

## Director's Dispatch

After over four years of connecting with USM's many supporters through my capacity as the SLY case manager, it feels exciting to begin a new chapter – with you, with my co-workers, with the youth, and with the entire USM community.

At the close of 2007 the USM board offered me the position of USM's Executive Director. I accepted the position – and the many new challenges it brings – after much difficult consideration. What does it mean to become the director of an agency after many years of one-on-one engagement with youth? What does it mean to accept the learning curve and tackle a new type of role at USM? Am I ready to leave direct service? Most importantly, what does it mean to leave the relationships I've built with young adults in case management?

I decided to embark on this journey because I ultimately felt as though my voice as a former direct service staff might be well-heard by funders and the community at large. Perhaps I won't be as polished as other directors, but when it comes to the work we do, the reason we do it, and the youth we serve – I've decided that in the end polish doesn't matter. Honesty, compassion, and engage-

ment with the most at-risk youth sleeping in our streets does.

I look forward to meeting all of you again or for the first time, and please do not hesitate to contact me! It is my on-going aim to keep the USM community connected to the youth we serve – you are the individuals who understand why our youth need all of our support.

My last week of case management, a young woman who I've known for five years came to Teen Feed to say goodbye. As we hugged and I thanked her for the candle she gave me, we reflected on her path over the years. Her child is healthy and growing; she earned her GED and is re-enrolling in community college. Before we parted, she said "You just wait, you're going to hire me as a case manager in three years. ..."

It has been such a privilege to be warmly in the lives of our homeless young people on a daily basis. I look forward to doing work, now behind the scenes, to continue the sustainability of the connections we make with youth... and the connections youth make with us.

—Megan

## What to Give Right Now...

### GLOVES

One-size fits all gloves (adult, not kids-sized) are always in high demand. The most popular colors are black, blue, and green

### HAND SANITIZER

Many times our young people don't have access to places to wash their hands. Travel-sized bottles of hand sanitizer are easy to carry in a pocket or back pack to help keep them keep clean while staying mobile.

### BUS FARE

While USM does receive heavily discounted bus tickets from the city & Metro, adult bus fare just increased by 25¢, meaning that our supplies will not go as far this year. Tickets can be purchased from the metro store, or checks can be made out to USM with "bus tickets" on the subject line.

### UNDERWEAR

Clean NEW underwear is like gold here at USM, and can really make a client's day. All sizes and styles: boxers, briefs, bras, high cut, low cut, all colors.

For more ideas or to arrange a time to drop off donations, please contact Megan Gibbard: [megan@teenfeed.org](mailto:megan@teenfeed.org) or 206-522-4366 x4.



# Teen Feed Times

Spring 2008



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## Changes at USM

There have been some big personnel changes at USM in the past few months that will enable us to continue serving the youth of the University District and Seattle all the more successfully. We have hired a new outreach case manager, Ryan Fouts. Ryan has worked at New Horizons Ministries for almost 3 years so he already has experience working with a lot of the youth we serve. In his short time with us, Ryan has already established a positive rapport with his clients.

In addition, our previous case manager, Megan Gibbard, has accepted a promotion to be the new Executive Director at USM. This will allow us to take advantage of Megan's experience and skills (too numerous to list here!) in all aspects of the running of our organization. This includes performing the important development work for USM, because we recently said goodbye to one of our valuable staff.

At the end of December, development director Allison Lord took a full time position with Seattle Education Access, with whom we had shared her for the past year. The great work Allison performed has put USM in the most comfortable financial position in which it has ever been. This has allowed us to hire Megan as a full time executive director and still have a full time

case manager to work with youth on a one-to-one basis. So many, many thanks to Allison and best of luck to her new job with Seattle Education Access, another organization under the University District Service Providers (UDSP) umbrella.

With the development work of Allison now being taken on by Megan, and with her mentoring/training of the new case manager Ryan, it is evident that our faith in Megan's abilities in continuing to direct USM towards a more productive and healthy future is well founded.

—Bradley Papineau  
 Vice-Chairman  
 Board of Directors

*Whether it was oversight or modesty on his part, Brad forgot to mention having taken on the position of Vice-chair of the University Street Ministry Board of Directors. Brad's been an advocate with Teen Feed since the days of Tele ('99-'03 for those of us who weren't here!) and is a natural at building relations with our clients. His presence at Teen Feed each week allows a more direct and tangible presence for the board with our clients.*

*Also, a deep thanks from the whole staff team to Douglas Phonsavanh, who has served, on a volunteer basis, as our accountant for the past several years. Doug's expert guidance steered us through our financial crisis a few years ago, and to the healthy point we are at today.*

—Eric

SPRING 2008



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 Serving Homeless  
 Youth.

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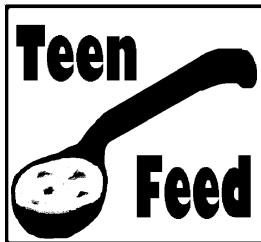
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## On Sweeps, 10-year Plans, and Seattle's Class War

As my regular volunteers can attest, it's been a busy winter at Teen Feed. With numbers averaging around 60 per night, we are seeing part of a larger trend here in Seattle: the number of homeless people is up. This year the One Night Count found a total of 2631 people on the streets of King County, an increase of 15% from 2007<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, Mayor Greg Nichols is (seemingly) trying to hurry along the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness by essentially criminalizing our cities' poor. Since last summer, reports of increased sweeps and patrols of parks have been coming in, and we are now faced with a new encampment

clearance protocol from the city for disposing of the belongings of people found "camping" in city parks. Hot on their heels, the Washington State Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT) has released guidelines based on the cities' protocols.<sup>2</sup>

Several young people I know were turned out of their squats during one of the coldest stretches we've seen this winter. Most of them had enough time to get their stuff out before the SPD showed up to evacuate the otherwise empty buildings. They were lucky that time. Some of these same folks were later arrested for sleeping under bridges or in parks, or had their possessions confiscated.

Why not stay at shelter? While we do have emergency shelter here in the U District, my colleagues at ROOTS have space for 25 young

adults 18-25, and the Youth Care Shelter has even less available beds for those under 18. Again, we are seeing about 60 young people a night for dinner. Do the math.

If I seem angry, it is because I am. Teen Feed plays a critical role in saving lives, and in helping provide a safe place for people to connect with other services while getting a nutritious meal, but we are doing triage work. We need your support, either through volunteer hours, or donations, but we also need to step up as an entire community and demand an end to the blatant class war being waged by the city against the poor. But then, the poor simply have some personal defect, right?

It makes a whole lot of people

really uncomfortable when we start to talk about real causes of homelessness as an epidemic. It's just so much easier to wring one's hands and blame the victim than to start to address root causes, because addressing root causes requires radical action and change, not ten year plans mandated by George Bush's Department of Housing and Urban Development, or city policies made to help clean up the streets and parks when those 10 Year Plans fail. It requires questioning our own lifestyles, and on whose backs they are built, and it means taking down the institutional forms of racism, classism, homophobia, transphobia<sup>3</sup> and sexism.

*Cont. on next page*

## Learning From Youth's Wisdom, Sharing in Their Lives



Hey there...my name is Ryan and I'm really excited to join USM as the SLY case manager! To give just a little background on myself, I grew up in Kansas and Colorado and have lived in Seattle since

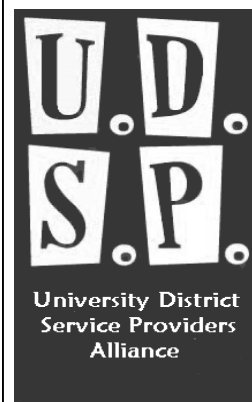
2002. I moved here to attend Seattle Pacific University where I got a degree in psychology. After graduating I completed a 1-year Urban Ministry internship (as well as two years of volunteering) with New Horizons Ministries, an organization located downtown that provides meals, emergency services and case management to homeless youth.

Having this background with homeless youth has made my transition into the U-District pretty seamless and, in the two months I've been at USM, I've been really encouraged by their willingness to engage with me. This work is certainly never without its challenges, but it is so great to hear their stories, to learn from their amazing wisdom, and to earn their trust. I am continually humbled by having the opportunity to work with them as they strive to achieve their goals.

There is one particular youth, who we'll call Jack, that I've really been able to learn from. When I first took this position, Jack made it pretty clear that he didn't feel confident working with me. Then, just a few days later he approached me and asked for assistance for getting his ID. Over the next few weeks we had many ups and downs, moments of struggle and frustration, etc. After about 3-4 weeks of working, he was finally able to get his ID and he was really excited. In our

conversations since then he mentioned his initial mistrust of me, but that he is thankful for the time I took to help him see his goal to completion. It's been amazing to sit with him throughout this process that has challenged us both and helped us to learn from each other. I can't wait to see what will happen next!

—Ryan



University Street Ministry is a Member Agency of the University District Service Providers Alliance.

The University District Service Providers Alliance (UDSPA) is a coalition of nonprofits working together to create a comprehensive continuum of services for homeless and street-involved youth and young adults. The UDSPA helps member agencies share resources and work together efficiently while pursuing our shared mission of offering a full spectrum of compassionate, quality care and support to Seattle's homeless and street-involved youth and young adults.

For more information, visit [www.udsp.org](http://www.udsp.org).

## Special Thanks to the following donors...



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Woody & Candace Pidcock

**...We couldn't do it without you!**

*Teen Feed, cont. from pg 2*

There are more homeless people on the streets of Seattle this year, and as my fiancé's bumper sticker says: "if you aren't outraged, you aren't paying attention."

—Eric

1. [www.homelessinfo.org](http://www.homelessinfo.org), accessed 3/5/2008.
2. "Learning From Tragedy?" Adam Hyla, Real Change News, Vol. 15 No. 10, Feb 27- March 4, 2008. [http://realchangenews.org/2008/2008\\_02\\_27/bhaul\\_v15n10.html](http://realchangenews.org/2008/2008_02_27/bhaul_v15n10.html),

accessed 3/5/2008.

3. Fun Fact: Transphobia is so not on our radar as a form of oppression that it keeps coming up as a misspelling when I type it, suggesting instead that I might mean "Tran phobia" (fear of Tran?). No such listing in the Miriam-Webster online dictionary either. For the record: Transphobia: an irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against transgendered people.

### Donate or volunteer with USM!

Please clip this form and send it in the enclosed envelope along with your donation.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Please send me more information on how I can help.

\_\_\_ I would like my donation to be listed as anonymous.

A financial contribution sufficient to:

- \$500- Provide fees and application costs for Washington State ID for 5 youth
- \$250- Provide 20 youth with direct mentoring and support with SLY Case Management
- \$200- Buy Teen Feed kitchen supplies for one month
- \$100- Buy 2 backpacks & 2 sleeping bags
- \$50- Give toiletries to 25 youth
- \$20- Buy bus tokens for 10 youth
- \$\_\_\_ Other Donation