

We have seen many of our clients take jobs with other nonprofit agencies and use their life experiences to help others from similar backgrounds. This newsletter looks at how this transition impacts both the clients and the organizations that they work for.

"Things in Common Make a Bond"

"I said 'I want all the street kids, I want all the punk rock kids. Give me their files,'" began Seamus, a worker for the Mayor's Homeless Outreach Team. "Cause I know where they're coming from and I empathize. I have an incredible ability to empathize. I've been there, I've done that."

Clients Spotlight

The ability to help people out is one of the main reasons

that many nonprofit and social workers go into their fields. But for Seamus and other former and current At The Crossroads clients, the help they can offer is made all the sweeter because they are offering it to people whose experiences are similar to their own.

"I had to 5150 one of my clients," said Seamus, referring to the process of committing someone for mental health treatment. "This person asked me for help, and I was able to not only get the help he needed, but when he got stabilized, he was eternally grateful. It was so cool to help someone out. It makes you feel

good about yourself. That was one of the highlights of my career."

Inside Knowledge

People also feel good about knowing what it's like to be clients themselves. Sometimes this knowledge is driven by bad experiences. Jen, who works as a supervisor and peer educator at the San Francisco Needle Exchange, remembers services in Portland "where you walk in and you get attacked by case managers. It's overwhelming and it turns a lot of kids away."

Other times, positive experiences with particular agencies fuel people with the desire to join the same field.

"The biggest thing when I was a client was that people didn't judge me," recalls Khristine, who works at Homeless Youth Alliance. "They were treating me like a human. And that's really helped me with the way that I deal with



Khristine at work in her office at Homeless Youth Alliance.

clients. I'm here if they want and whatever decision they want to make. They're human and they need that same human experience."

Sarah, who also works for Homeless Youth Alliance, specifically began working there because of her own experiences as a former client.

Continued on Page Six

Recognizing the Value of Personal Experience

At many social service agencies around the Bay Area, employees are hired because they followed a professional path: they went to school, studied a field, got a bachelor's or advanced degree, and found a job to apply their training.

But some organizations looking to help homeless or at-risk young people choose a different route. Their approach is to bring on staff members who have gone through personal experiences just like the young people they want to serve.

Seeing success in front of you

"It's not our set hiring policy, but it's grown organically from who we are, what the whole organization is about," explained Marlene Sanchez, Executive Director of The Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD), which works with women who have been incarcerated or have spent time on the streets to empower them to improve their lives and their communities. "One of our main principles is that we answer first and foremost to the young women we work with. Our experience is that young women who had experience on the street have an easier time relating to the women we work with and including their voices in

their decisions."

The women they work with, in turn, have an easier time connecting to the organization, and to the idea that they can bring about positive change in their lives.

"For the young women who come through," said Marlene, "success seems that much more attainable when it's right there in front of you."

Continued on Page Four

In this issue:

- Meet our new staff! Page Five
- And our new board! Page Nine
- Join our campaign Back Page



Letter from the Director

Rob Gitin

It has been incredible to get to see so many of our clients embrace roles in which they get to use their life experiences to help others. It's a lot of fun when our relationship with clients transitions from counseling to colleagues. I have seen this type of work transform some of our clients, giving them a sense of purpose and passion that they had never experienced. It helps them heal and grow, giving them perspective and balance. However, some of our clients who thought they wanted to help others ended up discovering that in order to help themselves, they had to create distance between them and their former lives.

After spending about ten years of her life homeless and high, Rebecca got off the streets five years ago. After being in a residential drug rehab program for a few months, she decided to go back to school for the first time since she was 14. She quickly settled on getting certified as a drug and alcohol counselor.

While she was in school, Rebecca and I had long discussions about how to do this kind of work. She had an incredible enthusiasm for learning, and continued to discover more about herself as she studied toward her degree. She started speaking to groups of women in recovery, and seemed to gain strength and resolve in staying sober and building a new life. She began doing outreach to women on the streets whose lifestyles were very similar to the one she used to lead. She started taking shifts at a residential drug treatment program for women. She seemed convinced that she had found her life's work.

During this time, Rebecca got pregnant, and had a daughter. About a year later, she made the decision to move to Portland, because it was more affordable and slower-paced than San Francisco. After moving, she quickly got a job working with women in recovery. Even after her move, her path continued in a similar manner.

And then a funny thing happened: she realized that she didn't want to do this type of work anymore, and did not want to be surrounded with people who reminded her of her past. She called me, and told me that she was looking into taking a job at a grocery store. And she sounded relieved, and peaceful.

Rebecca had focused so much energy on her recovery, and other people's recovery, after getting sober and off of the streets. Helping others had kept her on the straight and narrow, serving as a constant reminder of what could happen if she lost focus. It also made her feel good, proud of herself in a way I had never seen. And then she reached a point where her needs changed. I remember her telling me that she "just wanted to be normal," and did not want to be constantly reminded of her past on the streets and her struggles with drugs and alcohol. She didn't want her primary identity to be as "a recovering addict" or as someone who had overcome obstacles. She wanted it to be about being a mom, about having a simple life, and about having an existence where other people's struggles were not always reminding her of her own. She was ready to move on.

I was very happy for Rebecca when she told me about her shift, and her starting to lead a life with a different focus. It seemed as if she was truly free from her past for the first time. Her life was not just a response to her hardships, but was about starting with a blank slate and creating something new. Just as for those who have made the commitment to help others, she was doing what felt right for her. It always feels good to see a client follow her heart and mind.

I thought it was courageous. When you choose the work of helping others, everyone always tells you how great you are; but when you work at a grocery store, that goes away, and the sense of self-worth has to come from within. It might not have seemed this way, but when Rebecca walked away from helping others, it was one of the bravest decisions she ever made.

Rob Gitin
Director, At The Crossroads



Staff

Outreach Counselors

Joy Brown
Naomi Irvine
Brenda Covarrubias

Director

Rob Gitin

Program Manager

Shawn Garety

Senior Outreach

Counselor

Ivan Alomar

Development Manager

Molly Rhodes

Office Manager & Volunteer Coordinator

Rachel Stegemoeller

Event and Campaign

Coordinators

Dana Hansen
Phillip Chan

Volunteers

Outreach

Volunteers

Kurt Manley
John Sorrenti
Valerie Cizek
Renée Etcheverry

Organizational Volunteers

Kristina Batiste
Ed Yaffa
Thomas Carlson
Kate Morgan
Chris Aguinaldo

Board Members

Nadinne Cruz
Mary Gregory
Kevin McCracken
Lateefah Simon
Avner Lapovsky

At The Crossroads

333 Valencia Street
Suite 320
San Francisco, CA 94103
t. (415) 487-0691
f. (415) 487-0692
mail@atthecrossroads.org
www.atthecrossroads.org

Mission Statement

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.

Core Values

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

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.
- ▶ We build trusting, non-judgmental counseling relationships, help clients identify goals, and support them in achieving these goals.
- ▶ We meet with clients 1-to-1, in a public space of their choosing. We listen to them and provide tailored referrals to other service providers.
- ▶ We do not stop working with our clients if and when they leave the streets. We continue to support them through this transition, for as long as they want.
- ▶ We work closely with 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.
- ▶ We advocate for the improvement of the continuum of support for all homeless youth.

Get Involved with At The Crossroads



Make a donation to ATC

You'll experience a sense of happiness and fulfillment that you've never known. You'll want to do it again and again. In all seriousness, the future of At The Crossroads depends on the generosity of individuals who believe in our work. We also accept in kind donations. See our Wish List on our website: www.atthecrossroads.org.

Checks should be made payable to: "At The Crossroads, a project of CIF." Or you can make a credit card donation at www.atthecrossroads.org.

Volunteer

Individually

Do you have free time in the afternoon or evening? Come by our office and sort donated clothing, put away food, drive to the Food Bank and go shopping, or help with a number of other tasks that keep us going. Interested? Email **Rachel** at rachels@atthecrossroads.org.

Prep Night

Help us prepare supplies for outreach to our clients by making candy packs, bunching socks, and bagging soaps and Q-tips. Prep Nights are scheduled on the last Wednesday of every month. If you would like to join our volunteer email list, email **Rachel** at rachels@atthecrossroads.org.

Street Outreach

Volunteers accompany counselors on the street – carrying supplies like drinks and socks. Find out about the process on our website. Email **Ivan** at ivana@atthecrossroads.org.

Email List

Sign up to receive emails about our monthly supply prep nights, as well as other organizational activities. Email **Rob** at robg@atthecrossroads.org.

Expand our network

Please let others who might be interested in ATC know about our work! If you'd like, we'll provide you with a packet of information – you can also pass on our newsletter or direct people to our website.

Be creative

We're open to hearing your ideas for supporting ATC. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us through email (getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org) or phone (415-487-0691).

In fact, the whole set-up of CYWD is that the women who start at the program will one day become the leaders of the program. To this end, CYWD is designed with two tiers of leadership development. If they choose, and when openings in the organization arise, women who join the organization at the first tier can move up to the second tier, where they start to run the program themselves, and continue to get training. Ninety percent of CYWD's staff, and all of their top leadership team, started off as members of the program.

From client to participant

This belief that the people you want to help should be the core of your organization has also led places like Homeless Youth Alliance (HYA) to veer away from language like "client" when describing the youth they work with. "I prefer 'participant,'" wrote HYA's Director Mary Howe. "We are not based on a social service model, we are based on an empowerment model. So when we use the word 'participant,' this describes that an individual has an active role to participate in our services."

This active role is strengthened when participants see the work of the organization being done by people who are not so different from them. "A deep empathy and understanding exists between staff and participants," said Mary, whose program based in the Haight includes outreach, a drop-in center, counseling and needle exchange. "Staff model that a successful transition off the streets is possible. It provides hope to the youth when they know the person they're talking to understands exactly what they are talking about and trying to express."

Indeed, Mary has a vision that one day HYA will be completely run by former participants. "They know the program so well and are invested in HYA's work, because it is near to their hearts," explained Mary. "It is so amazing to work side by side with a former participant whom you have watched change before your eyes and who is giving back what was given to them."

The insight that former participants can bring to the work of an organization is not lost even on organizations who usually hire their staff from the more traditional professional social services pool.

"We have staff who have some similar experiences, and I have great respect for the credibility that they are able to bring to those relationships," wrote Ciara Wade, Youth Development Department Manager for New Door Ventures, which provides job training and counseling opportunities for at-risk youth. "Former clients tend to have great compassion for the suffering of those still in the lifestyle. This insight is helpful when making decisions about how to approach a problem."

From the personal to the professional

How and why this insight is shared, however, is important.

"I encourage my staff to think carefully about how much personal information they share," wrote Ciara. "I definitely think that there are times when sharing personal information is valuable, but I also believe it can be confusing for young people."

Wrote Mary, "The staff are reminded to never monopolize a conversation with their own experience. They are present to counsel and mentor the youth participants, not the other way around. Sharing personal experience and history is only used to open up lines of communication or trust, because they are more likely to open up to someone they believe won't judge them."

Boundaries between you and your work

The issues around sharing personal stories are also part of the larger challenge of staff maintaining appropriate boundaries in their work.

"Former clients tend to have a harder time separating personally from what current clients are experiencing," said Ciara.

To guard against this, even peer-based programs will sometimes require a "break" period between when someone was on the streets and when they begin working with the same community. When HYA counselors make an outreach contact with someone they know personally, they make sure that individual is connected with someone else in the organization, to maintain the professional counseling relationships HYA is trying to provide.

Yet even with these boundaries, it's impossible to stop staff members from having a strong connection with their work.

"It is hard and painful to watch what the kids endure on a daily basis, and even more so if you have a history with them," wrote Mary. "This isn't the kind of job where, at 5 p.m., you clock out, go home and don't think about them, because the kids' needs are 24-7."

Connections between you and your work

Yet the passion for their work is often what makes former clients and young people with street experience such good counselors and teachers for other young people from the streets.

"The staff commitment to our organization is deeper," said Marlene. "They know what this place did for them."

And the young people they are reaching out to help also realize what these places can give to them.

"No matter where they go, they're going there with a different orientation," said Marlene, who has seen numerous young women leave CYWD to pursue their own career or education goals. "They have something under their belt, more than they did when they first walked through our door."



Staff and participants at CYWD celebrate the opening of their new office.

"For the young women who come through, success seems that much more attainable when it's right there in front of you."

Marlene Sanchez, Executive Director of CYWD

Welcome to ATC's New Staff

ATC has been busy like rabbits since our last newsletter, and has added not one, not two, but FOUR new staff members!



Dana plans her day.

To help get our 10-year anniversary celebrations up and running, we've brought on two Event and Campaign Coordinators, **Dana Hansen** and **Phillip Chan**. Dana joined us in September, fresh from a year in Chicago and with two years of event

coordination experience already under her belt. Her spunk and enthusiasm have infected all of our efforts to do great work. She also has an appetite like you wouldn't believe, so be warned that any food you accidentally leave behind at the ATC office won't be there 15 minutes later. Trust me.

In November, Dana was joined by Phillip Chan, who made the natural life progression from Harvard to the Peace Corps to ATC. We hope working with ATC inspires him to finally

get his life on track. In Fall 2008, Phil will be moving on to medical school, but not before spending 525 hours commuting to our office on Caltrain.

In September, ATC brought on our newest Mission Outreach Counselor, **Brenda Covarrubias**.

While Brenda was earning her degree from UC Berkeley in psychology, she worked with homeless youth at the Suitcase Clinic. Brenda is especially excited that her degree includes a minor in South and Southeast Asian studies, but we're mainly relieved that aside from her skills and



Brenda just made a cool joke.

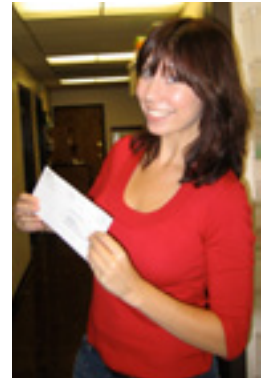


Phil already put to work!

outreach dance moves, she brings a much-needed sense of urban chic to the office. All we have to do is listen to one of many stories from her social life, and it's like we're cool, too.

Last but not never least, in September we brought on our first ever full-time Office Manager/Volunteer Coordinator, **Rachel Stegemoeller**.

Rachel's love affair with ATC began two years ago, when as volunteer programs coordinator for Hands On Bay Area she helped double our volunteer prep nights. When she's not waiting on hold for hours with our toothpaste supplier or ordering volunteers around, Rachel enjoys seeing obscure movies and talking like a 1950s housewife. Our office has never been better, especially thanks to the Miami-Vice-like couches she and her boyfriend Dallas gave us to spruce up our sagging look.



Rachel loves bills.

We Can't Believe What We're Reading

And we hope you don't believe it either. This past summer, the San Francisco Chronicle published a series of front-page articles about the homeless situation in San Francisco. The articles have been sloppy and vague at best, and at worst have provided false information that has demonized homeless people and the organizations that serve them.

We could devote this entire newsletter to a response to the articles, but instead, we want to briefly address a couple of issues.

First, the Homeless Youth Alliance, an organization that has a needle-exchange component in the Haight District, was portrayed as not caring about what happens to the needles that it hands out. The articles made HYA sound like an irresponsible organization that does not care about the greater community beyond the injection drug users it sees. The articles neglected to mention the regular neighborhood clean-ups that HYA has its clients perform, where they focus on picking up used needles. It also failed to mention that by helping its clients get into drug detox and rehab programs, HYA reduces the number of individuals who are using needles.

Second, the not-so-subtle message was that homeless people have no desire to do anything except drink and use drugs. The articles implied that the only way they will change their lives is if they are forced to do so, with the threat of incarceration playing a huge component. One of the articles mentioned that "an unnamed source in city government

estimated that 9 out of 10 homeless people do not want housing." There was no alternative viewpoint presented.

Well, here's one: that is absolutely ridiculous! Talk to any person who works with homeless people, rather than someone who writes about them, and they will assure you that the majority of homeless people would much rather have a stable, safe roof over their heads than be on the streets. This is definitely true of ATC's clients. They are not in stable

housing because there is a scarcity of housing, there are systemic barriers that make it difficult to access the limited affordable housing that exists, and many of them have personal barriers that create obstacles when trying to get off of the streets.

Our biggest problem with these articles is that they were clearly editorials or opinion pieces, primarily offering one individual's opinion, but they were framed as if they were investigative journalism. They were polarizing and divisive, and contributed to the us-versus-them

mentality, with 'responsible community members' on one side and 'disrespectful, dangerous homeless people' on the other side. When has this mentality ever led to solutions that best serve all members of a community?

We hope that in 2008, the Chronicle devotes an equal amount of space to pieces that look at the positive work that is being done to address homelessness, and discuss ideas about helping homeless people that look at them with dignity and compassion.

The majority of homeless people would much rather have a stable, safe roof over their head than be on the streets.



This work has helped me find a sense of myself. I'm happy where I am. — Marisa

Continued from Page One

"Coming here when I was on the streets made a big difference in my life," said Sarah. "Meeting people who were willing to accept me when I was in crisis, and not be pushy but offer me options and choices. I wanted to give back. I said, 'Someday, I want to work here.'"

Helping out people like you

Indeed, what At The Crossroads' clients all bring to their work is an ability to relate to where their own clients are coming from.

"I felt like an outcast where I came from," described Marisa, who works as an educator

There's instant trust. It's like, "Hey man, I can talk to you." — Seamus



for the YMCA of San Francisco. "You don't fit in a certain way. I've been in a situation where I've had nothing, where I don't know how to get to the next meal."

Having similar experiences to the people they are trying to help is often a great boost in getting clients to share what they need.

"My coworkers, a lot of them have college degrees, so they use book knowledge when it comes to clients," said Tameika, who works for Cameo Transitional House and the Community Access Ticket Service. "I don't. So I have a different view of how they feel and think. I can sometimes take my hat off and be personal with them."

"It helps them to know that I'm kinda homeless right now," said Yann, who works for the Hospitality House art studio. "They have more respect for me and the job that I'm doing."

"You and me knowing that we got some things in common kind of makes a bond," said Jen, "so it's easier for them to open up, or for me to open up even. Maybe they're more willing to come to me."

"There's instant trust," said Seamus. "It's like, 'Hey man, I can talk to you. I feel free in being able to tell you things I can't even tell my therapist.' I've actually had someone say that to me."

Peer or friend or both?

The connections that former and current street youth can feel with their clients, however, can be a double-edged sword. For example, it is a lot harder to draw the line between friend and employee.

"You can't keep a professional and a personal relationship going, because you might hesitate to make the correct choice," said Seamus. "And you might lose a friend. I couldn't have that. I had a friend of mine who wanted to be on my caseload, and I had to say 'I can't do it. You have to be someone else's.'"

For other people, the lines some organizations ask them to draw feel unreasonable when their connections to the clients are what brought them to the work in the first place.

Jen described the policy of where she worked in Portland: "Like if a kid traveling through the city went to a drop-in, had a piece of pizza and left, then they can't come over to our house. Even if we'd known them for 10

years. The program I'm working for now, they're a lot more understanding that these are still first and foremost our friends."

"Boundaries are really important because some people will just come in and latch on to you," said Yann. "But I give the people I'm friends with more time because it doesn't feel like I'm working when I'm hanging out with them."

Line between client and you

The deepest struggle for almost everyone was how the work related to themselves.

"The hardest part for me is that I didn't expect I would take the work home," said Seamus. "I'll be home and I'll be thinking about a client, 'What can I do for him? He needs this, he needs that.' I'll second-guess myself some times. It isn't good."

"When I see people in situations that really remind me of what I went through, that makes it harder," said Sarah. "Not just, 'Wow, that seems hard,' but 'Wow, I was there, it was really fucked up and painful and I really feel for you.'"

"When I have to look for a client in the TL [Tenderloin], it really brings me to the reality of who I used to be before I got clean and sober," said Tameika. "It reminds me that I'm still never too far from being in that same boat."

Finding yourself

These individuals have lots of ways of coping, from meditating to the comfort of friends and family. And almost all find strength through doing their work.

"I get a lot of reminders of where I am from and how miserable I was," said Khristine. "Most of the clients that I used to use with are really stoked for me that I work here and that I did get off the streets. I'm a lot happier now."

"When I got this job, I was still on the streets," said Marisa. "This work has helped me find a sense of myself. What do I like to do, what do I want to do. I'm happy where I am."

"This work has given me direction that I might not have had otherwise," said Sarah. "It's empowered me to see my time on the street as a positive thing, giving me the empathy and the perspective to understand different trials and tribulations that people go through, and use it as an asset in the work that I do."



Knowing that we got some things in common makes it easier to open up. — Jen

Where to go from here

The sense of themselves that people found in their work helped them start to plan their futures. Marisa has visions of opening her own center for kids, providing them basics like food and clothing so they can focus on what they want out of their lives. Jen thinks about starting her own needle exchange program in a state that doesn't have one.

And some people can't think of any place they'd rather be than where they are now.

"I'm still a part of this community and I get to give back, share my experience with people and get paid for it," said Khristine. "It's fuckin' rad. I have so much passion for it and so much love. It's like my dream job."

It helps them to know that I'm kinda homeless. They have more respect for me and the job that I'm doing. — Yann



Applying lessons from old lives to the business of life today

When Kevin McCracken first joined Ashbury Images, he was freshly out of the treatment program at Walden House, and still an occasional client of At The Crossroads. Over the next eight years, he worked his way up to assistant manager and then general manager. Ashbury Images, a nonprofit screening shop that provides job training to at-risk youth,



Kevin likes to have fun while he works.

grew from annual sales of \$600,000 to \$3.5 million. Earlier this year, Kevin left Ashbury to start his own screen-printing business, All Good Design. And this summer, he became one of the five founding members of At The Crossroads' Board of Directors.

What interested you in working at Ashbury Images?

When I started there, they hired mostly adults in recovery from substance use and homelessness. I liked having that opportunity to reach back and help people trying to get their lives together.

What was the experience like working with the clients there?

Well, it was both really rewarding and extremely frustrating. There would be somebody I knew was the most talented, intelligent person I'd ever met, but could not stay clean. And there were a lot of times where I would be like, "I wouldn't bet a nickel on them making it through." And they'd be the ones that were leaving to go to work for the union, and getting paid \$80,000 a year, two years later. So it really was rewarding and challenging. I mean, I had to call the police on one employee; that's how intense it got there at times. That's not my style. But it was also rewarding watching people truly get it.

When you were dealing with clients, how much do you feel your own personal background of either homelessness or drug use came into play in the way that you would work with them?

Well, it leveled the playing field a lot. There were things that I could say to employees that other management couldn't get away with. When people would come in and I knew that they had relapsed, it was a lot easier for me to go to them. They would understand that I am just saying it, it needs to be out in the open, "You're jeopardizing your job, you're jeopardizing your newfound life." I kept a copy of my mug shot at my desk.

"When people would say 'You don't know what it's like, it's never been that bad for you,' I would just pull out my mug shot and say, 'Meet 1998 Kevin.'"

Why?

When people would say "You don't know what it's like, it's never been that bad for you," I would just pull it out and say, "Meet 1998 Kevin." And that would usually change things quite a bit. It helped me get into a place with some employees, that almost seemed untouchable. Their guard was up so high, they were so, just, angry. I wasn't afraid of our employees. We had a couple guys that were, you know, 6'3", 6'4", 250, completely covered in prison tattoos. I just knew it was all sound and fury. They were gettin' it out, you know? I could approach that situation and just be understanding. "I understand it's frustrating. It's the first time you've ever been clean in your whole life. You don't know how to deal with 600-700 shirts an hour coming down that dryer, and they're hot, and you gotta box 'em. And you need to get 'em out today, 'cause the customer needs their order, and you don't give a crap about a customer, 'cause you used to rob banks for a living."

On a more emotional level, how did it impact you?

It totally affected me at times. There were times when I would actually go home and cry because someone would relapse that I was like, I know exactly how they're feeling right now. I'm not really one to hide how I'm feeling. That's just not me, and quite honestly it has gotten me into situations I probably could have avoided, had I been more unattached to people. But I think it's also what made me good at what I did. 'Cause I truly cared about the people that we were helping.

Update on Transitional Youth Task Force

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the Transitional Youth Task Force was convened by the Mayor's Office in 2006 in order to address the needs of disconnected 16-24 year olds in San Francisco. ATC has played a leadership role in the process, and we are excited to provide an update on the progress of the Task Force.

- \$500,000 was put into this year's budget to implement the recommendations of the Task Force.
- An interagency council is being created that will be a permanent body that oversees the process of implementing a citywide plan to support these youth. A hiring process is underway for a director.
- The Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH) picked up the Task Force's recommendation that San Francisco create 400 units of housing for homeless and marginally housed 16-24 year olds by 2012. ATC is part of the MOH committee that is working on implementing this recommendation.
- A final report has been released, with 16 recommendations for the city on how to improve the continuum of care for these youth. This report is already being held up as a model statewide. If you would like a copy of the executive summary, please email Rob at rob@atthecrossroads.org.

ATC is thrilled with the city's commitment to this population, and is excited to participate in the process of giving every young person in San Francisco a real opportunity to have stable housing, to find a meaningful job, and to go to college.

Client Corner

In the dark
on a soulless night
again the inner city
slinks through the night

Addiction and perversion on every corner
another baby waits for food.

That does not come
as her mother sticks another needle in her arm.

Sirens and death
no one seems to notice
for the darkness has taken over

The soul cries
But again no one notices
as I stick a needle in my arm.
Hoping to escape a life of pain.
Drop by drop I draw my blood
with nothing left to gain.

Cold and alone the homeless walk
in this city full of pain.

In an alley they stop
and draw our blood.

Knowing it will be the same

Sick and tired
it never ends

This disease called addiction

As the beast who sucks out life.

Seeks whom it can devour.

In the dark
on a cold and soulless night.

DAVID ELKINS

Diwali Group gives ATC reason to celebrate

About three years ago, **Joey Chawla**, having been impacted by homelessness in her family, decided to channel her energy for this issue by getting her community of friends to help out local homeless organizations. She formed the **Diwali Group**, named after the Diwali Festival, a Hindu Festival of Lights, which is a time both to celebrate what you have and to help out community members who are not as fortunate.



For the past two years, ATC has been lucky enough to be a recipient of the Diwali Group's generosity. This year, it took the form of 200 new sleeping bags and 100 new backpacks for our clients. Our clients have been so excited to get these wonderful gifts! When you are sleeping on the streets, or in a dirty hotel bed, having a nice, warm, clean sleeping bag can make all the difference in the world. Diwali's generosity helps us send the message to our youth that we care about them, and that they deserve to be safe and comfortable. On behalf of our clients, we want to thank Joey, her husband Sanjiv, and all of the members of the Diwali group for making a difference in the lives of hundreds of young people!

Meet At The Crossroads' Board!



Nadinne Cruz

(Board Chair) Nadinne currently works as an independent consultant in higher education, and is regarded as one of the country's leaders in community-based service learning on college campuses. She is the former executive director of the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University, and also the executive director of the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs in St. Paul. She has won numerous awards for her work, including the 2005 Alec Dickson Servant Leader Award.

What is the one thing you're most excited about in being part of ATC's Board? I am enthusiastic about helping to build the ATC organization in order to better support and deepen its ability to serve the youth/clients. I bring years of leadership experience and the sobering realization that organizations that do good work are not exempt from the pitfalls and challenges that come from the lack of organizational infrastructure and leadership.



Mary Gregory

Mary is vice president and a senior program officer at Pacific Foundation Services, which provides administrative, program, accounting, and recordkeeping services to family foundations. She has been a volunteer, board member, board president, staff member and/or fundraising consultant for approximately 20 different nonprofit organizations. In 1997, she founded Mary's List (www.maryslist.net), a web-based matching service for nonprofit organizations that are seeking consultants. Mary lives in San Francisco with her husband Dan and her Labrador, Sazerac.

What is the one thing you're most excited about in being part of ATC's Board? I am pleased to be part of an organization whose philosophy of inclusion and respect has guided its development in every stage of its growth and change and has led to wonderful outcomes for the youth who have worked with At The Crossroads.



Avner Lapovsky

Avner is currently co-principal of the wholesale interior design showroom Sloan Miyasato, which has been a fixture in San Francisco for the past two decades. He has been involved with ATC for several years, and in 2003 organized a birthday fundraising party that raised over \$20,000. He has also connected ATC with several other supporters. In addition to his work for ATC, Avner volunteered for a year with SF Aids Foundation on the AIDS hotline, and volunteered with the SF library to deliver books to the AIDS ward at Laguna Honda Hospital.

What is the one thing you're most excited about in being part of ATC's Board? The decay of care and compassion in San Francisco's ability to reach out to the homeless youth population has pained my heart for years. After crashing into Rob Gitin and the ATC outreach model at the beginning of the decade, I feel enriched and inspired. Now, a new phase begins and it is my privilege to step up to the plate and officially begin to contribute my talents to the Board of Directors.



Kevin McCracken

Kevin is currently the managing partner and co-founder of a small San Francisco-based merchandising company, All Good Design. Prior to that he served as General Manager of Ashbury Images, a social purpose business in San Francisco. Kevin was awarded the Bank of America Local Hero Award in 2004 for his work with at-risk youth and recovering drug users and alcoholics. Kevin's first contact with ATC came in early 1998 as a homeless client.

What is the one thing you're most excited about in being part of ATC's Board? As a former client and long-time supporter of ATC, I am excited to help continue its vision, especially the idea of assisting people where they are. I have my own history of homelessness and I feel I can bring that unique perspective to the decisions and guidance the board makes.



Lateefah Simon

Lateefah is currently the Director of Reentry Programs for the San Francisco District Attorney's Office. Prior to that she was the executive director of the Center for Young Women's Development, a leadership and employment program for low-income women in San Francisco. In 2004, she was a recipient of a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, and in 2005 was recognized as a California Woman of the Year by the California State Assembly.

What is the one thing you're most excited about in being part of ATC's Board? ATC is one of the most effective organizations out there working with young people who are living and working on the streets of San Francisco. I believe in ATC's leader and its work and hope to be helpful in spreading the gospel about one of the last few honest youth programs out there.

2007 Donors (so far!)

thank you!

PARTNER - \$5,000 AND ABOVE

Anonymous

Scott Ferguson

Gwendolyn Holcombe & Carl Kawaja¹

Lori Lerner & Terry Berkemeier*

PILLAR - \$1,000-\$4,999

Al Camarillo*

Lynn Charles

Nadine Cruz & Laurance Ulrich¹⁰

David Hand

Scott & Ellen Hand

Hanna Winifred Lavin Fund*¹

Mark Shaw*

ALLY - \$500-\$999

Nicole & Josh Auerbach

Nikki Ausschnitt¹

Sam Brasch

Patty Daniels

Edmund Duffy

Bart Duncan*

Michelle Eckmann*⁷

Mitchell Gitin

Scott & Ella Goldstein

Malkeet Gupta & Nithya Ramanathan*

Pete & Danielle Jensen

Sandhya Kilaru

Barbara Koltuv

Steve & Trisha London*

Harvey & Danna Stone

Gwynne Stoddart

Jean Sullivan*

Christine Wilcox

ADVOCATE - \$250-\$499

Bill & Marj Coleman*

John Fonda Cray & Kate Cardegna*

Robert Frear & Tim Kennedy

Manuel de Santaren

Barbara & Bill Everdell

Lisa Feldstein & Max Drukman

Sallie Hall

Catherine Harris*

Fred & Marion Kneip

Max & Eve Koltuv

Dr. Warren LoPresti

Ken & Betsy Plevan*

Bill Poland & Tim Treadway

Sara & John Stassen

Nicholas Walsh

Cedric & Amy Wiesner

SUPPORTER - \$100-\$249

Anonymous

Katherine Beckwith

Don & Jeanne Boyd*

Lila & Irv Brandwein

Michele Brusseau & Matt Blaine

April & Andrew Bufka

Mary & Tom Cao

Susan & Scott Carey*⁵

Wendy Chang

Sarah Diehl & Clay Moltz

Diane Farnen⁴

Mary Gregory

Jim Grimes

Roma Guy

Steve Krieg

Kim & John Laurance

Tom & Maureen McCracken*

Michael Nichols³

Diana Lynn Novelo³

Leah Reveliotty

Patricia Reveliotty

Christine & Stephen Rhodes*

Kit Rodgers

Charles Sandel*

Marlo Simmons¹⁰

Lateefah Simon

Lisa Socolow

John Sorrenti

Howard Ting

Carter Wall*

Tay Yu⁴

FRIEND - \$35-\$99

Anonymous* (multiple donors)

Peter Afia

Jocelyne Ampon⁴

Kenneth Bourgault⁴

Sandi & Charles Brown

Lisa Cutler

Bart Duncan*

Sara Dwyer⁸

Jonathan & Allison Felder

Roger Gross*

Jenn Guitart & Kevin Boyd

Becky Johnson

Sabina Maier Smith*

Stephanie Mann

Steve & Honey Mann

Ye Min*

Katie Morris

Brad O'Donnell

Kirsten Olson

Amanda Padilla⁴

Gabriella Rodezno⁴

Nicole Sanchez

Diane Serber

Dan Soto

John Stassen*

David & Ilona Weber

William & Roschelle Weiman

Jim & Chau Yoder

PATRON - \$1-\$34

Anonymous⁹

Marisol Almaguez⁴

Amy Berger⁴

Jamie Bond⁴

Dannie Delves⁴

Chun Kim-Levin

Jayna Kouzouyan⁴

Jessica Madrid⁴

Kadence McMenamy⁴

Damian Moss⁴

Cherrie Nelson⁴

Shelly Reyes⁴

Carol Sheppard⁴

Marci Shore

Melody Stivers⁴

Susan Suekawa

Amanda West²

FOUNDATIONS

California Wellness Foundation \$82,500

Louise & Claude Rosenberg Jr. Family

Foundation* \$50,000

Anonymous Foundation \$45,000*

Louis R. Lurie Foundation \$45,000

Nick Traina Foundation \$25,000*

van Löben Sels/Rembe Rock Foundation \$20,000

Morris Strulsaft Foundation \$15,000*

Union Bank of California \$15,000

Jamieson Family Foundation \$10,000

Public Health Institute \$2,400

CORPORATIONS

Levi Strauss Foundation \$3,000

North Point Advisors LLC* \$2,500

Check Pont Software Technologies \$2,500

McKesson Foundation, Inc. \$1,000

Frog Design \$650

Gap \$500

Whole Foods \$320.30

Monster Mutt LLC \$250

R&E Fisher Comm Property Trust \$250

Joel Isaacson & Co., Inc. \$200

Three Ring Records \$78.98

Buffalo Exchange \$21.60⁶

CORPORATE IN-KIND DONORS

Ashbury Images

Benefit Cosmetics

Buffalo Exchange

DCL Productions

Gap

Hotel Vitale*

Information Resources, Inc.

Levi's

Panache Destination Management

Timbuk2 Designs

Union Bank of California

Urban Outfitters*

IN-KIND DONORS

Kristin Bass

Jade Battle

Wendy Chang

Patty Daniels

Diwali Group

Dr. Melina Jampolis

Meredith Johnson

Jackie Leng

Edna Rivera

Lisa Socolow

Roxanne Somboonsiri

Rachel Stegemoeller

Mandy Stewart

Christine Wilcox

OTHER IN-KIND DONORS

Condom Distribution Program, SFDPH

Habeas Corpus Resource Center

DISCOUNTED GOODS PROVIDERS

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.

¹ administered through San Francisco Foundation's Donor Advised Funds

² donation raised through a housewarming party

³ donation made through and 100 percent matched by the Levi Strauss Foundation Make a Difference Employee Funds Disbursement program

⁴ donation raised through Tori Talavera's ATC benefit Strangest Show on Earth

⁵ donation made in honor of Avner Lapovsky

⁶ donation made through Buffalo Exchange's Tokens for Bags program

⁷ donation matched through Bank of America's Matching Gift Program

⁸ donation made in Memory of Martha

Laurance

⁹ donation made through the I Do Foundation

¹⁰ donation made in honor of her mother's 85th birthday

Janet to the Rescue

Every summer, ATC seems to be short-staffed. We don't know how this always happens, but we have learned not to fight it, but to accept it, and go with the pain. Well, this past summer, it actually wasn't too painful, and one of the big reasons why was a super-volunteer named **Janet Yu**. For the past five months, Janet has dutifully gone to the San Francisco Food Bank, digging her way through thousands of cans and hauling hundreds of boxes back to our office. Our best estimate is that she has shopped for five tons of food since she began with us. This food gets handed out on outreach to our clients on the streets, and gets put into food boxes for those who have moved beyond the streets into more stable housing.

Janet is incredibly responsible, admirably detail-oriented, and completely reliable. And she's pretty cool to boot. Thank you, Janet, for making sure that our clients have wonderful options for food every time they see us!

Janet Yu returns from one of her many Food Bank runs, towing lots of good grub for ATC's clients! If you have a knack for shopping and an eye for bargains, maybe you too can lend your fantastic skills to helping ATC get food for our clients! Contact our Volunteer Coordinator Rachel Stegemoeller for more information, at rachels@atthecrossroads.org.



Our Favorite Baby

Is named **Laurel Etling Socolow**, and was born on August 24, 2007. Why does ATC love this baby so much? Because she gave her mom a hard time in utero. Okay, we'll explain. This past summer, when **Lisa Socolow** was pregnant and was told by her doctors that she needed to stay at home for the last few months of the pregnancy, she emailed ATC to see if there was anything she could do to be helpful while at home. We thought she might be looking to make a couple of birthday cards for our clients, but instead she took on the responsibility of finding new in-kind donations for At The Crossroads, a labor-intensive job to say the least (excuse the pun). Lisa exceeded our wildest expectations, not only getting a bunch of new donations for ATC, but also setting up a system for soliciting and tracking donations that we will be using for many years (bless her highly organized heart). Some of the donations she got include 1,000 chocolate squares from Ghirardelli and gift certificates from Pasta Pomodoro and Peet's Coffee. She also developed a new relationship with REI, which has now donated clothing and may get further involved with other aspects of ATC.

We are so happy for Lisa and Seth (the hubby) for their beautiful, healthy daughter, and encourage Lisa to have many more fruitful but challenging pregnancies.

Laurel Etling Socolow, born August 24, 2007, at 10:59 a.m., weighing in at six pounds, five ounces and measuring 18.5 inches long!

ATC Around the World!

ATC Volunteer John Sorrenti knows that the power of our organization doesn't stop at the borders of San Francisco – it can be felt the world over! To the right, John sports his always fashionable ATC T-shirt by Machu Picchu in Peru.

Want to show your support of ATC? Buy a T-shirt! Not only will you look cool, but all the proceeds go towards supporting our work. What's more, if you wear it on your next vacation, send us a picture and we may put it in our next newsletter!

If you are interested in buying a T-shirt, contact Rob at robg@atthecrossroads.org.



10 Years of ATC! Hard to Believe, But True



Former ATC Staff member Tori Talavera takes it all off to raise money for At The Crossroads. To the left, the first handful of dreads is gone – no turning back now! And to the right, the final finishing touches on her brand new look. She looks so damn cool!



In early 1998, ATC first started walking the streets of San Francisco, reaching out to young people who had little if any support in their lives. We offered them a sandwich, some Band-Aids, and a person to talk with. Ten years later, we are still walking the streets, offering sandwiches, and doing so much more. In the coming months, we hope you join us to celebrate a decade of work with our 10-year anniversary I Think I Can campaign and our Anniversary event!

I Think I Can Help ATC

In January 2008, we're launching our I Think I Can campaign, which is like a walk-a-thon, but much more fun. People or groups (Like You!) **identify a goal they have, or something fun they want to try, and get their friends to sponsor the activity by donating to At The Crossroads.** Think New Year's resolutions, ridiculous ideas, meaningful goals, or new hobbies.

We already had an unofficial kickoff of our

I Think I Can campaign this past summer. On July 4th, Tori Talavera, who worked with ATC for more than three years, shaved off her dreadlocks to raise money for ATC. She had dreads for about seven years, and had been looking to cut them off. ATC's campaign provided the impetus she wanted to take the leap.

Tori chose Independence Day to liberate her head from the pounds of hair that were weighing it down. She had a party with food and entertainment, including singing, banjo playing, and a strip tease involving the flag (you had to be there). About 30 people came, everyone had a great time, and it raised \$1,200 for At The Crossroads. It was a wild and fun affair!

Tori left ATC in September to move to Washington State to be closer to her family. During her three years working with us, she gave us many gifts, and this was one of her final amazing gestures to ATC.

We need as many people as possible to sign up for our campaign. Your idea does

not need to be as elaborate or creative as Tori's; it should just be something that will be fun that you feel you can accomplish. Even if you can't come up with an idea, you can still participate, and help us raise much-needed funds.

Wanna learn more? You can check out the official I Think I Can campaign invitation you may have gotten with this newsletter. Or, go to our website, click on our I Think I Can link, and you can get the lowdown on the campaign. **We need you to get involved to make it a huge success!**

Save the Date

Well, at this point, it is more like **SAVE ABOUT 30 DATES.** ATC is going to be having an event to celebrate its 10-Year Anniversary in May 2008. We're in the process of pinning down the exact date, and will send out save the date cards and emails when we finalize it. Now you have something to look forward to for the next 6 months!

PARTICIPATE IN OUR 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY ACTIVITIES!

To receive updates on our 10-year activities, send an email to Dana Hansen at danah@atthecrossroads.org, and let her know you want to join our 10-Year Anniversary email list. Also, check out the 10-Year Anniversary page on our website, look at the different ways to get involved, and let Dana know if anything captures your fancy.

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