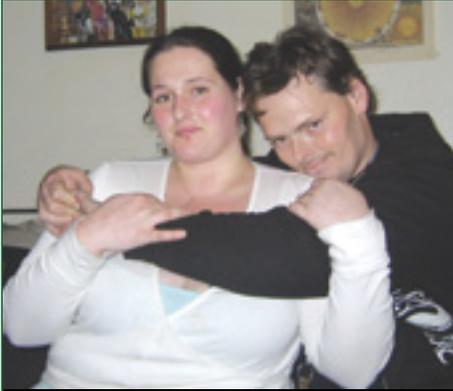




# NEWSLETTER

Life After the Streets | Summer, 2007



Much has been made of the “Housing First” national and local models for dealing with homelessness: first give people a roof over their heads, *then* focus on the other issues surrounding homelessness. Just as the name suggests, housing, though vital, is seen as a *first step* if homeless people are to succeed in making better lives for themselves. This newsletter explores the next steps.

## The Struggle to Make a House a Home

*At The Crossroads sat down with a number of our clients who have made it into transitional and permanent housing, and talked to them about the impact that their living situation has had on their lives. (Some client names have been changed at their request to protect their privacy.)*

### From a roof to a home?

Many clients are quick to point out that the presence of a roof doesn't mean homeless life and culture is behind them.

“I consider it home because that's where all my things are, but I still feel homeless living in transitional housing,” said Brandy, who has been in a group living situation for mothers since June 2006.

Part of this feeling of transition can come from the other people in the building, or the neighborhood. Lucy is currently living with her two children in Cameo House, a housing program for formerly incarcerated mothers. “I'm thankful that I have somewhere to stay,” says

Lucy, “but for me, it's really hard to live with nine different people that you don't know from Joe Blow. You don't have that coziness of your own kitchen, your own living room, your own address. It's just like renting a room, and so it doesn't feel like home to me. I just try to tell myself that it's only temporary; eventually I'll have my own place.”

And housing itself, permanent or temporary, comes with its own maze to navigate. For many clients, it's the first time they've been responsible for the basics of apartment living: paying bills and rent on time, or buying groceries.

“I've never really had to do my own thing, so it's kind of weird,” said Kim, who has been off the streets with her husband, Brad, for the past four years. “I do think of this as my home but I still feel really weird about it because I've spent so much time on the street.”

“I was surprised how hard it is to actually get back to your normal, day-to-day habits,” said Patricia, who has been off the streets for two years, “like keeping clean, and putting yourself back on a calendar, on schedule.”

### A new life

Clients like Lydia and Eric were actually surprised at how quickly they adjusted to their new life of responsibilities once they left the streets five years ago.

“I kinda thought that I was gonna continue the way I was, just that now I was gonna be inside,” said Lydia, who now has a child with Eric. “And that's not how it works. After a short while, you kinda get that desire to be a little normal. That surprised me a lot.”

Added Eric, “I do miss the streets. There are times when I really do miss that irresponsibility. I really miss being able

*Continued on Page 6*



## After Nine Years, ATC Has a Logo!

One of the things that ATC has long been missing is a logo, and now we've got one! Last year a local PR firm, **Verb Factory**, took ATC as its first ever pro bono client. The staff are in the process of completely overhauling our website, and will also develop a new brochure for ATC. Their first project was a logo – they devoted an extraordinary amount of time and creativity to coming up with something that we loved, and were always patient when dealing with a somewhat... *difficult* client. When they presented the design to our staff, the approval was enthusiastic and unanimous. We hope you agree. We are so grateful to **Deirdre**, the project leader; **Rich**, Verb Factory founder; and **Chris**, the logo designer. They have been fantastic to work with, and we're very excited about what comes next!



# Letter from the Director

Rob Gitin

About four years ago, I had a meeting with a client named Jeremy, who had recently gotten off the streets. He had been mostly homeless for about seven years, and had been working with ATC for three years, leading up to the time when he got into a stable apartment. At the time of our meeting, he had been in his apartment for about three months, and he was not feeling good about life.

**“I feel like I’m losing my mind, and I don’t know why.”** These are the words that opened our meeting. He went on to detail how he had been feeling very depressed, to the point of contemplating suicide. He was using more drugs than he had while homeless. He was having trouble sleeping, which was new for him. He felt anxious and confused, and was on the verge of going back to the streets, and perhaps worse.

Jeremy’s situation, while scary, is not uncommon. **When our clients first get off the streets, they often find themselves feeling worse than they had felt while homeless.** There are a couple of factors at play. The first is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. While living on the streets, our clients are largely occupied with survival, and do not have the mental or physical space to think about anything else. The trauma that led them to the streets, and the trauma they experience while homeless, get pushed down deep without being dealt with. When your mind is wholly occupied by basic survival, it cannot address emotions about the difficult things that are happening or have happened to you.

When someone does get off the streets, and suddenly has basic needs met, the mind has the space to think about other things, allowing other thoughts and feelings associated with the past to come rushing up. Often, the feelings of sadness or anger are strong, but they are disconnected and disorienting, because it’s hard to remember and figure out what events or situations the specific emotions are linked to. This can make people feel like they are “losing their mind” and going crazy.

Another factor is the question of “what comes next.” For so long, that question had an answer – getting housing. While they are homeless, many clients’ primary goal is to get off the streets. Focusing or even thinking about what comes afterwards can be impossible in the face of that all-consuming pursuit. Once off the streets, suddenly the client has to think about what he or she wants to do now. This can be a hard question for anyone, but for our clients, it is harder than usual. They have a new set of rules, priorities, and social norms. They have often left behind the majority of their friends, and are more isolated than ever before. If they have met new people, they usually don’t feel comfortable opening up about their former homeless life. They are confronting critical life questions with little or no support.

**This is why ATC does not stop working with our clients once they get off the streets, but continues to provide support for as long as they want.** I feel like some of the most valuable work we do is with clients during this transitional period. When Jeremy met with me, I was able to reassure him that he was not going crazy. I explained to him that what he was experiencing was a normal part of the transition off the streets. In fact, it was actually a sign of his health, that he was dealing with things he had pushed down for years. I was able to help him see what was going on, and place it in a context that wasn’t so scary. While he continued to struggle with these issues for the next several months, he never felt as low as he did that day.

It is a privilege to get to work with the same individual for many years. It feels good to know that you are able to provide someone that you care about with support that is unique, personal, and has a real impact on helping him build the life he wants. I have an enormous amount of respect for the courage our clients show when creating new lives for themselves. They are a constant source of inspiration.

**Rob Gitin**

**Director, At The Crossroads**

## At The Crossroads

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**Community Resource Coordinator:** Shawn Garety **Development Associate:** Molly Rhodes

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Thomas Carlson, Kate Sankey, Kurt Manky, Mei Luc

**Advisory Board Members:** Al Camarillo, Marykate Connor, Nadinne Cruz, Taj Mustapha, Steve Williams

# Mission Statement & Core Values

## 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
- 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 those goals.
- ▶ We meet with some clients 1-to-1, in a public space of their choosing. We listen to them and provide tailored referrals to other services.
- ▶ 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. You can **make a credit card donation at [www.atthecrossroads.org](http://www.atthecrossroads.org) (click on Donate Now)**. You can also make a check payable to: "At The Crossroads, CIF." Send it to the address listed on the opposite page.

### Volunteer individually.

Do you have some free time in the afternoon or evening? We'd love you to come by our office and sort donated clothing, put away food, drive to the Food Bank and go shopping, or a number of other tasks that keep us going. If you are interested in this, go to our website, click on Get Involved, then on Volunteers, and check out our options.

### Get your friends, your workplace, and your groups involved.

Do you know other people that you would like to introduce to ATC? Do you work at a company that could donate time or money? Are you part of a group of people that would want to help out? Go to our website, click on Get Involved, and learn more about different ways that you can get your communities connected with ATC.

### Join our volunteer email list.

Receive emails about our monthly supply prep nights, as well as other volunteer opportunities. 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 [getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org](mailto:getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org) with "join email list" in the subject line.

### Be creative.

We're open to hearing your ideas for supporting ATC. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us via email ([getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org](mailto:getinvolved@atthecrossroads.org)) or phone (415-487-0691). Find our Wish List on our website: [www.atthecrossroads.org](http://www.atthecrossroads.org).

**The three agencies  
At The Crossroads  
talked to for this article:**



### **CONNECTING POINT**

Connecting Point places homeless families in one of three San Francisco family shelters. While they wait

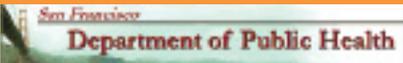
for an opening, families have access to services such as a drop-in center with food, a computer center, and counseling run by Connecting Point's parent organization, Compass Community Services.



### **LARKIN STREET**

Larkin Street Youth Services runs a variety of housing

options available to youth ages 24 and younger. For those looking for more than temporary shelter, Larkin Street offers Avenues to Independence, geared toward youth looking for help with life skills, or Ellis Street Apartments, for youth seeking an authentic taste of what it would be like to live on their own. They also have programs aimed at LGBTQ youth and youth with mental health issues.



### **DIRECT ACCESS TO HOUSING**

Run through San Francisco's Department of Public Health (DPH), the Direct Access to Housing (DAH) program offers permanent housing to homeless people who are suffering from a range of mental illnesses. Almost all of the DAH tenants are already participating in other DPH programs. They are able to stay in DAH units for as long as they need them.

**“There is not enough housing for young people. You need not just more housing but more different programs, flexibility in structure and length of time, more options to meet the different needs of different youth.”**

**— Sherilyn Adams,  
Executive Director,  
Larkin Street Youth Services**

# From a Home...

For many of At The Crossroads' clients, getting into housing is just one step among several needed to move away from a life of homelessness. A roof over their heads will only last for so long if they aren't also able to secure a job or begin to tackle their mental health issues. ATC talked to three housing providers for homeless people in San Francisco about their housing models, and their work not only to get people off the street but to give them the tools to stay there.

## **It starts with an application**

For several programs, accessing their housing starts with an interview and application process. It can be a daunting task, often involving several pages of detailed information. At Connecting Point, the city's family shelter placement center, families looking for shelter outline their medical, personal and housing histories. At Larkin Street Youth Services, counselors get to know youth who stop by their drop in center to figure out what they want to accomplish, and which emergency or transitional housing option best fits those goals. *(For an overview of each program we talked to for this article, please see the sidebar on this page.)*

Though the application process itself can intimidate anyone, the programs themselves stress the importance of knowing where a client is coming from to find and maintain the best fit possible.

“We know that there's no guarantee that success in one place leads to success in another place,” said Aram Hauslaib, Connecting Point's Assistant Program Director, who makes sure that the information gathered at Connecting Point is passed on to whichever shelter or other city programs the family members are placed in. “We share information so we know the history of the client, and where they're coming from.”

The Direct Access to Housing program (DAH), for homeless people who are suffering from mental illness, says the whole concept is to get people who

are living on the streets and suffering from various mental health issues into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

“It's unethical to have housing units open while people are on the street,” said Margot Antonetty, the Deputy Director of Housing and Urban Health at the Department of Public Health. “To have an access system that's slow doesn't help you with that.”

## **More than just housing**

Once a client is in housing, there are a variety of services they have access to beyond the four walls around them.

“The continuity of connection is really important,” said Larkin Street's Executive Director, Sherilyn Adams. “We want to meet the full complement of their needs over time. It's up to the young person to decide how she or he wants to reach their goals, and we're here to provide the support to help them reach those goals.”

DAH provides a range of mental and physical health services, both within the buildings that house their 918 units of housing and within walking distance of them at their Tenderloin health clinic. They also ensure that these services are available for as long as the client wants them.

“We don't expect them to simply get their stuff together and get on with their lives,” said Antonetty. “They wouldn't be in our housing if that was the case. We understand the ongoing issues in their lives.”

Connecting Point also understands that an effective shelter system not only helps people get into shelter but also helps people on the edge of homelessness stay housed. This year they started offering rental assistance, designed to help people meet their immediate rent needs and avoid eviction.

“We're trying to address a lot of people who may not be eligible for shelter, but can be helped otherwise,” said Hauslaib.

# ...to a Life

## Rate of success

Attention to the individual needs of clients has led to great success rates among the housing programs. For Larkin Street, 75 percent of the youth who complete one of their housing programs have reported back to them that they are able to stay off the streets and remain independent. There is no formal tracking of what happens to youth once they leave, but former clients are known to stop by at holidays or special celebrations. Clients who have gone through Lark Inn, one of Larkin Street's emergency shelters, are invited to come back for bag lunches and check in with the staff and their friends.

"We want them to move on, but of course we want to hear how they're doing," said Adams. "If an issue comes up, we're always here."

Connecting Point doesn't track what their clients do beyond their time at the family shelters, but also relies on former clients returning to share stories of how they've been. Families bring by new babies, sharing stories of new jobs or new homes with counselors they connected with.

DAH programs have only just begun looking into how many of their clients stay with their housing, yet preliminary results suggest that more than 90 percent of their clients are successful. The low failure rate is in large part due to their definition and focus on success – only those who have to be evicted are counted as not successful, and DAH does what it can to solve tenants' problems before kicking them out.

"We want to be able to serve more and more challenging clients," said Antonetty. "It doesn't always work out, but it's worth taking the risk so the client doesn't have to fall apart. It takes the right building, the right support. But we want to continue to find new and creative ways to stabilize people."

## Challenges along the way

Of course, in the journey to help homeless people find success in housing, there are several challenges along the way. There is always the problem of limited financial resources, which limits both the supportive services that can be offered and the housing itself.

"There is not enough housing for young people," said Adams. "You need not just more housing but more different programs, flexibility in structure and length of time, more options to meet the different needs of different youth."

The lack of options is also felt by Connecting Point. Their detailed intake process would ideally lead to placement in shelters that can meet a variety of their clients' specific needs. But the reality is that with only three city-run family shelters and 80-100 people waiting for 2-20 places available each month, placing families in the perfect shelter is a luxury they can't afford.

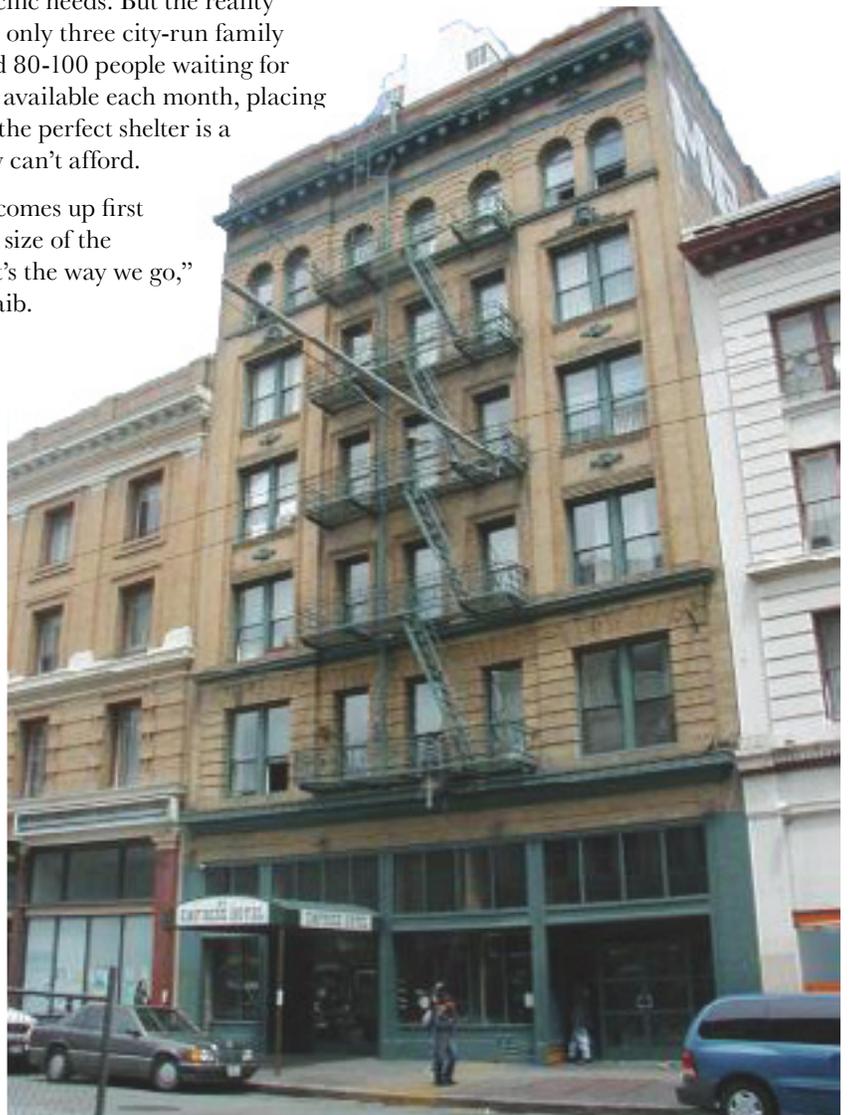
"Whatever comes up first and fits the size of the family, that's the way we go," said Hauslaib.

## Rewards at the end of the day

Despite the limitations of how many people can be reached through existing services, there is comfort and a sense of pride in the people who are able to use the programs to improve their lives.

"Every day we see kids get accepted into housing, move into housing, get a job, get along better with their peers," said Adams. "We see them accomplish their goals, whatever they are."

"I can't tell you what incredibly visionary people there are working at our sites," said Antonetty. "That and our tenants are what make our work possible." ♦



*The Empress Hotel, one of*

Continued from Page 1

to travel, to just get up and leave. But I'm content in life now. Where before, when I was living on the streets, contentment was a fleeting moment. It only lasts for so long, usually depending on how long your high lasts. I'm a lot more content now. Realistically content."

### Leaving a community

Moving into housing can mean leaving behind friends, family, and community. It can be a challenge to form relationships, and build a new social circle. Brad notes that he still tends "to isolate, stay at home and watch TV rather than go outside."

It can also create challenges like deciding how to deal with old relationships.

When Lucy entered Cameo House, she had just left a recovery center where she felt she had made lots of close ties.

But she got a rude awakening when she visited the program to follow up on her friends.

"I tried to keep in touch with a couple of my really, really close friends," describes Lucy. "I went there five or six times to visit, and they were just like, 'Hey Lucy, what's up?' and then they went about their way. You know, they weren't like, 'Oh my gosh! you know? I really thought that we were gonna be friends, so that was a big letdown for me, I was really hurt. So I feel like, I just had to let it go. That maybe they were good friends with me at the time we went through what we went through and that was just kinda like part of my past now."

In her new situation, Lucy is still a stranger. "It's not always a comfortable environment where you can just go in the living room and hang out and watch

TV," said Lucy of her living situation. "I wish we could be like, 'Hey what's up? How was your day? You wanna eat dinner? Rent a movie tonight?' I wish it could be comfortable like that."

Aside from trying to form new relationships, newly housed people often have to leave behind the only people who ever stood up for them. Patricia remembers some of her old friends who would bring her in off the street when things got bad. "I disconnected from them because I feel like I owe them so much. Like the only people I have anything to prove to are the people that actually helped me when I was on the streets. One day I'll be able to show them my full appreciation."

Of course for others, it's that they're not far enough from the people they hung out with

on the streets that makes it a struggle. "It gets really old," said Kim. "A lot of people when they move inside, they do the same thing they did when they were on the street. It's just frustrating."

Agreed Lydia, who lives in the Tenderloin, "It's hard to walk down the streets and see little orange caps on the sidewalk. It's hard to run into people that you want to raise a kid. But I would rather raise a kid there and have more to give him than having him in one room where he can't run around and play."

### Helping services

The challenge of housing is an opportunity for services to offer support to help the newly housed reach their goals. "Just cause I got off the streets don't mean life is perfect or I'm perfect or anything's perfect,

it just means that I'm off the streets. I still need support sometimes," said Serina, who moved into her own place in August 2006 after being on and off homeless for fourteen years. "I don't need as much help as I did when I was out in the streets running around like a chicken with my head cut off — being stable, I've become more mature. But there's some times when I still need support."

Serina discovered a lot of her strength and resolve through her church. She also gets help paying for school to get her GED, and gets groceries through food pantries. Without the extra services, she knows that, "It'd be a lot more stressful. Life wouldn't be going so easy. It would be just like it was before I started going to church. I'd still be on drugs, I'd still be prostitutin'."

Services can include help finding a job, getting health care or reuniting with estranged family members. "Since I've been in housing, I use the services that I should have used when I was homeless," said Patricia. "Like applying for Medi-Cal or applying for anything that's gonna take care of my health. I know that I can rely on just going into a store and stealing something, it's as easy as that for me, but because I wanna keep my house, I don't do those things."

### Where to go from here?

With so many ongoing challenges, many of our clients wish there were more services that they could work with both before and after they get off of the streets. Many of our clients don't use any services at all outside of At The Crossroads. For some this is a matter of

choice, while for others it's a sense that there isn't anything out there to help them. Services that reach out to young people on the street often have an age cut-off, or don't make a point of keeping up with clients who have left their programs. It is not that they aren't interested, but tight funding and other limits mean that they focus on the clients with the immediate need.

"Some places will cut you off if you don't use them every week," said Eric. "That makes a big difference because I'm not the type of person to use something just because it's there. If I need it, I will use it. If I don't need it that month then I'm not gonna take something from somebody else."

A long term service that can work with a client no matter what stage of life can make a big difference in keeping goals

in sight. "I think one of the biggest issues with homeless people is they don't realize the answer's inside you," said Joe. "When At The Crossroads asked me, 'What would you like to do about this situation,' I answered the question. I needed someone to talk to, I needed someone to ask the right questions."

For clients like Joe, housing is important, but only one step to consider in the next few months to the next 50 years.

"I think that getting stable housing made me realize that my life is important," said Joe. "What I do does matter, and what I go through matters. And it not only matters to me, it matters to others." ♦



**Beth** has been living off the streets for the past two years  
*What has been the best part of your life being off the streets?*

Being able to go home when it's raining and change into warm clothes and be in a nice warm bed. Being able to bake brownies.  
*What has been the most challenging part of life off the streets?*

Paying bills on time. And rent on time, too.

*Have your priorities changed since you got off the streets?*  
Mostly my priorities have changed since I had my baby. My first priority is my recovery and then my daughter. Recovery is first because, without my recovery, I can't have my daughter.

*Do you think getting housed was part of the process of you going into recovery?*  
Uh-huh. I don't think I could've gotten sober on the streets.  
*What about the community you had on the streets? Did that totally change once you were housed?*

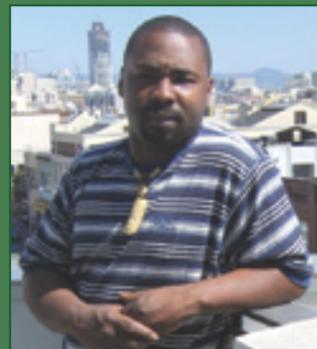
Oh yeah. It wasn't really hard to give up my using friends because I don't want to hang out with them now. I don't want to slip up and use and I don't want my daughter around that.

*Since you have been in housing, what services do you use?*

You guys. That's about it.

*Is there another service that would be important to you?*

I guess I could probably use regular help with diapers and baby food. There are places, but you can only get seven diapers at a time. I just wish that there was a place that all they did was diapers and baby food, because baby food gets really expensive.



**Joe** has been living off the streets for about five years  
*Do you have a vision of what home would feel like for you?*

Home would definitely be a place that has an oven and a closet for me to put my linens and my broom and mop in. I honestly think that they think that people with low income don't clean up.  
*Was there anything that surprised you about what having a stable place to stay would feel like?*

I was surprised that I was actually able to sustain. I think one reason why a lot of people don't attempt to make it off the streets is because they're afraid of failure. It's better to stay where you are instead of trying to

succeed and failing, because then you really feel like you're not worth anything.

*What do you think is the best part about having a stable place to stay?*  
Being able to help out other people who don't have a stable place to stay.

*Since you've gotten stable housing, what kind of services do you use right now?*

I don't use too many services outside of ATC. I feel a lot of services, they're designed to baby you, and they're not really designed to get you out of this position. They really need to let a lot of these people sit back and struggle on their own, you know.  
*Why does ATC work for you?*

Because the way that you guys always empowered me. I don't get treated like I have low expectations, I don't get treated like I don't have any type of education or that I'm not gonna go anywhere, you know. I get taken for who I am and ATC has allowed me to prove myself.

*Do you think your priorities have changed?*

I will never hustle again. And I will not start over again.



**Marge** has been living off the streets since August 2005  
*Do you consider the place you are living to be home?*

Kind of. We're living in a run down hotel where they totally have to fix up everything. There would be needles everywhere, used condoms. People peeing on the corners. The people that come over and use drugs or whatever, they don't realize there are people that actually live here.

*What has been the best part about life after the streets?*

A roof, a fridge, hot food, ice cream. A shower.

*Since you've been in housing, what services do you use?*

You're the only one.

*Any reason why you don't use other services?*

I don't have the means. My cellphone got stolen, I don't have an internet connection, I don't have nothing, no connections.

*Let's say somebody didn't know anything about being homeless, what would you say?*

I would say you never want to be on the streets. Everything will be more of a struggle than it already is. It's already hard enough as a kid to get what you want. When you're a teenager, you ask your parents for clothes... but not having shit like toilet paper? You are not going to want to feel it.



**Serina** has been off the streets since August 2006  
*Do you consider your place to be home?*

Oh yeah. I don't have to go in the bathroom out in the hall, I don't have to go and buy stuff to eat at a fast food place. I have my own keys, that nobody else has except the landlord, and I actually pay rent once a month and not every day.

*What's been the best part about having a stable place to stay?*

I've been looking for stability my whole life and I've never found it until I actually got my own place to stay. I feel like a normal human being now —

taking my daughter to daycare, going to the gym, working out, doing things that are normal.  
*What's been the most challenging part of life since you've gotten off of the streets?*

Worrying about the people from my past finding out where I live and trying to destroy it.

*How have your priorities changed since you got off the streets?*

Well now I have priorities (laughs). No, before I had priorities too, they were drugs and money and gettin' a place to stay. That was it. But now I have priorities of taking care of my daughter — at first taking care of my own self, so that way I can take care of my daughter.

*Have you changed the people that you hang out with?*

Yes I did. Because they're doing the things I used to do, they're getting high, it's just much easier not to be around them. I'm not into that no more.

## Transition Youth Task Force makes recommendations

In 2006, Mayor Newsom called together a task force of community-based organizations, government officials, and transition-age youth to create a city-wide set of policies and recommendations for 16-24 year olds who are disconnected from the support necessary to build healthy lives. The city has never had a coherent policy or system to address the needs of these individuals, and hopes to become a model for other cities around the country.

For the past 15 months, this group has been working very hard to create a set of recommendations that would meet the needs of the diverse range of these young people. The individuals on the task force put a great deal of time and passion into the process, and it shows in the results.

In May, the Transition Youth Task Force (TYTF) finalized a set of 16 recommendations. **If implemented, these recommendations will result in systemic change that will provide young people with the housing, support services, education and work opportunities that have been missing in their lives.**

- Fewer young people will become homeless.
- Those who do become homeless will have better opportunities to get off the streets.
- Disconnected youth will have a new chance to build the lives that they want.
- 400 units of housing for homeless and marginally housed youth will be created.

So far, the support for the recommendations at the city level has been overwhelming! In addition to Mayor Newsom, heads of all of the major city departments have endorsed TYTF's recommendations, and expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for the task force's efforts. While making these changes will be a multi-year process, some of the recommendations will make an immediate impact on young people's lives in the upcoming year.

ATC was proud to play a leadership role in this process as the chair of the community services workgroup. We will continue to play a large role in the implementation process, making sure that the needs of homeless youth are addressed by the city in a way that provides them with meaningful opportunities to make change in their lives. We applaud the city for making the statement that it will hold itself accountable for this population, and is invested in seeing young people make successful transitions into adulthood.

## Making sure our clients look pretty

Since our second year, The **Union Bank of California Foundation** has been a key supporter of ATC, making a generous grant to us every year. This past year, they deepened their involvement with ATC by organizing a hygiene item collection program with the bank's employees who travel and stay in hotels.

This has been spearheaded by **Karen Murakami**, UBOC Foundation's long-time program officer. Little did we know what an amazing job they would do! Every couple of months, we pick up four or five large boxes of shampoos, soaps, lotions, and other items.

Some of UBOC's employees have taken to buying additional hygiene items and including them with the donations. The UBOC folks have really gotten into this effort, and provide ATC with more than half of the hygiene items that we give to our clients. We are extremely grateful to Karen and her coworkers for the energy they devote to their collection efforts.



*UBOC staff pose with their latest hygiene donations.*



*Marshall Elementary students lend a helping hand.*

## Local Elementary School Pitches In to Help ATC

As the number of clients we work with increases every year, so does the amount of food we distribute. We give out snacks and sandwiches to about 240 people on outreach every week, and another 60 clients get a full food box during the daytime.

It is not easy to keep up with the food needs of our clients. **Marshall Elementary School**, which is located just a few blocks away from our office, decided to help out by organizing a food drive with their students and families this past winter. Students collected approximately 180 pounds of food for ATC, and took the time to learn more about our clients and our work.

This drive allowed us to save money on food and use it in other areas, including buying IDs and birthday gifts for our clients. It was wonderful to get young people and their families involved in ATC's efforts. We are grateful to Marshall for making this commitment to help its community!



*Check out this CD! Put together by Three Ring Records, with cover art by former ATC client Nic Coley.*

## Benefit CD and Event for ATC

In early 2006, **Dan Crowell**, owner of **Three Ring Records** and husband of our former staff member Lori Norcia, came to At The Crossroads with the idea of making a benefit CD for ATC. He told us he'd handle all the leg work, find the musicians, record, press, and distribute the CD, and cover the costs.

Sound too good to be true? Well, it is too good, but it is true. In December 2006, a compilation CD of songs donated by 22 different musicians was finished. It is fantastic! It has already gotten media coverage in a variety of different places, and has started raising money for our organization.

We cannot properly express our gratitude to Dan for the incredible amount of time and energy that he devoted to this project; we are humbled by his effort. We also want to thank the 22 artists for donating a song (and in some cases coming up with an original song), and to Nic Coley for donating the cover art. **If you are interested in buying the CD, go to [www.threeringrecords.com/floss.html](http://www.threeringrecords.com/floss.html)**, and scroll to the benefit CD for At The Crossroads. We hope you check it out; you won't be disappointed!

Three Ring Records also put on a benefit concert for ATC on May 19th. 110 people came and had a great time, and we raised more than \$1,100 to help us help our clients reach their goals!



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San Francisco Food Bank

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

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<sup>1</sup> Administered through San Francisco

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<sup>2</sup> Donation raised through a house

warming party



*ATC clients celebrate at one of ATC's holiday parties. We had over 140 guests at our two parties.*

## Holiday Parties

This past holiday season, more than 140 clients and their children came to our parties, got personalized gifts, ate delicious baked treats, and got a meal. An additional 50 clients who were not able to come to our parties got holiday gifts. These parties require a ton of community involvement, and would not have been possible without the support of a number of individuals. More than 30 people, foundations, and businesses contributed more than \$12,000 to cover the entire cost of these parties.

A number of businesses also made in-kind donations of gift certificates that we were able to give to clients or use for their gifts. Sixteen individuals baked an incredible array of treats that were gobbled up by our clients at the parties. And 35 people came by our office to wrap more than 400 gifts the week before the parties. Unfortunately, there is not space to list everyone who helped out, but you know who you are, and we want to thank you for helping make this a great holiday season for our clients!

## Fire It Up

Firefighters Union brings Holiday Cheer to our clients

ATC is working with a growing number of clients who have their own children. For most of these young people, money is extremely tight; when the holidays come, it can be hard to afford presents for their children.

Fortunately for ATC and our clients, the **San Francisco Firefighter's Union** does an amazing toy drive every year, gathering thousands of toys for children in low-income families. ATC has been working with this program for the past few years, and it has always made special allowances for our clients to get toys with no wait and no fuss. **John Hanley**, the Union president, makes the whole process so simple. This year, in order to make it as easy as possible, they let us pick up about 50 holiday toys and distribute them ourselves to the people we work with.

Our clients were so thrilled that we were able to give both them and their children great gifts, allowing them to celebrate the holidays together as families.

# Staff Changes...

## Kelly Brandon



*Good luck, nurse Brandon!*

This April, Kelly Brandon got the great news that she was accepted to San Francisco State University's masters nursing program. Unfortunately for us at ATC, this meant that she ended her five-year career with us this summer to pursue her lifelong dream.

Kelly will leave behind a legacy that includes the following: 1) Her legendary high-kick 2) An amazing performance of the memorable dance sequence from Napoleon Dynamite 3) the ATC record for most times getting licked on her neck during outreach.

Actually, her true legacy will be that she made our organization permanently stronger with her commitment to creating policies and systems that will be in place for years, she made our staff stronger with her creative and supportive activities and presents, and she helped her clients build stronger lives with her incredible consistency, humanity, and responsiveness. She is an original, so we cannot try to replace her. We can only thank her and be grateful for the time she spent with us.

But even without Kelly, we will soldier on! This March, At The Crossroads added our newest outreach counselors, Naomi Irvine and Jason Thompson.

## Naomi Irvine



*From volunteer to staff.*

Naomi joined the ATC staff after spending a year as a Mission outreach volunteer extraordinaire. When she graduated from San Francisco State with a degree in International Relations earlier

this year, Naomi was looking for a job in which she felt like she would do meaningful and positive work, and ATC became a natural fit. The core of this work to Naomi is the outreach she now does four nights a week in both Downtown and the Mission.

"Outreach has been my favorite part of the job so far," said Naomi, who obviously has yet to experience the thrills of office chores like surface cleaning. "It is wonderful to get paid to go out into the community and talk with people."

When Naomi's not basking in the pleasures of outreach, she enjoys reading anything she can get her hands on. She's also happiest when she gets to eat good food and dance the night away. Other than that, she claims that she's pretty normal and boring. We know better. She's a big freak. But she's our kind of freak.

## Jason Thompson



*He doesn't always look crazy. Really.*

Before joining ATC, Jason spent the last year volunteering as a crisis counselor with SF Suicide Prevention.

"Working full-time with folks in the community seems like a natural progression," said Jason. "I'm

really interested in psychology and committed to doing what I can to support underserved youth."

Jason has only just started meeting with clients. But he's having a good time on outreach, meeting and getting to know ATC's clients and how he can help them meet their needs.

ATC clients and staff are also getting to know Jason, beyond the nifty English accent he brings with him from his native land. Jason has long been pursuing his craft as a writer, and recently finished his first book, STELLA, a memoir about his mother's struggles with mental illness. Another first was the 1<sup>st</sup> birthday of his daughter that he and his wife celebrated this spring. But perhaps most impressively, he put the entire ATC staff to shame by completing his first ultramarathon – 31 miles in 6 hours and 14 minutes. We try to get him back by mocking the Queen's English with incredibly poor syntax and grammar. It makes him want to cry.

## Volunteer Fundraisers

Last year, 16 individuals joined our first-ever attempt to reach out to a broader community to raise money for ATC. They told their friends, families, and coworkers about ATC, and encouraged them to support our work. Thanks to their efforts, ATC has 24 new donors who contributed more than \$3,500 to the organization! Since this was our first attempt to do this, there were many challenges with logistics, but these individuals stuck with it, and made a real impact on ATC. Thank you so much to **Ye, Chau, Leslie, Jordan, both Christines, Leah, Megan, Nikki, Darcy, John, Patty, Katie, Meredith, Cari and Deb.** We appreciate that you value our work enough to share it with the people that you know. If anyone reading this is interested in doing something similar, please email Rob Gitin at [robgitin@atthecrossroads.org](mailto:robgitin@atthecrossroads.org).



*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).*