

# Diane D. Nilan

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- Author—***Crossing the Line: Taking Steps to End Homelessness***
- Filmmaker—***My Own Four Walls; on the edge: Family Homelessness in America; REACH; Littlest Nomads; Worn Out Welcome Mat – Texas and Kansas***
- Blogger—***Invisible Homeless Kids*** and ***Wanderings*** ■ Activist, homelessness issues

## Experience

- 2005-present      **HEAR US Inc.** Naperville, IL, President and Founder  
national advocacy organization to give voice & visibility to homeless children & youth.
- Implemented national strategy to give homeless parents, youth & children voice & visibility.
  - Raised funds and developed HEAR US support base to initiate and complete film projects and activities.
  - Created website, blogs and brochures to promote HEAR US.
  - Conducted interviews with local and national media outlets.
  - Testified before Congress on homeless family/youth issues.
  - Presented HEAR US tools at workshops and speaking engagements nationwide.
  - Filmed interviews with 75 homeless kids nationwide; co-produced ***My Own Four Walls***.
  - Collaborated with national leaders on national advocacy efforts.
  - Traveled 250,000+ miles nationwide to non-urban areas to chronicle family/youth homelessness.
  - Wrote series of essays published by newspapers and blog sites on homelessness.
  - Advocated for changes in federal laws to help homeless children and youth.
  - Co-filmed/produced feature-length award-winning documentary ***on the edge: Family Homelessness in America***, shown on PBS affiliates across the country.
  - Produced ***REACH***, film to empower incarcerated parents, provide user-friendly McKinney-Vento information.
  - Filmed/produced ***Littlest Nomads***, a short film about homeless infants and toddlers.
  - Filmed/produced ***Worn Out Welcome Mat –Texas and Kansas***, short films about doubled up families and youth in Texas and Kansas.
  - Filmed/produced ***Unmasked*** series for Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness.
- 2003-2005      **PROJECT REACH**, 8 suburban counties outside Chicago, Founder and Director  
lead liaison for McKinney-Vento implementation
- Created innovative approach to provide McKinney-Vento technical assistance
  - Monitor compliance of 305 Chicagoland school districts.
  - Developed website, brochures, displays and a variety of training materials.
  - Conducted trainings on homeless educational rights to administrators, educators and others.
  - Participated in national homeless education policy group.
  - Utilized media to develop awareness of and interest in this issue.
- 1990–2003      **Hesed House & Public Action to Deliver Shelter**, Aurora, IL, Associate Director and  
Program Director (Center for ministry to very poor and homeless persons)
- Solidified volunteer support—over 5,000 from over 60 faith communities—trained and coordinated volunteers.
  - Planned and implemented nationally-recognized successful advocacy activities.
  - Successfully created and lobbied for federal and state legislation, including a law guaranteeing homeless children access to education.
  - Assisted rural, suburban and urban communities' efforts to begin homeless shelters.
  - Served as spokesperson on homelessness with national, state and local media; public speaker for organization.
  - Advocated for local, state and federal policies to benefit homeless children and adults.
  - Hired, trained and supervised shelter staff, special projects college and masters' level interns.
  - Oversaw nightly shelter, maintaining safe environment for 120+ homeless adults, children, volunteers & staff.
  - Presented workshops at local, state and national conferences.

## Education

1969–1973      College (now University) of St. Francis, Joliet, IL, B.A., Philosophy

## Awards

2015, NAEHCY, Best Targeted Campaign Award, *Worn Out Welcome Mat - KS*  
2015, Sisters of St. Francis, Mother Alfred Moes Award  
2014, University of St. Francis, Sister Clare Award  
2013, Texas Homeless Network, Kathy Reid Award  
2012, NAEHCY, Sandra Neese Lifetime Achievement Award  
2012, The Education Center, Naperville, Kids' Best Friend Award  
2012, Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness, Community Builder Award  
2012, Bridge Communities, Transforming Lives Award  
2008, Naperville Church Women United, Human Rights Award  
2007, National Association for Education of Homeless Children Youth (NAEHCY), Outstanding Media Award  
2006, Kane County (IL) Hidden Hero; and University of St. Francis Award of Merit

## Professional Affiliations

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth  
Friends of Imiliwaha (founding member, board of directors)

## Interests

Photography/videography, travel, reading, disc golf, kayaking, hot air ballooning, social media