

Now is the Time...
to help homeless kids!



HEAR US Inc.

2008 Annual Report

*...giving voice and visibility to
homeless children & youth...*

Dear Friends,

During my past 4 years on the road, filming, giving talks, and encountering empathetic persons, I've been simultaneously inspired and exasperated about the plight of more than 1.5 million homeless children and youth in America. *Now is the time to help!*

I've seen more backroads than most ever will. I've met courageous young persons willing to speak publicly and articulately about life without a home. I've seen caring professionals exceed expectations as they assist soaring numbers of homeless families and teens. I've listened to concerned individuals dismayed by the scope of poverty and homelessness in our country. *Now is the time to help!*

I've had the privilege of introducing and sharing the stage with the young homeless experts featured in our acclaimed HEAR US documentary, *My Own Four Walls*. I've witnessed their profound effect on a variety of audiences. *Now is the time to help!*

And I've joined with other steadfast advocates who believe our country can better address myriad needs of homeless families and youth. Our efforts in Congress, while temporarily stymied by a diminishing hesitation to acknowledge the existence of millions of homeless young people, have begun to show positive results. More is needed. *Now is the time to help!*

We urge systemic changes and improved local responses to improve lives of homeless children and youth. The HEAR US commitment to inspire a COMPASSION EPIDEMIC reflects generous support of our nationwide network of believers. *Now is the time to help!*

Our success depends on continued support. You can be part of the solution. *Now is the time to help!*

Gratefully,

Diane Nilan
President

FINANCIAL

2008-09 INCOME		HEAR US accomplishes a great deal for modest sums, thanks to extraordinary in-kind donations from supporters:
Donations	\$30,914	
Sales	28,044	
Grants	16,500	
Events	11,905	
Consulting	10,070	
Misc.	904	
TOTAL INCOME	\$98,337	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video services Dr. Laura Vazquez, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL • Web services Dan Riefstahl of Pixel Point Creative, Erie, PA • HEAR US site hosts: Bob and Elaine Lehman, Reno, NV; Mary Jean and Rich Horna, Scottsdale, AZ; Olga Ferris, Ft. Worth, TX; St. Peter's Convent, Mansfield, OH, Sacred Heart Monastery, Lisle, IL ; Andrew College, Cuthbert, GA; Hope Haven Shelter, DeKalb, IL
2008-09 EXPENSES		
Admin	\$2,912	
Phone/Internet	2,791	
Equipment	1,778	
Grant Activity	2,680	
Rent	1,298	
Program Materials	9,330	
Travel	5,877	
Video		
Production/Dist.	4,353	
Personnel, salary & taxes	54,344	
Health Insurance	4,642	
Retirement	1,200	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$91,205	<i>Undoubtedly, and regretably, some inkind contributors will be omitted. Our deepest regrets.</i>

In addition to the oversight of the HEAR US board and treasurer, Sr. Helen Jilek, OSB, Mr. James Robbs, CPA, of Frank L. Sassetti & Co., Oak Park, IL oversees accurate and timely submissions of required reporting forms. The HEAR US 990 form is public information and is available upon request.

HEAR US Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

HEAR US Projects, Products & Services

MY OWN FOUR WALLS

Award-winning documentary collection (DVD) brings faces and voices of homeless children and youth to audiences everywhere. Serves as a training tool for homeless education efforts.

IT'S ABOUT THE CHILDREN

Series of children's books and images raise awareness and evoke compassion for homeless children. Pat Van Doren's books are guaranteed to increase compassion and inspire action for homeless kids.

JONATHON'S HEART

Free college e-curriculum to accompany *My Own Four Walls*. Resources include reading lists and lesson plans designed to heighten awareness of future educators, social workers and other human service staff.

REACH

Outreach materials empower homeless parents or caretakers by explaining rights under McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act that ensure educational stability for homeless students. Also helpful for a variety of audiences.

ON THE EDGE

Feature-length documentary depicting lives of mothers who experienced homelessness. Currently in production with the goal of broad viewership. Dr. Laura Vazquez, media professor at Northern Illinois University, and Diane are working on this compelling documentary.

PRESENTATIONS & PRESENCE

HEAR US conducts presentations to a variety of audiences including educators, human service providers, university and college students and the general public.

The HEAR US website offers a plethora of resources, including updated media articles about homelessness from across the U.S. and advocacy projects.

LEARNING CURVE EXPRESS

The most ambitious HEAR US cross-country tour will bring stories from invisible homeless children and youth into congressional offices and local communities via YouTube.

COMPASSION EPIDEMIC

HEAR US believes in people's capacity for goodness and action. By providing simple advocacy activities and education tools, people will be able to respond locally and systemically to the issue of invisible homeless children.

MORE INFORMATION MAY BE FOUND ON THE
HEAR US WEBSITE, WWW.HEARUS.US

Age-Old Problem—Lack of Awareness

Since homelessness hit this nation's radar screen in the 1980s, one sub-population was, and continues to be, largely ignored—little people—children and youth, with families and without.

Despite dogged efforts of national and local advocates, the lack of awareness continues to stymie two essential areas: access to school, and federal resources for adequate housing, education and other essential services.



HEAR US accepted the challenge to raise awareness and increase sensitivity to this often invisible population. Some progress is seen—but much more remains to be accomplished.

HEAR US is creating a *compassion epidemic*, generating local responses to local needs and inspiring a grass-roots movement to improve national policies to address issues affecting homeless families and teens. HEAR US collaborates with local agencies and key national organizations.

Powerful Tools Make a Difference

HEAR US uses technology to raise awareness of and sensitivity to homeless children and youth via the HEAR US comprehensive website, blogs, and other social networking tools.

My Own Four Walls brings compelling, experienced experts into schools, worship places, community meetings, and university classrooms, inspiring thousands across the country.



Related HEAR US materials—children's and adult's books, posters, e-curriculum, brochures—provide valuable tools for myriad uses, all conveying the little-known reality—millions of homeless children and youth in this country are being ignored.

HEAR US Plans

LEARNING CURVE EXPRESS Fall 2009 is the start of an intensive, dual-purpose effort to:

- enlighten Congress about the existence and reality of invisible homeless children and youth across the land
- inspire a *compassion epidemic* to generate increased local actions to help homeless kids.

Utilizing well-honed methods, Diane will visit communities and invite children and teens to share their stories on camera. Students in the Northern Illinois University Communication department will edit and produce short clips to post on the HEAR US *Learning Curve Express* YouTube site. Inviting local

media attention, Diane will also connect with area congressional offices to encourage them to view and respond to their young homeless constituents. Hopefully, seeing the short film clip will open their eyes and minds to the reality of local homeless kids.

HEAR US Support

Sales of videos and books, honoraria, grants and donations comprise the bulk of income. The HEAR US Bene-feast event held in October '08 generated both essential funding and wholehearted supporters. Online donation capacity and a small but steady stream of supporters balance the fiscal operations.

HEAR US Strengths

One benefit of an organization with a literally focused mission is flexibility to explore, expand and revise activities as needed. HEAR US has kept an eye on the core issue facing homeless families and youth—invisibility that hampers this nation's ability to comprehensively implement solutions—and has developed essential awareness-raising efforts to counter obstacles. Building relationships with national organizations provides synergy for current and future campaigns.

HEAR US Board & Advisors

Diane Nilan	Founder, President, Staff
Ken Johnson Oswego IL	Vice President Technical Director
Marilyn McGowan Aurora IL	Secretary
Helen Jilek, OSB Lisle IL	Treasurer
Rita Sullivan Carol Stream IL	Community Outreach and Development
Karen Turk St. Charles IL	Community Outreach and Development
Pat Van Doren Naperville IL	Media Advisor
Nancy Wiersum Naperville IL	Community Outreach and Development
Maria Wilson Naperville IL	Vice President, Resource Development
Dr. Laura Vazquez DeKalb IL	Media Partner

Name	Position/Affiliation
Barbara Duffield	Policy Director, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHYC), Washington DC
Diana Bowman	Director, SERVE, National Center for Homeless Education, Greenville NC
Edgar Barens	Documentary filmmaker, advisor, A Sentence of Their Own, Aurora IL
Judd Lofchie	Co-Founder of Streetwise (Chicago homeless newspaper), President, Lofchie & Associates, Aurora IL
Erika Wilson	DuPage County Sheriff Deputy
Patrick Perez	Kane County Sheriff Department, Sheriff Coach, youth program leader
Dan Riefstahl	Owner, Pixel Point Creative (web design), Webmaster, LCBA Erie PA
Ellie Nilan	Community Volunteer, Stone Mountain, GA
Markus Redding	Professor, Columbia University School of Social Work Attorney, New York City

*We don't accomplish anything
in this world alone ...
and whatever happens is the result of the
whole tapestry of one's life and
all the weavings of individual threads
from one to another that creates something.*
Sandra Day O'Connor



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