available for everyone to get

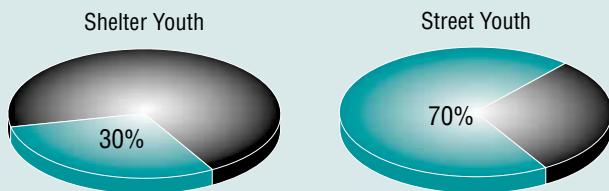
help with personal problems such as substance abuse and mental illness, then these problems would not add to the burdens created by the broader systemic causes of homelessness.

If these aspects of homelessness were better understood, perhaps we could tap the generosity of the American people and create an upsurge of support for directing federal resources toward ending homelessness. Homelessness is not an intractable problem, but it will remain unsolved as long as we are spending more money on bombs than on housing.

As General Dwight Eisenhower, our 34th president asserted:

*"Every gun that is made, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hope of its children."*

### Estimated Percent of Homeless Youth that Are Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation



Source: University of Pennsylvania study, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico*.

## Brand New Beginnings—Well Worth the Wait

**A**t long last, Brand New Beginnings celebrated the opening of a 24-unit building for formerly homeless families. Funders, social service providers, religious leaders and city officials joined the building's residents at the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Novem-

ber 29. Brand New Beginnings (BNB) was started six years ago when a group of homeless women in CCH's Women's Empowerment

Project decided to acquire an abandoned building from the city. Now that the building is fully rehabbed and occupied, BNB is developing on-site social services such as mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and job training and placement services.

*Brand New Beginnings resident Diann Ousley cuts the ribbon to celebrate the building's opening.*



Photo by Bob Black

Diann Ousley, one of the building's new residents spoke at the event. "Brand New Beginnings and programs like this are what is needed to bridge the gap between poverty and self-sufficiency. [Brand New Beginnings] supports the courage it takes to actually make a better life for you and your family," said Ousley.

Afterward, people at the ribbon cutting who had played a key role in developing the program placed their handprints in clay. The finished clay pieces will commemorate the many hands that worked to put the project together. They will hang in the community room at the building.

## DONOR PROFILE

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless takes this opportunity to thank the law firm of McAndrews, Held & Malloy for supporting our work to address family homelessness. Because of its substantial donation, we are able to help more families avoid becoming homeless in Illinois.

Since 1988, McAndrews, Held & Malloy, a firm specializing in intellectual law, has promoted a culture of caring for one another and working hard to support the firm, its clients and their families.

CCH thanks McAndrews, Held & Malloy for extending its generosity this year and answering the needs of Chicago's homeless families. We encourage all to remember those less fortunate this holiday season.

## Activist Doubet-King Appointed to City Commission on Human Relations

**T**he City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations, at the urging of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and in conjunction with Commissioner Clarence Wood, has convened a Special Committee for the Homeless. The committee will bring together homeless people, providers of homeless services, civil rights advocates and others to learn about and take action on issues facing

persons who are homeless in Chicago. Proposed draft changes to the City's Fair Housing Ordinance and Human Rights Ordinance are currently under discussion in the committee. The group is also considering proposals to create a better system for shelter residents to resolve disputes about services.

On October 3, 2001, the Chicago City Council boosted the role of the Special

Committee by adding committee chair Randall Doubet-King to the 21-member Commission on Human Relations. Reverend Doubet-King is immediate past president of the Organization of the Northeast (ONE) and former pastor of the People's Church in Uptown (1995-2000). Warm and well-deserved congratulations to Randall from the staff and membership of CCH.



Find us on the Web at: [www.chicagohomeless.org](http://www.chicagohomeless.org)

**A Newsletter for People Concerned with Homelessness in Chicago**

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless • 1325 S. Wabash, 2nd Floor • Chicago, IL 60605 • 312-435-4548

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Chicago, Illinois  
Permit No. 8760



Donations to the

**PUBLIC INTEREST FUND OF ILLINOIS**

help support the

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED!

DATED MATERIAL

## Mark Your Calendar Now

Save the Date! 5K Run/Walk for the Homeless  
April 13, 2002

We haven't forgotten! We've changed the date. Hopefest 2002 has been moved from January back to the fall so that we can plan a new and even better event this year! We hope you can join us for this special occasion. Please contact Angela West Blank at 312-435-4548 if you'd like to volunteer.

Also, if you missed our Holiday Appeal, please make a point of remembering those less fortunate this winter with a donation to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. With your help, we can make a better life for homeless families and children in our communities.

