

Newsletter

Getting Caught in the Criminal Justice System Cycle

As you read through this newsletter, you'll see a theme among many of the articles: how the criminal justice system impacts our clients. Many of our clients get caught in a cycle, homelessness leading to jail, jail leading to a criminal record that forces them to stay on the streets once they're released. To kick off this issue, we asked clients to share some of their thoughts about the connection between homelessness and being arrested, and asked them to reflect on how their interaction with the criminal justice system has impacted their goals.

How jail changes you and your goals



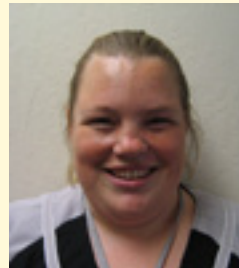
“When you get out of jail, nobody wants to give you a job. They look and judge you. You automatically feel... it's like a psychological disorder. You think about getting a job, and you think well, who's going to hire you? You actually cut your foot off before you take a step. You feel, automatically, even before

you get convicted, that's it, your life's ruined, because of what society's badgered into you as a child – ‘you go to jail, that's it, you can't get a job, nothing.’ The society's set up this system. Once you do your time, you've paid your debt. But society doesn't recognize that that debt's been paid. Society keeps badgering you with it. When you have a [criminal] record, you feel like you're marked. Like you've been spat upon.” *Joe, working with ATC for the past six years*

“Now, I don't want to go to school for bio-tech, I want to go to school to learn about the criminal justice system, because it just ain't right. The system doesn't help the needy. The system doesn't catch the bad guys. It catches the little guys, who get caught up in the web of the criminal justice system, and it squeezes them 'til their life is just gone.” *Maya, working with ATC for the past six years*

“Spending time in jail has given me time to think about all the decisions I've made, good and bad, and how those decisions got me where I am today. I believe I have a clearer vision of the goals I want to achieve. I've got plenty of time to think about the things I want out of life and figure out the steps I need to take in order to achieve these things. But the hard part is holding on to these things once freedom arrives. For myself, I tend to get caught up in the drama of

addiction and all those hopes and dreams again fade to just some good intentions I once had. This time I want to make it happen!” *Kari, working with ATC for the past six years*



“Spending time in jail has changed my goals. Now I have a record and I can't become a police officer like I wanted to. I can't get a really good government job. I have to go a different route. I have to ask for help. I have to go to a probation officer and see if they have anything for schooling, to see if they can help me do other things.”

Donna, working with ATC for the past five years

“While you're in jail, while you're getting clean, you don't want to do the same things that you were doing before, that kept you in that rut of being homeless. It made you think, okay, I need to change, I do not want to come back to this place. But in reality, you come out of jail – unless your mom or somebody you talked to in jail has got a plan waiting for you, you're back right to square one and you've gotta do it yourself.” *Eric, working with ATC for the past six years*

Dealing with cops when you are homeless

“I've been in jail several times and a lot of it has to do with me being out on the street a lot and the police looking down on homeless people and harassing us and us getting tired of it and harassing them back. They are always treating us like we are doing something wrong. We don't get the same justice other people do cause homeless people don't count in their eyes.” *Fish, working with ATC for the past two years* continued on page 9

At The Crossroads Mission Statement

At The Crossroads reaches out to homeless youth and young adults at their point of need and works with them to build healthy and fulfilling lives.

Letter from the Director



Dear friends,

Because of the diversity of young people whom ATC works with, there are very few things that are universal among our clients. Unfortunately, a common denominator for almost all of our clients is that at some point in their lives, they have been arrested and sent to jail. Many of them have been in and out of jail numerous times, and some have gone to prison. This is a sad and unfortunate reality. The criminal justice system perpetuates cycles of poverty, homelessness, and violence, and our clients frequently become entangled in this web. In this newsletter, our clients, volunteers, and collaborative partners discuss these cycles.

About two years ago, ATC developed a relationship with Northern California Service League (profiled in this newsletter). Through this partnership, our staff members are now able to visit our clients in jail Monday through Friday, and conduct private counseling meetings with them. When we first formed this partnership, I had no idea how significant it would be for our organization and our clients. It has become incredibly important, and I'd like to explain why.

First and foremost, visiting clients in jail has had a profound impact on developing trusting relationships with them. For many clients, nobody visits them, and they become completely consumed by the world behind bars. The survival risks, pessimism, and violence of jails become their sole reality, and their identity can start to change accordingly. When we go in and meet with clients, they are reminded that there is a world outside, that they belong, and have someone who cares about them in that world. A client recently told me that meeting with us is the only thing she has to look forward to in jail, and that it helps keep her sane and thinking about her future. When clients leave jail, they are deeply appreciative that we came to see them. This increased trust makes them more likely to come to us when they want support.

Second, we are able to help clients in jail think about what they want to do when they get out. Usually, when young homeless people leave jail, they return to a situation where they have no place to stay, their support network has deteriorated, and they have fewer options now that they have a criminal record. They have limited choices for survival outside of participating in street economies, which helps explain why jail becomes a revolving door for them.

When we visit our clients, we are able to listen to their thoughts about what they want to do when they leave, and help them strategize about how to turn their ideas into action. We can help them set up support for when they are released that will reduce the likelihood that they ever return. Rather than having their time in jail push them further into destructive cycles, we are able to support clients in using this time to identify changes they want to make and achieve their goals.

Third, it's just nice to have a visitor. Think of when you are in the hospital, all alone, without anything to do, how nice it is when someone you care about stops by. Being in a hospital is paradise compared to jail. We're able to make sure that our clients don't have to feel totally alone. It feels good that we can do something to make their time a bit more bearable.

I hate the fact that almost every client I have ever worked with has been in jail. I hate it even more that for some of them, living conditions in jail are better than living conditions out of jail. There is something very wrong about that. Whenever I end a visit with a client in jail, I am always struck by the same thought: I hope to never have to visit another client in jail again. The young people we work with deserve better.

Rob Gitin
Director, ATC

At The Crossroads

333 Valencia Street, Suite 320
San Francisco, CA 94103
Phone: (415) 487-0691 Fax: (415) 487-0692
Email: mail@atthecrossroads.org
Website: www.atthecrossroads.org

At the Crossroads Staff, Volunteers, and Advisory Board Members

Outreach Counselors – Kelly Brandon, Tori Talavera, Max Del Rio, Shawn Garety
Director – Rob Gitin Program Manager – Lori Norcia Development Associate – Molly Rhodes
Organizational Volunteers – Kristina Batiste, Carol Zielke
Advisory Board Members – Al Camarillo, Marykate Connor,
Nadinne Cruz, Taj Mustapha, Steve Williams

What We Do – The Basics

- ▶ ATC is on the streets four nights a week in two areas of San Francisco; Downtown and the Mission. We hand out basic necessities like food, condoms, socks, tampons, and hygiene items.
- ▶ On outreach, we listen to young people talk about their lives. We build trusting, non-judgmental counseling relationships, help them identify personal goals, and support them to achieve those goals.
- ▶ When youth express interest in working with us beyond outreach we meet with clients, 1-to-1, in a public space of their choosing. We listen to them and help them create a realistic plan of action, as well as provide tailored referrals to other services.
- ▶ If and when our clients leave the streets, we continue to work with them through this transition, for as long as they want.
- ▶ We work closely with a number of other organizations, connecting our clients with services such as jobs, housing, education, health care, and mental health services.
- ▶ We support other programs in their efforts to work with homeless youth through dialogue, trainings, and helpful documents.

Get Involved with At The Crossroads

Make a donation to ATC.

Right now, your donation means more than ever to us. Foundations and corporations have limited funds, and are being stretched thin by increasing need in the social service community. We know that many of you also have less money, and we want to encourage you to give whatever feels comfortable. You can also find out if your workplace has a program for matching donations. Find our wish list on the back of the newsletter.

Checks should be made payable to “**At The Crossroads, SFFCIF**” or you can make a credit card donation at www.atthecrossroads.org.

Volunteer your skills. Donate items from our Wish List.

When people donate items from our Wish List or their time and skills, we are able to keep program costs down and put more of our funds into the direct work with clients. Could you donate tech. support, web design, legal, or accounting skills? Other ideas? Find our Wish List on the back of the newsletter.

Volunteer to go on street outreach.

Volunteers accompany Counselors on the street – carrying supplies like drinks and socks. Find out more about the criteria and process for becoming an ATC Outreach Volunteer on our website. Email Lori at lorin@atthecrossroads.org if you are interested.

Join our Supply Prep Team!

Help us prepare supplies for outreach to our clients by making candy packs, bunching socks, and bagging soaps and Q-tips. It's easy, relaxing, fun – and a great way to get to know ATC staff and other supporters. Plus, it enables us to put more time into the direct work. Prep Nights are scheduled on the last Wednesday of the month. If you would like to be notified about upcoming prep nights, email Rob at robg@atthecrossroads.org.

HELP US grow...

Expand our network.

Do you know others who might be interested in hearing about or supporting ATC's work? Please let them know to increase our base of support! If you'd like, we'll provide you with a packet of information – or pass on our newsletter and/or direct people to our website: www.atthecrossroads.org.

Be creative.

We're open to hearing your ideas for supporting ATC. Is there some way that you'd like to help that we haven't mentioned? Let us know – we're excited to find out!

Any questions, please feel free to contact us through email (getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org) or phone (415-487-0691).

Volunteer Profile: Sandy Saberman

Working for justice from within

In October 2004, Sandy Saberman moved back to Chicago. For the past three years, Sandy has been an extraordinary fill-of-all-trades for At The Crossroads. She was a last-minute substitute on outreach, collected more hygiene supplies for us on her travels than any other individual, provided us with valuable advice and information on all things related to prison, and purchased holiday gifts for both our clients and our clients' young children. Sandy will be sorely missed. Here's a chance to find out more about the work Sandy does and its connection to the mission of ATC.

While her friendship with staff member Lori Norcia was Sandy Saberman's initial introduction to the work of At The Crossroads, it is the relationships she sees between ATC and clients on outreach that have kept her donating and volunteering for the past three years.

"I am struck by the respect everybody seems to have for ATC," said Sandy. "I feel like they trust you, and they look forward to seeing you, and they appreciate your services. Which I think probably has a lot to do with you, over the years, figuring out what they actually needed and wanted, instead of telling them what to do. It warms my heart. It makes me happy to see that they feel like they have a relationship with you."

Sandy is all too aware of the importance these trusting relationships. Through her work with inmates on death row, she has discovered how a lack of stable community and

personal support has often contributed to someone's life spiraling out of control. For the past five years, Sandy has worked as a licensed private investigator for Habeas Corpus Resource Center (HCRC). Under law, everyone imprisoned has the right to petition for a writ of habeas corpus. If granted, the writ requires the court to determine whether the petitioner is imprisoned lawfully and whether or not he should be released from custody.

HCRC, a state agency, works on behalf of poor and indigent death row inmates who do not have the resources to make the habeas corpus petitions themselves. HCRC staff reexamines and, in effect, retries the entire case. They start at the center of it all, the life of the person sitting on death row.

"Typically, the people who get on death row are all poor," said Sandy. "And most of them are people of color. And so they get these horrible lawyers who have no clue what they're doing. And so they just do really poor jobs. We try and do as complete an investigation on our client as possible."

This investigation covers a client's entire life, from family histories of mental and physical illness and abuse, to the community and the environment in which a client grew up. It often reveals how the criminal justice system itself can lead to an increase in criminal activity.

"There's been a huge change from a model of rehabilitation to a model of retribution," described Sandy. More people are ending up in jails or prisons for petty offenses, and obviously for

drug offenses. People are much more likely to get jail and/or prison time for a drug offense. And a drug offense can be anything. It could be carrying, it could be selling, it could be using, and it could be committing a burglary in order to support your habit. And then while in jail and/or prison, you're far less likely to receive any kind of helpful treatment. They're totally scaling back on educational opportunities and rehabilitative opportunities, whether they're job-training programs or drug-rehabilitation programs. You know, they call the prisons the schools of hard knocks: you can go in for committing a simple burglary in order to feed your drug habit, and come out totally traumatized. And schooled in how to commit far more intense crimes."

This pattern of escalation is especially harmful for impressionable youth and young adults.

"I've had lots of clients I've had to do social histories on," said Sandy. "You talk to people who knew them when they were a teenager, when they were starting to sleep on the streets and starting to sell themselves for drugs. You see when they slipped, you know. You see that this was the start of the decline, where it got more and more serious. Then 10 years later, they're still doing the same things, but in much more hardcore fashion."

This pattern is only made worse by the fact that people, when released, often have no choice but to return to the community they were in before they got arrested, the community where committing crimes is a way of survival.

"There's not enough services to keep people out in the first place," said Sandy. "You go into prison, and even if you do clean yourself up, and you get your head straight — you get your meals, you don't have to hustle — and

Nobody looks at the root causes of anything anymore. They're just looking how to do some sort of quick fix, which is locking people up. We've over two million people in prison.

you detox, you come out and you're back in the same situation. You're back in these really unhealthy environments, without enough services to help you stay on the straight and narrow, whatever that means to you. If you're homeless, you don't even have the privilege to have space and security to think about what you need and want, like about tomorrow. It's always about survival for today. And I think that affects our clients, yours and mine, in a multitude of ways, including, unfortunately, the more frequent desire to self-medicate, and to use drugs, and alcohol, and sex, in order to get through the day."

Sandy noted the irony that most of the clients she serves through HCRC only get the use of really good lawyers and support when they are already at the end of their rope, and are in need of a lifeline for their survival. Sandy believes that what her clients and almost all the people who cycle through the criminal justice system need is the education and rehabilitation to help them stay out of the justice system in the first place.

"Nobody looks at the root causes of anything anymore," said Sandy.

"They're just looking how to do some sort of quick fix, which is locking people up. We've over two million people in prison. Prison's become a money making machine. And it's horrible. It's a way of locking people up and hiding them, hiding the poorest sectors of our community. People think life in prison is so cushy. Life is not cushy. There are some benefits over living on streets, like getting regular meals. It doesn't mean we should make prisons harder. We should make living on the streets easier. Living on the outside should be better."

And while Sandy knows that we have a long way to go to make "the outside" truly better for everyone, she sees the work of her own organization and ATC as a crucial step along the way.

"I think organizations like yours can help to play a huge part in keeping murders from even happening," said Sandy. "Keeping the escalations from happening, keeping people out of prisons. I think what we do is very hard. It's really hard because it's huge, it never ends."

Some Interesting California Prison Statistics...

Annual cost to run California State Prison System: **\$5.7 billion**

Average yearly cost per inmate: **\$30,929**

Yearly cost for room, board, health and student services at UC Berkeley: **\$17,383**

Total offenders under CDC jurisdiction: **300,081**

Approximate number of students enrolled in university of California schools: **210,000**

In the last twenty years:

- ▶ Spending on K-12 education rose 33.4%,
- ▶ Spending on incarceration rose 571.4%

- ▶ The number of K-12 teachers fell 8%
- ▶ The number of guards rose 250%

- ▶ The number of K-12 schools rose 2.6%,
- ▶ The number of lockups rose nearly 200%

- ▶ The number of students graduating high school fell 2.7%
- ▶ The number of people in prison and jail rose more than 400%

All above info courtesy of the California Department of Corrections (www.cdc.gov), the Prison Activist Resource Center (www.prisonactivist.org), and the University of California (www.universityofcalifornia.edu)



A Big Thank You -

Over the past few months, our donations of travel items have been getting more and more steady. While we would still love to receive more items, one place in particular has done a great job responding to our needs. **The Mandarin Oriental San Francisco** hotel has come through in a pinch a couple of times to ensure that our clients have clean hair and hydrated skin. The Mandarin also provided housewarming gifts in the form of towels and linens for a couple of clients who recently moved into permanent housing. We are thrilled that they have decided to support our work.



The Northern California Service League: Reaching out to those in jail

Fifty-six years ago, being sent to jail was like falling off the face of the earth.

“When you went to jail, you literally disappeared,” described Yolanda Robinson. “No one knew where you were. The sheriff’s department wasn’t forthcoming, letting people know that their family member or loved one was in jail for any reason.”

The situation was so bad that it took someone from the inside, the late California Supreme Court Justice Raymond Peters, to create some outside hope for inmates, with his founding of the Northern California Service League (NCSL).

“He saw a need for his clients to get some help,” said Yolanda, the current NCSL Pre-Release Administrator. “They were tired of people just coming to jail, back and forth, no services, you know, same type of crimes, nothing available to them. They wanted people to be able to contact their outside families, friends, to let them know that they were in jail. And then from there, we just branched out, getting people jobs, getting people into treatment programs. It was a great

vision from someone most people hate, which is a judge, but he really saw a need and continued to develop it.”

Today, NCSL operates almost a dozen different programs and even more

classes within San Francisco jails and California state prisons, from substance abuse and social services programs to life-skills training and job placement. From their headquarters in a small office across the street from the San Francisco Hall of Justice, NCSL is able to positively affect the current reality and future lives of hundreds of inmates and ex-offenders every month.

Many of the people NCSL helps are also At The Crossroads clients, or other youth and young adults trying to make ends meet through survival activities. In April 2004, almost 66 percent of the people Yolanda and her volunteers

helped were younger than 35. About 11 percent were 19 or younger.

“Anything over 30 and you’re an old man,” said Paul Gilliam, one of NCSL’s senior volunteers.

“It’s getting a lot younger age in jail,” added Yolanda, who noted that most of the increase in young people appears to be related to drug use. “I’d say most of their parents were already in custody because of crack. Now we’re dealing with the crack babies themselves. Most of these kids are being raised by their grandparents or they’re in foster care. Kids are raising themselves basically. So when they get to a certain age, most of these kids stay on the streets. They don’t have a place where they can say this is where I live. Homelessness is a huge part of why they end up in jail.”

Yolanda knows what a lot of her clients are going through, as she herself was incarcerated when she was a young adult. When she joined NCSL five years ago, she knew immediately that she had found the job that would allow her to help other people get out of the life she never wants to go back to.

“Homelessness is a huge part of why they end up in jail. They don’t have a place where they can say ‘this is where I live.’” Yolanda

“I swore when I left hell I would never ever come back to jail,” said Yolanda. “I needed to get back to my roots, give back because I know what it’s like being here.”

At the core of this service is a strong, meaningful connection between NCSL staff and inmates, built on respect and understanding. This connection is further strengthened by the relationship between NCSL and ATC, which work together to reach out to their clients at all their points of need.

“I think our relationship gives people a complete package of everything

that's available," said Yolanda. "You're starting out on the outside, while they're in their hustle game. You guys are out there in the trenches with them, you see exactly what it is that they need. And when they get here they're stationary, and then we're able to give more information based on what

of custody, that would alleviate a lot of them getting out at midnight and coming back in to jail at 7 in the morning. Cause that's what normally happens."

In the absence of readily available housing options, the best tool NCSL

"We're catered to what our clients need, to make it better for them," said Yolanda. "We're not saying you need to do this, you need to do that. Our impact is great because we're listening to what they need and not what we think they need for them."

"I swore when I left hell I would never ever come back to jail. I needed to get back to my roots, give back because I know what it's like being here." Yolanda

you've already started. When we talk to people in jail and we mention At The Crossroads, they're more cooperative, they ask for a lot of help. Our agencies, the names might be different, but the foundation and the services are the same."

The partnership between NCSL and ATC – the care each organization shows for supporting and enhancing the impact of the other – extends into the relationship each organization is able to build with its clients.

"A lot of people have trust issues," said Yolanda. "The lifestyle that they lead, they don't trust anybody. By meeting with us, and other agencies that are really geared to help them help themselves, they see that people care. It builds the bond, where it's been gone. Once you build that trust, the sky's the limit. It can go anywhere. They need that. People need that. Period."

Even though NCSL offers a huge support network for their clients, both Yolanda and Paul are well aware that there are still several obstacles that ex-offenders face when looking to turn their life around. For someone fresh out of jail, the biggest of these obstacles is housing.

"They can get out of custody, but then where do they go," asked Yolanda. "Right up 6th Street. Right into the heart of where all your problems are. It's not an environment if you're really serious about recovery and changing your lifestyle. If you had a place where everyone could go when they get out

has to provide its clients who want to break out of the cycle of jail is information. As one of the NCSL flyers states, "Education, not incarceration."

"That's our marching song," said Yolanda. "Education in the key."

"You gotta crawl before you walk," added Paul. "As long as they've got some information out there, that'll help them get through a lot of the problems that they go through now. As long as they've got information, they're winning. If they don't have nothing, it's a revolving door."

And like At The Crossroads, the information NCSL gives comes out of goals and desires their clients express for themselves.

And when clients are able to fulfill these needs, to "make it," as Paul said, it's all that NCSL could ask for.

"You know, the best part of this job is when people get out of prison, and they come back and they say thank you, or they got a job, or they got their child back," described Yolanda. "It's something that they accomplished and we were just there to help them help themselves. They remember us and just want to come back and say thank you. That's the greatest. You could never ask for more."

For more information on NCSL, visit www.norcalerviceleague.org

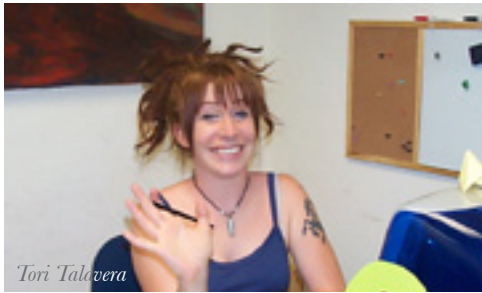


Paul Gilliam volunteers his time and skills to support the work of NCSL.

Meet the New Counselors!

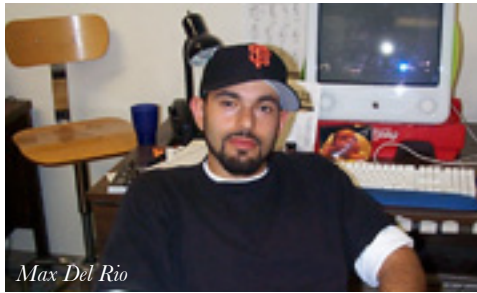
ATC is proud to introduce our newsletter readers to our three newest outreach counselors: **Tori Talavera**, **Max Del Rio**, and **Shawn Garety**. As part of their initial job application, Shawn, Max, and Tori provided a brief response to a potential outreach scenario. Now that they've been working at ATC for four months, we asked them to reflect on their original answers, to see if anything has changed or if their thoughts have been reinforced through working with ATC clients.

***Scenario:** There's a young adult who you've seen on outreach a few times. He smokes pot regularly, and has snorted speed and has smoked heroin occasionally. He tells you that he's planning on trying injecting for the first time, but doesn't really ask for your opinion. Food for thought - What is your initial reaction? How do you feel personally? What would you want to say? What would you say? What about this situation do you feel comfortable and/or uncomfortable with?*



My original response to the scenario presented during our application process did not require much contemplation on my part. I had a very clear idea of how I would feel and what I would do in that specific situation. What a know-it-all...a rookie! I was a recent college graduate with a degree in Psychology and a strong, personally formed view of the social service system and the way it should be run. That stance has not changed. What has changed are my ideas about what it takes to support those ideas in real-world contexts.

Enough of theory, rhetoric and policy! We work with real people with real lives. The depth of what it really takes to be non-judgmental, 100% supportive and empowering to the folks we work with is something that can only be experienced while sitting with one of them face-to-face. Trying to give our clients the support they need takes effort — the kind they don't often get while navigating the bureaucratic maze we call the social service system. The wherewithal required to support each dynamic individual is what I had not contemplated while applying for the position. There are no cookie-cutter clients at At The Crossroads, and there are no cookie-cutter methods of working with them. *Tori Talavera*



I think that my original answer reflects fresh innocence. I am struck by the fact that I felt so confident in something that I didn't really know about. Not only does the contrast between my reality and the young adult's reality make me uncomfortable, but I'm also struck by my lack of existing true-life education. I needed an all-inclusive lesson on how drugs work, what effects they have, how much they cost, and other important drug culture information. I feel that most common assumptions are almost unilaterally designed to keep the larger industry of criminal justice flourishing.

As I think about how I would handle the scenario now, perhaps I have transitioned from supportive optimism to supportive curiosity. I have a deeper appreciation for the detriments that can arise from assumptions. I now feel as if every interaction is like meeting someone or learning something new, even if the interaction is with someone I have worked with before. Within the street cultures that I've observed, false confidence can bring with it the risk of making a harmful mistake.

If I were to judge the people I meet by my own comfort/knowledge of the unknown, I would be leaving myself open to making the mistakes of a tourist. Ultimately I would be lost. *Max Del Rio*



My response to this outreach scenario remains the same - I would use a client-centered approach to allow the individual to express his own feelings around using and survival. I would allow him to speak freely about his situation and within our conversation I would use active listening skills to help this young person hear himself out. If our conversation were open to harm reduction strategies, supplies and resources, I would certainly provide them. I would not want to impose my own ideas on this individual but instead help him to help himself.

While my response remains the same, my understanding of what it means to be non-judgmental has changed. My training and actual work with clients has taught me that it is one thing to think you are non-judgmental and it is another to practice it through counseling. Whether clients are talking to me about the most intimate details of their life or the most ordinary things, just listening and allowing them to come to their own realizations is truly what client-centered counseling means. As I learn and grow as a counselor, I have a whole new respect for the relationships that we have with our clients. I really like working for an organization that respects individuality and meets people where they are in life. *Shawn Garety*

continued from front page

“Being homeless put me in a position where I was frequently being harassed by SFPD. Whether it was them waking me up under a bridge or just jacking me up because of how I looked, I was subjected to having my name run or being searched. Being indoors takes away a lot of the worry of going back to prison. Having that sense of comfort is priceless.” *Kari*

“[The police] are always treating us like we are doing something wrong. We don’t get the same justice other people do cause homeless people don’t count in their eyes.” *Fish*

“Well, if i wasn’t homeless, i certainly wouldn’t have been at the place i was, when the crime was committed. But being homeless, whether you think it or not, does attract more scrutiny from the police. Supposedly we all ‘look suspicious.’”
Mike, working with ATC for the past two years

Trying to survive once you get out

“Getting arrested messes up jobs. They don’t see me as a person, they see me as a criminal record. I keep committing crimes because I can’t get a job. When I had a chance to get an apartment, the landlady found out I had a record, and didn’t want any criminals in her apartment building. Last

time I got arrested, it was halfway of a blessing, because I was tired of struggling, tired physically, mentally, emotionally. Sometimes you’d rather be in here than out there.” *Maya*

“When you get out of jail, you’re right back in the same position. And anything you accumulated before you went in is now gone. So you have to start from scratch. Nobody out there on the street is going to help you start from scratch. The police are not going to tell you where to go to find a job. You’re friends are not going to give you no money, but they’ll get you high. That’s about it. It’s hard.” *Joe*

“When I am released I will get a hotel room again, save up some cash while looking for work. A lot of times we aren’t lucky enough to be able to get into a hotel again after getting out. Sometimes you lose all your things including IDs and it’s nearly impossible to get a room without ID. And if you’re broke getting out, it’s hard to come up again in order to even get a place.” *Kari*

“I do illegal things to support not only a drug habit, but to make the money to eat, find a hotel to stay in, put clothes on your back, all that kind of stuff. You try to keep your appearance looking somewhat presentable, so I don’t look like I’m on the streets.” *Eric*



For the last five months, our bins have been full of chocolate packs, safe injection kits and q-tips, thanks to our outstanding supply prep volunteers. They work tirelessly, but not thanklessly. We’d like to acknowledge the work of Tara Anderson, Gregory Gooden, Michelle Alexia, Dina Brooks, Kimpreet Puar, Anna Bonner, Avner Lapovsky, Myra Retuta, John Sorrenti, Cari Pang Chen, Robert Teal, Leonor Odonos, Mikey Wallin, Minerva Lee, David Hauser, Amanda West, Amanda Berk, Jen Blackman, Julie Juergens, Erik Budde, Andrew McClelland, Martin Burbidge, Romel Jacinto, Jo Brownold, Howard Steiermann, Lisa Del Rosario, and John Stassen.



Mural in the Mission District

Things going on in San Francisco that affect ATC and our clients

ATC partners under financial threat

One of the best parts of operating a non-profit in San Francisco is the wonderful network of colleagues that exists. This network is currently threatened because of money. Since ATC started seven years ago, three of our most important community partners have been **Haight Ashbury Youth Outreach Team (HAYOT)**, **Caduceus Outreach Services**, and the **Coalition On Homelessness**. The drop-in run by the HAYOT has always garnered the highest marks from our clients, and their needle exchange is a comfortable, supportive environment where IV drug users receive support. Caduceus has provided psychiatric treatment for many of our clients who would not have received therapy or medication without their accessible, non-judgmental services. Coalition has always been there to ensure that our clients are treated humanely at shelters, to consistently advocate for their needs, and to help out them with tickets for loitering, panhandling, or other “offenses” related to being homeless. A common denominator between all of these programs is that they treat homeless people with respect and dignity, which can be a rarity in the lives of folks on the streets. Unfortunately, another commonality for these three programs is that they have had to reduce their staff and services over the past few months for financial reasons, and the cuts could get worse in the near future. It is impossible for ATC to imagine existing without these partners; our clients would lose three of their most important resources for improving their lives. We urge you to learn more about these organizations and get involved! Contact Mary Howe at HAYOT at (415) 565-1942, or visit www.sfnc.org, Marykate Connor at Caduceus at marykate_caduceus@sbcglobal.net or (415) 243-8420 ext. 306, or Paul Boden at Coalition at (415) 346-3740 or www.sf-homeless-coalition.org.

Care Not Cash Update

Care Not Cash began implementation this summer. Care Not Cash is supposed to help the homelessness problem in San Francisco by decreasing the amount given directly to single homeless adults through General Assistance (GA) checks — from between \$300 - \$400 down to as low as \$59 per month — and using this money instead to provide permanent housing for these adults. As of September 2004, 291 people on GA have been moved into permanent housing, according to statistics kept by the city. This housing is Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotel rooms that the city renovates and then master leases to the tenants. By most accounts, the city has done a good job renovating these rooms, which are cleaner and better furnished than before. On the other hand, the city has not developed a single unit of new housing for Care Not Cash. The 291 hotel rooms the city has taken over to lease means there are 291 fewer rooms on the affordable housing market. In addition, there are 895 people on Care not Cash that have been given a shelter bed as their form of “permanent housing.” They are, in effect, paying almost \$300 a month in rent — money that used to come directly to them — to stay in temporary shelters. These shelters used to be completely free.

And then there are the more than 1,350 people who have dropped off of GA entirely. These San Franciscans no longer receive financial assistance to meet their basic needs. They decided that it was not worth \$59 a month to stay in shelters where they are separated from their significant others and pets, that have a 7 p.m. curfew, a mandatory bed time, and a 10-12 hour period every day when you are locked out of your ‘home.’



*Yehuda and Leah Vineberg-Lapovsky.
Photo courtesy of Avner Lapovsky.*

Yehuda Lapovsky Youth Fund

On June 9, at the age of 85, Yehuda Ben Eliezer Lapovsky passed away in Tel Aviv, Israel. He is remembered for his strength, character, and love of family. He was one of Israel's most honored tourist guides, working at the job for more than forty years. He left behind a legacy of a beautiful, loving family. One of his three children, Avner, has been a long-time friend of At The Crossroads. Avner decided to honor the life of his father by asking his friends and loved ones to make a donation to ATC on his behalf. Fourteen people heeded his call, and made a special donation in his memory. We were truly humbled by this gesture, and wanted to acknowledge our gratitude to Avner and his friends:

*Ms. Clarellen Adams
Ms. Gretchen Bellinger
Mr. & Mrs. Aaron & Margaret Green
Mr. Jim Grimes
Ms. Ruth Ben-Ari Livingston
Ms. Marita Paule
Ms. Joan Pitnick*

*Mr. Tom Ross
Mr. Manuel De Santaren
Ms. Danielle Steel
Ms. Mae Mae Taylor
Ms. Robin Volz
Mr. Michael Weil*

For those who were fortunate enough to have Yehuda as part of their life, we are sorry for your loss.

2004 Donors . . . There's still time to join

Partner \$5000+

Anonymous (Multiple donors)
Lori Lerner & Terry Berkemeier

Pillar \$1000 - \$4999

Robert and Elizabeth Fisher
Mitchell Gitin
Scott & Ellen Hand

Ally \$500 - \$999

Barbara Koltuv
Oren Gradus & Barbra Long
Danna & Harvey Stone

Advocate \$250 - \$499

Nicole & Joshua Auerbach
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Chris Everdell

Lisa Feldstein & Max Drukman
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Jim Yoder and Leonard Jackson

Corporate In-kind donors

Amoeba Records (Gift Certificate)
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CCI (Office Supplies)
Exact-Science (Clothing)
Jeremiah's Pick Coffee Company (Coffee)
Joie de Vivre Hospitality (Massages)
Mandarin Oriental San Francisco (Hygiene items & Linens)
Panache (Free Printing)
Rainbow Grocery Cooperative (\$100 gift certificate)
Red Vic Movie House (Movie Passes)
San Francisco Marriot (Hygiene Items)
SFMOMA (Museum Passes)
Simon & Simon Apparel (Clothing)
Timbuk2 Designs (Messenger Bags)
Trader Joe's (Gift Certificate)
Villagio Inn & Spa (Hygiene Items)
Walgreens (Gift Certificates)

Foundations

California Endowment \$134,000
California Wellness Foundation \$33,333
Louis R. Lurie Foundation \$25,000*
Nick Traina Foundation \$25,000
Silver Giving Foundation \$25,000*
VanLobenSels/RembeRock Foundation \$12,500
Anonymous Foundation \$8,000
Union Bank of California Foundation \$7,500
Louise & Claude Rosenberg Foundation \$5,000

Corporations

Savel of Princeton, Inc. (\$100)

Other In-Kind Donors

Condom Distribution Program, SFDPH
Department on the Status of Women
Haas Center for Public Service
Habeas Corpus Resource Center

Discounted goods providers

San Francisco Clothing Bank
San Francisco Food Bank

Bold indicates donors who have supported us annually, for at least five years

* Donors who have supported us annually, for at least three years.

¥ Administered through San Francisco Foundation's Donor Advised Funds

We Moved!

In September, ATC moved down the hallway to a new space. Our new office is bigger, with actual windows, and a private meeting room. This will make both our staff and our clients happier people. Sure, moving 20 feet doesn't sound like a big deal, but believe us, it was. It required a lot of time, energy and planning, and could not have been accomplished without the help of a few key people. Carol Zielke made sure that our computers would be working perfectly on the first day in our new office. Roger Garety patched up a wall and our carpet, and did electrical work so that our office was able to fully function. Matt Joyce lent his carpentry expertise and helped beautify the office. And Dan Crowell, Anna Bonner and Matt did some serious grunt work, helping us pack and move what seemed like an endless series of boxes. Thank you all for your amazing work!

ATC Core Values

- ▶ Prioritizing meeting the needs of our clients first
- ▶ Making services as accessible as possible
- ▶ Supporting empowerment
- ▶ Respecting individuality

ATC General Philosophy

We do not have a specific agenda with our clients. We want to help them accomplish the goals that they prioritize, whatever those may be. We do this by listening closely to what each client tells us, and helping them formulate their own answers and solutions.

We exist to reach the young people who do not get reached by traditional systems of support. We provide our clients with unconditional support, sticking with them no matter what choices they make. This support builds the trust that encourages clients to use us as resources to help them with their goals.

Wish List

If you are someone you know can help us out with any of the items below, you could make a real impact on ATC's work.

Items for the Clients

New or Good Condition Used

Clothing
Rain Gear
Sleeping Bags (not too bulky)
Blankets (not too bulky or puffy)
Gloves
Flashlights
Warm hats
Long Underwear
Backpacks
Coats

New

Can Openers (travel or key chain)
Sunglasses
Socks
Batteries
Gift Certificates for clothing, music, food

Travel Size (unused):

(Hygiene supplies from hotels are great)

Shampoo
Conditioner
Mouthwash
Shaving Cream
Hair Brushes
Laundry Detergent
Deodorant
Soap
Lotion
Face Wash
Body Wash
Sewing Kits
Razors
Lip Balm

Items for the Office

Macintosh computers (1 year old or less)
Scanner
Loungin' Chairs
Business Copy Machine
Staplers, scissors, etc.
Disposable office supplies
Paper Cutter
Certificates for the staff or volunteers (dinners, massages, other fun things)

At The Crossroads is a project of the San Francisco Foundation Community Initiative Funds. If you would like a copy of one of our previous newsletters, email us at mail@atthecrossroads.org, and we'll send it to you as long as we have some left (we have a limited supply).