



FACES WITHOUT PLACES GAZETTE

JANUARY 2008

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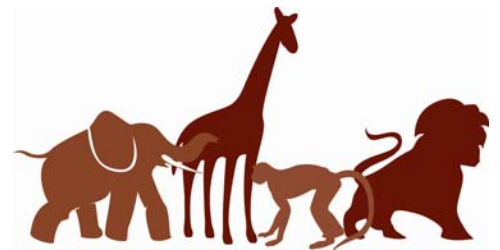
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FACES WITHOUT PLACES FANS SHOW UP AT THE JUNGLE FOR THE 10TH ANNUAL BENEFIT

FACES without PLACES supporters and friends gathered at the Jungle called Paul Brown Stadium to celebrate the 10th Annual Benefit, raising funds and awareness for local children experiencing homelessness.

Nearly 300 people gathered in the East Club of PBS on Friday, November 9, 2007 for an evening of festivities featuring food, drink and excellent music performed by the group Jazzmerized. All funds generated by FACES without PLACES directly support local children and youth, and over \$35,000 was raised at the event. Attendees helped by supporting basket raffle ticket sales, Jungle bag raffles and the silent auction to help raise funds. Thanks to the Cincinnati Bearcat Dance Team for their help in selling chances at the event.



Cincinnati Bengal's and FWP supporters John Thornton and Shayne Graham were honorary guests for the evening, mingling with the crowd and enjoying the music and company. They helped the event score a "TOUCHDOWN" for homeless youth.

Cincinnati School Board President Eileen Cooper-Reed presented board President Kim Blank with an award signifying the board's generous support over the years in raising over **\$1,000,000 for Cincinnati Public Schools Project Connect Program.**

The benefit could not have been successful without the generous support of those who attended as well as our many sponsors. Faces without Places would like to recognize Lawrence and Russell, LLP, Kroger, Ameriprise, Jim Beam, and Wesbanco, for their generous support.

Finally, a special thanks to event chairs Bryan Foltz, Sandy Durkin and Brent Harpster, and the countless volunteers. Thanks again to all of our supporters, old and new, who made this event a spectacular night. See everyone next year!



Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible. ~ St. Francis of Assisi

ITEMS OF INTEREST...

Please visit www.faceswithoutplaces.org to read an informational article that appeared in Street Vibes, December 2007. This represents a poignant view of the risks of our homeless youth. Eliminating barriers to preschool for this population will not only prepare preschoolers for learning in the classroom, but will lessen the gap they often times face with social skills.

An excerpt...

...Homeless situations are extremely detrimental to children like Jason. Children in homeless situations are more likely to experience developmental delays. They receive inadequate health care, resulting in higher rates of health problems. They lack proper nutrition, have limited support systems, and endure high emotional stress and anxiety. They experience a loss of structure, routine, and stability as a result of their highly mobile lives. They can have strained attachments with their caregivers. They endure, in childhood, situations that a majority of Americans never have to experience, all of which put them into the "at-risk" category.



ITEMS NEEDED FOR SCHOOL PROGRAM

Payless Shoe Cards

DVD's -- Rated G

All School Supplies, especially:

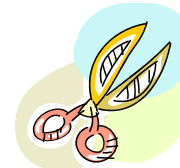
2-pocket folders

Spiral notebooks

Notebook paper

Highlighters

Scissors



NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Elissa Pogue, PC Director

The growing number of children experiencing homelessness is cause for great concern around the country as shown by the large attendance of school, state, and social service workers at this year's National Conference on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) Conference. Three Project Connect staff from Cincinnati were fortunate to travel to Portland to attend the NAEHCY Conference this year. This is the only national conference addressing the educational issues of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

The staff came away having learned plenty, taught plenty, and having the true privilege of witnessing one of our youth win a national *Award for Excellence* Scholarship. Naomi Johnson-Davis, a local teen, who has experienced homelessness for the last five years, received \$1,500 in college scholarship monies, as well as, an all expenses paid trip to Portland along with the other national winners. (Please see an excerpt of Naomi's award winning essay on page 3) It was truly inspiring to hear Naomi and the other scholarship winners from across the country offer both their strength and wisdom at the awards ceremony.

Karen Fessler, who has mentored Naomi for years, and serves as the adolescent manager for Project Connect, presented at the conference on strategies for serving unaccompanied youth. Karen is a nationally known expert on unaccompanied youth and can be seen, most recently, on the documentary, *America's Invisible Children*. (To obtain a copy of the video, contact Project Connect at 363-3300.)

Some great news came out at the conference:

- Students who are classified as homeless or unaccompanied during the year they apply for college, are now eligible for a waiver from reporting their parents' income on their FAFSA, thus reducing a huge barrier to college enrollment. Most homeless students will borrow money to attend college, and, in the past, have not been able to report their parent's income if they are not living with the parent and have no access to the pertinent financial information.
- Head Start will be reauthorized early next year, and in the reauthorization, there will be slots earmarked in preschools for children experiencing homelessness.
- McKinney Vento will be up for reauthorization after next year (Election Year!). We are working hard to make sure important provisions are included, like more money for transportation to give the law some teeth, especially in areas where there is no one lobbying for the educational rights of these children.

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AN EXCERPT OF NAOMI JOHNSON-DAVIS' ESSAY

Please visit WWW.FACESWITHOUTPLACES.ORG to read the entire essay Naomi Johnson-Davis wrote as part of the entrance packet to apply for the LeTendre Education Fund Scholarship!

If I were to sit down here and write about all my problems and everything I have been through it would take a long time. I, Naomi Johnson-Davis have been to the world of homelessness and it has not been an easy journey. I must say that through it all I have managed to stay focused and positive. That is why I feel that I would be the perfect candidate for the LeTendre Education Fund Scholarship!

I have always had family problems since I was a young girl. I never had toys or people to play with besides my brothers and sisters. My mother and father have never been around. As a young child I was never told "you are beautiful," or "I love you." Those absent statements really affect a person when they get older. My bigger issues including homelessness started when I was about thirteen years old. I was first sent to the Lighthouse Shelter with a bald head. My mother had taken scissors and cut all the hair off my head. Even though I was completely bald, like a man, I continued to go to school because I knew that my education would be the thing that would take me out of the place I knew as hell. . .home!

I have been to so many schools in my life that I can't keep count, or remember all the names, but I promise if you ask any of my teachers they would tell you that I am a determined hard worker. I have managed to keep education first and be on the honor roll on a regular basis. I also participate in many activities like PPSE (Postponing Sexual Involvement) FEA (Future Educators of America), Gear-up and the Diversity Club.

Even if you don't offer me the scholarship, I will continue on towards a higher education and make my voice heard. Education is important and I want the world to know!

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to share my story with you.
A voice for homeless youth—Naomi Johnson-Davis

2007 – YEAR IN REVIEW

Elissa Pogue, PC Director

Project Connect has identified **1,263 homeless children since August 1, 2007**. This compares to 1196 students last year for the same time.

CPS's school psychologist, Audrey Coaston Shelton, helped us serve 274 special education students this year thus far, compared with 213 last year.

The staff began working with the English Language Learner (ELL) department in Cincinnati Public Schools which has enabled them to identify and work with 33 students who are ELL's.

In terms of services, Project Connect has supplied 2,406 basic services to students. This includes school supplies (484), Metro bus tokens (451), uniform vouchers (348), helped procure free lunch (345), Yellow Bus services(179), after school programming (138), Metro bus pass (117), enrollment assistance (79), gas card (58), clothing (39), birth certificate (8), and preschoolers (50).

There are many other, more amorphous services, like social work, psychological services, school consultations, housing, holiday, that may not be tangible but involve a lot of staff time. These services are provided to families on a daily basis.

Outstanding staff members, Rhonda and Shelley work with all of the K-8 schools in CPS, as well as, all the charters and any cross district transportation for students in this age category. Karen handles all the high school students, in and out of the Cincinnati Public School district. When referrals are received, they respond the same day, with phone calls to families and follow up at the schools. The staff prides itself in their efforts with very little lag time to make certain kids are connected to their education.

I also want you to know that a number of people have come to us in the last month to say how much they appreciate the services we provide to the students and families and how wonderful it is to have a mechanism, like FACES Without PLACES, the Holiday programming, etc through which folks can donate to families they know are in need.

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Visit us on the web at
www.faceswithoutplaces.org

CHRISTMAS OFF CAMPUS CELEBRATION

Trish Fries, PC Staff

For the seventh year, the **Cincinnati Chapter of University of Dayton** alumni sponsored PC children for their “**Christmas Off Campus**” celebration on Thursday, December 6th. Fourteen families were treated to a party with pizza, lots of activities and treats, a visit from Cincinnati Bengal Shayne Graham, and an entrance by Santa via helicopter.

The biggest impact comes in the many gifts they took home with them. These families are all struggling to get by, some still experiencing homelessness, others in a new place for only a few weeks. They were overwhelmed when UD alumni provided each family with gifts off their own wish lists, Christmas decorations, and a Kroger gift card loaded with \$100.

Our thanks to **Shannon Lively** for again organizing such a dedicated, thorough committee of party planners and shoppers. And our thanks to the many UD alumni who provide the funds to make this happen. It's truly a highlight for Project Connect and the children we serve!



Funded by THE CITY OF CINCINNATI

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