



Care for the Homeless Graduates First Class of Certified Advocates



Care for the Homeless graduated its first class of “Certified Care for the Homeless Advocates” on September 26, 2013, following a nine-class training course on policy issues, public speaking and advocacy techniques. This first class of Certified Advocates, comprised entirely of client leaders from the organization, included ten graduates, each of whom has experienced homelessness in New York City.

The graduating Certified Advocates told their personal stories at the event and connected their own story to a particular policy issue for which they are personally advocating. This diverse group of Members of the Graduating Class includes blacks and whites, men and women, straight and gay, those currently experiencing homelessness and some who are formerly homeless.

The personal stories included: a Ph.D. former college teacher who lost his eyesight, then his job and finally his home, a man who was sentenced to death at the age of 16 but had his sentence vacated in one of the last cases Justice Thurgood Marshall sat on for lack of due process because he was never certified as an adult, a man currently employed and living in a shelter but not making sufficient income to

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NYT Front Page Story: Two Jobs and Homeless? Not News to Us!

Two weeks ago the *New York Times* ran a story you can [read here](#) about the many people currently living in New York City homeless shelters (some of them Care for the Homeless clients) who work, sometimes full-time or even two jobs, but can't earn enough to get their families into permanent affordable housing. That wasn't news to us; we have clients like that.

Last week Care for the Homeless' Executive Director, Bobby Watts, had a letter published in *The Times* in response to the story, which you can [read here](#). At minimum wage even 3 jobs wouldn't support a family in most average two bedroom apartments.

That's why we're advocating for affordable housing programs for very low-income New Yorkers, supportive housing for those who need it, a housing first policy, modest subsidies to help those in shelters to move to permanent housing, and more.

Read more on the Care for the Homeless **Agenda to End Homelessness** on our web site: www.careforthehomeless.org.

CFH on the Radio

Care for the Homeless was featured on the Human Service Council's "Voices of Human Service" radio show on AM 1600 WWRL on September 29th. Client leader David Broxton and CFH's Policy Director Jeff Foreman talked about our recent client voter registration drive which recently signed up 247 new client voters, and handed out an additional 1,250 mail-in registration forms, our advocacy for policies to end homelessness as we know it and other CFH advocacy efforts.

Listen to the podcast on our web site: www.careforthehomeless.org.

Become an advocate today! Join us on Facebook and on Twitter for up-to-the-minute info.



Graduates continued ...

afford a stable home.

Others came to homeless through natural disaster, domestic violence, drug and alcohol problems, and inability to find or maintain employment.

The graduates advocate for access to appropriate health care and other human services, for affordable housing for very-low income people, for supportive housing for those who need it, for full funding for the SNAP food stamp program, for reinstatement of a 30% of income rent cap on those with HIV living in HIV-AIDS Support Administration (HASA) housing, for a "housing first" policy, and for better job training and education.

With the completion of the advocacy course, the group will launch a Care for the Homeless Speakers Bureau offering presentations to groups in New York City about policy issues related to services for people experiencing homelessness, affordable housing and what it's like to be homeless.

Members of the Graduating Class include: Calvin Alston, Al Arterburn, David Broxton, William Bryant, Ava Connor, Gayle Dorsky, Philip Malebranche, Garret McMahan, Vilna Miller and Anthony Williams.

"We're excited to talk about how good policy choices can prevent and end homelessness" said Anthony Williams, a graduate and Chairperson of one of the organization's client leader boards. "If people understand the issues, and hear our stories, it can inform the public discussion on critical issues."

"This is an opportunity to more effectively educate the public about policies that affect the fight to better deal with, prevent and eventually end homelessness," Care for the Homeless Executive Director Bobby Watts said. "I want New Yorkers to hear our clients' stories of having experienced homelessness, and in many cases overcome it and gone on to make valuable community contributions."

"We know the best way to influence public opinion on our issues is for the public to meet people and hear their personal experiences, and talk about how we can end homelessness through good public policy," according to David Broxton, Chairperson of one of the organization's client leader boards and also a graduate of the advocacy class. He said the group's Speakers Bureau will make presentations to community groups, religious congregations, schools, service clubs and others interested in the discussion.

The Advocacy Certification Training program was led by volunteer Board Policy Committee member Shani Penn, who taught classes in speaker techniques, and Care for the Homeless Policy Director Jeff Foreman, who led classes on the history of homelessness, policy issues and the solutions in the Care for the Homeless "Agenda to End Homelessness."

"Poor policies got us into this mess, and we believe better public policy can end modern homelessness as we know it," said Gayle Dorsky, one of the graduates.

How to Request a Speaker: Presentations featuring the Certified Advocates, are available to interested groups by contacting Jeff Foreman in the Policy Office at 212-366-4459, ext. 206 or via email at policy@cfhnyc.org.

Safety net programs face crisis in Washington

It might seem like *deja vu* but we're in another fiscal crisis of our own making in Washington. The House and Senate have been unable to agree on at least three major funding items that are critical to the country.

First, there's the budget. In recent years it's become usual to miss budget deadlines but keep the government going by passing temporary "Continuing Resolutions" to continue funding government at current levels until something is agreed to. In today's hyper-partisan and frequently nonfunctional environment, short term resolutions add little optimism of reaching a real agreement. They just kick the can down the road, and not very far either.

Second, the federal government will reach its debt limit, possibly in days but certainly no more than weeks, compounding the problem. The government can't legally spend more than its debt limit. So reaching the debt limit doesn't stop debt accumulation, it just stops the government from paying the bill.

Third, there's the ongoing issue of sequestration and cutbacks to critical safety net programs. Even though the federal deficit is declining, fairly quickly, there's still an argument raging about cutting the national debt. Last year's dramatic domestic spending sequestration cuts came on top of substantial 2011 cuts.

Funding for affordable housing, low income housing tax credits and grants for health care and other services for homeless people are far below recent years' levels and way below the actual need. But there are efforts to cut the safety net even more for the most vulnerable.

The SNAP program is an example. SNAP is current name for what most people call food stamps. There's no agreement on funding. There are four legislative proposals and none of them are very good. The Senate passed an agriculture bill cutting SNAP by \$3 billion over a decade. The House tried to pass a \$20 billion cut, but many members wanted a bigger cut! A third plan removed SNAP from the agriculture bill, but supporters wouldn't go along because it might mean no SNAP reauthorization. Finally the House passed a \$40 billion SNAP cut.

Take Action. Protect the poor and vulnerable. Call your Members of Congress – in the House and Senate – today and urge them to protect SNAP and what's left of America's safety net for vulnerable people. You can reach your Members of Congress through the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121. Please call today!