

THE SPRINGS ECHO

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Colorado Springs, CO. December 2019

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A Street Paper

SUGGESTED DONATION \$2.00

*In Memoriam
Raven Canon
1976-2017*



- For Anam Cara & all souls on the street.
- For Lee & the light he brings to us all!
- For Alicia - the best that we can be!
- For John S. & the PE Library Staff.
- For the Prez & Laszlo @ Rico's.
- For Wendy & her kind, brave heart.
- For Andy: On the frontlines everyday!
- For John C. & the Old Town Bike Shop.
- For Evan and The Perk Downtown.
- For Peter & Mary; A lifetime of love!
- For Mr. Thomas, my friend in literature.

FROM THE STREETS OF COLORADO SPRINGS

Happy Holidays



We Are Thankful For

Catholic Charities, Marian House, Andy, Michael, Corey, Jim & the Dedicated, Supportive Staff & Volunteers

Family Promise, Kat & ALL members of the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)

Homeward Pikes Peak, Beth, Jansen, John & the Whole, Wonderful, Caring Team!

R. J. Montgomery Salvation Army Shelter, Brian, the Staff, & Volunteers

Springs Rescue Mission, Larry Yonker, the Staff & Volunteers

Westside Cares, Kristy, & the Awesome, Amazing Staff & Volunteers

Bless You All For Your Amazing Work!

- For Fred, Mike, & RAWTools.
- For Steve Handen, a life well-lived!
- For Bill Sulzman & the enduring power of an idea!
- For Esther K. and The Longest Night!
- For Garvey, the Street Philosopher.
- For all of our Amazing Vendors.
- For the Dedicated VOLUNTEERS at The Springs Echo. (Much, Much Love!)

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Bus Beat

by Tom Noonan



“Adopt a Stop”

What would happen if everyone reading the “Bus Beat” adopted a bus stop? What would it look like and what are the possibilities? Many cities have such programs, yet Mountain Metro Transit does not, yet! If we wait for Mountain Metro Transit, it might be some time before anything happens. We don’t have to wait and can act now using our own ideas.

“Adopt a Stop” may take many different forms? Something as simple as leaving change or a bus pass for the next rider can make the difference in someone’s day. Yes, someone other than a bus rider might take the change. At least they had to visit the bus bench to do so, which might be a step towards riding the bus in the future.

Around town “Little Libraries” and “Little Food Pantries” are appearing in neighborhoods. Typically, bus riders are poor materially and gifts of books and food are appreciated and help pass the time before the next bus. Colorado Springs still has many buses only running on an hourly frequency; so, a snack or book might help ease the wait for someone waiting for the next bus. With our unpredictable weather, leaving an umbrella, gloves, hats, sunglasses, or other items helping to deal with the changing climate are a good idea.

Only approximately one percent of the city populations rides the bus for a wide variety of reasons. Those who ride the bus help reduce air, water, and noise pollution for everyone while also reducing traffic. All these results are good for our environment local and globally.

“Adopt a Stop” might also may include keeping the bus stop clean. Leaving a container for recycling is another option. Drawing chalk art on the sidewalk can be a creative way to brighten up a bus stop.

Another idea is visiting with people while they wait for the bus. Many years ago, I remember reading a toy wrapper inside a box of Cracker Jacks with words that still echo many years later: “Kind words cost little yet are worth a great deal.” Lending an ear to a waiting passenger, even if they are venting, allows us an opportunity to be empathetic and compassionate.

Finally, we want your input on improving public transportation in our community. Send us your ideas for “Adopt a Stop” and other suggestions for making public transportation more appealing in Colorado Springs. Please remember, the best way to support transit is to ride the bus. We welcome your comments, and enjoy the ride. Thank you for supporting transit in our community.

Please contact us at BeUnitedServants@gmail.com

Tom Noonan

Who We Are - The Echo Team

We’re just a small group of volunteers who give of our time and energy hoping that our work might ease the burden on our friends and neighbors. If you would like to help with this project, the thing we need most are donations to cover the printing costs of the paper. Please reach out to us at:

contact@thespringsecho.com

Deadly Words

by Elizabeth Woodcock

Deadly Words

A shadow of a laugh
is all she’ll ever be
She waits for her moment
which never will she see
clinging to the words
For which she’ll never say
Who knows no time of day

Why these chains they never break
Well she will never know
And these fears they make her shake
But never will she show

for life is but a road to death
And getting harder every day
Holding on for one last breath
yet Breathless as they say,
“you’re ugly, you’re fat, there’s just no hope
go tie your neck up with this rope.”

They’ve trapped her in a room
With no fight left to give
For they know not of her gloom
So they think that she will live
It’s all a joke they say
We’re just having fun
Still they keep her trapped away
But she’s had enough
She’s done.

they hear her scream
they hear her shout
but never will they let her out
for she knows that she is weak
And broken at the heart
She can not even speak
Where would she even start

so when the road came to an end
no more labors did she tend
for with the rope she fell asleep
and the ones who spoke
they did not speak
and silent voices they shall keep!

Wendy's Story

by Wendy Minick

My life started out in the country of Indiana. My family had provided a good life for us out in the country. Growing up, I developed an interest in arts and music. I had always liked to draw, color, put puzzles together, crochet and embroider. I also played the harmonica, the trumpet, the recorder and piano.

After I had graduated from high school, I went into the Army National Guard. I spent five years in the Army National Guard. In those five years, I had gotten married to another soldier and started a family while serving in the military. I eventually received an honorable medical discharge after the military discovered I had developed a serious medical condition.

After I left the Army National Guard, I divorced my spouse and I had moved to another state with both my children. I had moved to the city of Denver, Colorado. I had started raising my children as a single parent in Denver after I got reestablished in a new environment. I also started training in school for electrical engineering. Then I got employed at Arrow Electronics. I was employed there for five years. Then I decided to change fields and entered Diesel College. Then I had gone to Arapahoe Community College and studied automotive. I also had to take other courses at a different college because the courses I needed to take weren't being offered by the college I was going to. So, I went to Denver Community College for the academics. I started working at Sears Auto Centers, and I worked there for six years.

My parents had split up since I was eight years old. Then my mother had decided to move to Colorado to be near me and my children. My mother had to stay with me and my children off and on. At least until my mother's untimely death.

My mother's passing was not only difficult on an emotional level, but my mother's passing was difficult on a financial level as well. I was made

attorney in my mother's will. I was not only responsible for my mother's funeral cost, but also for all the past bills my mother had left behind which had eventually put me in a financial bind.

After paying her funeral costs and her past bills, it left me not being able to afford my own living expenses for myself and my children. It's the first time I had ever embarked on being homeless. I went to go speak to my pastor about what I should really do. He was kind and very generous to tell me that I could stay at his church for a little while. I stayed four months at my pastor's church. My pastor had posted an ad on the internet for employment on social apps for me. Then a woman responded to the ad, and I started working for her and her family out in the country between Colorado Springs and Pueblo. I had worked for the lady and her family for a year. The job didn't seem as promising as I thought. I had ended up leaving the woman's home and moving to Colorado Springs. I had moved into Skylark apartments. I had resided there for a year and a half. I was served with an eviction letter.

The landlord proclaimed that my son had caused destruction to his property. So, we were requested to vacate his property. I had no other choice but to be forced into homelessness for the second time. I couldn't ask my children to help me when they had their own families to take care of. I also couldn't ask my siblings to help me because I already had, and they refused. I couldn't ask my parents because they are both deceased. Which led me back to being homeless again. I finally found a couple of local homeless shelters that could help me and had allowed me to reside there.

After two years of being homeless, I was finally prospering, and I was able to finally get myself back into a home.

I had prayed a lot and went to church weekly.

After all I had gone through, The Lord finally answered my prayers and I was blessed with my own home.

The lord works in very mysterious ways and does answer prayers.

I had prayed a lot and went to church weekly.



"The Lord works in very Mysterious Ways...and does answer prayers."

All stories can be found on *The Springs Echo* Facebook Page or at www.thespringsecho.com

Getting To Know You

“Pat Holley and...”

Patricia Anne Holley (“Pat”), a single mom to three children, former caterer, and present day angel on Earth, met me at the door to her Colorado Springs residence one windy, late afternoon in October. She tugged a small respirator behind her and greeted me with a smile and a “Hello, c’mon in!” The wind presents a challenge for people like Pat who battle COPD, so it was a good day to stay indoors and chat.

At almost 80-years-old, Pat finds meaning in helping people who are experiencing homelessness. She and two other “Rose Ladies” use part of their Social Security income each month to make 30 one-gallon supply kits for people in need. On the last Thursday of every month, they set up a little “store” along West View Place in downtown Colorado Springs, between Marian House Soup Kitchen and Monument Creek. Within 30 minutes, the kits are gone. The demand and the need are that high. Readers, please meet Pat Holley.



You can find a complete transcript of our conversation on the [Springs Echo Facebook page](#), or at www.TheSpringsEcho.com.

So, Pat, are you a native of Colorado?

No, I was born and raised in Oklahoma; I moved to Colorado Springs in 2012.

What brought you here?

My daughter. She was concerned about me living alone as I got older with my health problems; she is also a single mom. She had one boy who was already in college and her youngest one was getting ready to leave for college, so she would be an empty

nester. It was good timing. I was ready to quit working and my only source of income would be Social Security which is hard to live on.

What did you do in your professional life?

Oh gracious! So many things. I worked for a health food store, owned a catering business, and I was in the

insurance business. I was also a customer service manager for a company that made implantable hearing devices. I did a lot of things. It was fun.

My understanding is that you advocate for people who are experiencing homelessness in Colorado Springs.

Not so much advocate; I’ve always had a concern for the homeless. Two years ago I read a Point in Time article talking about the different homelessness. There had been so much talk about people coming here because of pot - that these weren’t real Colorado people, but in that count they found that 61 percent of the homeless had at one time owned a home in Colorado Springs. So, not only were they not

from other places, they were homeowners; and 75 percent of that 61 percent were veterans. That bothered me. These are people who sacrificed their lives for us and they’re living on the streets. That’s not right. Homelessness is a huge problem as you well know because there’s no one reason that causes it. There are those who just don’t want to work and there’s not much you can do about that. There

are those who have mental health problems. There are people who have had uninsured health expense bills and lost everything. There are people who are working and just not making enough to buy or rent; we don’t have affordable housing around here. So it’s overwhelming to an individual who wants to help and wonders, “What can I do?”

There used to be a TV program called *Hallmark Hall of Fame*. One night they had a play that was all done in poetry form. A woman died and all the mourners were standing around her grave. Each one was taking a turn saying what they thought had caused her death. She had had a horrible life. But the last one to speak said, “I don’t

think she died of thorns as everyone supposes. I think, instead, she must have died from a lack of roses.” I thought, “Okay. I can’t fix the thorns as one person, but I can spread some roses.” So, I found some friends who were like-minded and wanted to help.

One day a month we go to the park by Marian House and give away goods that the homeless need. We have what we call a “kit”; it’s a gallon Ziploc bag. Every month it will have new socks and wet wipes because they don’t have access to water. It will have a snack food pack with healthy snacks, and other products. It might be hygiene products. In November it will be warm caps and gloves.

We’re doing this out of our own pockets. None of us is rich, so we can only do about 30 people at a time. We also hand out bottled water. Then, in the back of one of the cars, we have what’s called ‘The Little Store’ and it’ll have a mixture of things that have been donated or that we’ve bought. It might be hydrocortisone because a lot of them have eczema. It might be ACE bandages or foot powder. Anything people need who are living on the street. One thing we found there was a big need for was stamped envelopes. Their stuff gets thrown away, or torn up, or they need a new driver’s license or Social Security card... they have to write for those. Well, what do you do if you don’t have money to buy a stamp or an envelope? So we always have stamped envelopes and they always go.

We always have nail polish. I mean you may be a woman living on the streets, but you still want to look good. That nail polish goes 90 to nothing! It just cracks me up.

Harbor Freight hates us. Oh my God, they hate us. They have all these

Profiles In Courage

...The Rose Ladies” by Stacie Gonzalez

coupons that are come-ons; they're supposed to get you in to buy something big. We use the coupons to buy big packs of batteries for \$1.99. There's like 40-some odd batteries in there. Then if you buy the batteries, you get a free flash light! I've got more coupons for tarps and people who are homeless love tarps because they build lean-tos and whatever else with them. We'll get more free flashlights. We're not buying the big things Harbor Freight is hoping we will buy with the coupons; we're getting our stuff for the homeless.

We also always take women's hygiene products: Kotex and other things they don't have access to. We ask each month: "Is there anything you need?" I'm always surprised at what they say. One time they said, "Q-Tips. Could we get Q-Tips?" Sure, we can bring you Q-Tips. That's not a problem. "Kleenex. Can we get Kleenex?" Yes, just let us know what you need and next time we'll bring that. They know that we come the last Thursday of the month. We pick Thursday because that's when the free veterinarian comes. We also take pet food. People experiencing homelessness will feed their animals before they feed themselves.

We get a lot of hugs and a lot of "God bless you." I had cataract surgery, and I put gauze pads over my eyes because there was no way I would say, "Don't touch me you're too dirty." I didn't want an eye infection either. [Laughter]

So let's talk about that. Have you ever feared catching a disease?

Catch a disease by touching a homeless person or giving them a hug? No, no, no, and I've been doing this for over a year. I've yet to catch anything from a homeless person other than goodwill.

Does your group have a name?

Yes, "The Rose Ladies" because of that

play.

What time do The Rose Ladies set up on Thursdays?

At 11:00 a.m. We're cleaned out in 30 minutes.

Are you accepting donations from the community?

Yes, yes, yes.



How would someone make a donation?

Logistically the best way would be to email me because we collect everything at my house. Right now we have enough warm hats and gloves to do 30 kits. We also have enough scarves, but I will not put those in the kits. We will put them up on a table in a big box because the homeless never get to

choose anything and I think it would be fun if they could choose their own color and style that appeals to them.

Have you ever had a problem with the police? How do they view your operation?

Not in this context, no. Oh! I learned one thing. Often the homeless re-

you can cook over it." I thought, "God! You will burn down the woods somewhere." I don't know that we want that liability.

I'm struck by your generosity. I can also see that you have a health condition that makes it difficult to get around. Would you talk about your sense of empathy and concern? How did it develop? What do you attribute it to?

Seeing the homeless on the street. Sometimes you see a homeless person with a walker. Sometimes you'll see them with legs so swollen it's difficult to know how they're walking. You see people that look old--their skin and their hair-- but when you talk to them you realize they're not, it's just the life they've had to live.

I wake up every morning with a roof over my head and a soft bed; with clothes on my body and more in the closet; and food in my fridge; and people living with me who love me and care about me and friends who check on me all the time and will help any time they need to. I am so far ahead of some people I meet that it's unbelievable. All my life I've volunteered. If you can help somebody who's not got it as good as you do, you do it.

I'm not a rich person, but the homeless have less than I do. If you can help them, why not? Why should you not do it? It makes little sense not to. If we all helped one another, we would be in a lot better shape than we are. [Pat points to a large white button on her chest.] This is my button: Be Kind.

quest hand sanitizer. The first time we took it it went like wildfire. One lady who had gotten it from the store was standing near me. I said, "Boy, that's a popular item," and she said, "Oh yeah, you put a little in a can and light it and



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Getting To Know You

Derrick Murphy

Derrick Murphy, Jr., 28, is a single parent, veteran, business owner, and a security guard for Pikes Peak Library District. He's also charming, articulate, and clean-cut. If you met Murphy, it might come as a surprise to learn he spent most of 2018 homeless. Why? Child support obligations in two states exceeded what he could afford. He lost everything, including his credit. But with the help of a local non-profit, Partners in Housing, and Murphy's determination to create a sense of home for his family and see his business dreams through, Murphy is slowly getting back on his feet.

Hi, Derrick, it's nice to meet you. Thank you for this conversation. I understand you were recently homeless.

I was, yes, that's correct.

Are you homeless now?

No, not no more. I'm in Partners in Housing right now.

Congratulations! I would like to talk about that, but first let's help readers get to know you. Will you tell me a bit about yourself?

I own a coffee business called "Just a Cup - Coffee and Coffee Creamers." We specialize in organic-based coffee creamers. We have our own bean, our own coffee. In 2016 - 2017 I had contracts around Colorado Springs with different places. That's how we made the bulk of our money before we went homeless.

Do you have family?

I do have family. I have kids. I have two boys and one girl. My youngest is five months, we just had her. I have one that is 4 and another one that is 9. My oldest is living in California, my youngest is here. I have one sister. She's older than me. We are two years apart; her name is Julissa. She lives in Dallas, Texas.

Are you married?

I'm not married. I have a fiancé.

Are you a native of Colorado?

I've been here for a little while. I'm actually from Germany. I was raised in Baltimore, Maryland and we moved here with my parents being in the military. I went to Widefield High School. My father retired after 20-25 years in the United States Army.

What was growing up like for you as a boy?



It was fun. I had a good family. My dad was amazing, my mom was amazing. My parents divorced when I was in sixth grade. Things changed after that. My mom was a single mom for

"...It's tough. It's hard. I know God is good though. I know we'll make a way. I know what happened..."

a while. My father was still in the military at the time; he retired, and then got remarried.

So how did you get into the coffee-business?

My mom has a friend that was in touch with Rod Smith, a partner with Organo Gold Coffee Company. Organo is an organic coffee marketing-type company. We got into the business. I started with Organo Gold and then I branched out and worked into creating a system that everybody

"Just a Cup, LLC." If anybody wants to follow us, they can follow us at justacupLLC on all social media platforms.

Alright, so let's talk about how you became homeless. What happened?

So I pay child support for two kids. I pay for one in California and one in Colorado Springs. When I had my second son in 2015 me and their mother

had an agreement that she wasn't going to put me on child support, and I was going to pay for the day care. When I paid for the daycare, things unfolded there that was not due to my end, and it just trickled down from there.

When I was put on child support from my youngest son's mom, it raised up my amount that I paid monthly. It set back my child support in California and then I was hit in arrears. They levied our bank account and froze it for a month; we lost everything from there.

could buy and that's when I introduced creamers.

Are you still developing "Just a Cup?"

I am. We're just starting to kick it back off again. We created a website and we're doing the marketing now. We're letting people sample it and we're making sure we still have that edge and that people are still interested. We'll be taking orders from customers

Can you talk numbers just to give people a sense for how much you were paying?

I pay \$900 a month in child support, and then rent, on top of bills. It's tough. It's hard. I know God is good though. I know we'll make a way. I know what happened. I've been through a lot, so this right here is not gonna stop me from getting to the goal.

Plus I just had my daughter. I love her so much. She's so beautiful. Every time I see her, it pushes me more to get to where we want to get. My lady has three kids of her own from a previous marriage as well. So, they come back and forth to the house. We have a big family and I have a lot on my shoulders, so I can't slow down. So I thank you for this.

Profiles In Courage

“God is Good” by Stacie Gonzalez

I have so many questions.

I know. I have a big story.

You do. Where should we start? How about the first moment you realized things were crashing down.

I was married when I was in the Army. We got divorced and I did child support because of the divorce. I was paying that child support since 2011; it was already set in stone.

It was my youngest son's mom that did all this. The agreement was I was gonna pay for daycare to avoid child support. We agreed upon that at the courthouse. Fast forward some months. She finds some man, she gets remarried, and everything spirals from there. Once she got married, she acted like I didn't do anything - like I was never there - but I was there. I've been there since the beginning when my son was born. There was never a time she couldn't drop my son off.

But the first moment for me, was when my son's stepfather made a comment at the daycare that I pay for, that he wasn't going to bring my child back. It hit the director and the director called me. I used to work on Fort Carson. I used to work for the CYS NAF [Child Youth Services Non-Appropriated Funds]. I used to help plan programs and curriculums for teenagers and kids of all ages. That's where I used to work when everything transpired after that comment my son's stepfather made. Of course, I was furious and irate, so I went to confront it, and things blew up. My son's mother took him out of daycare and when she took him out of daycare, she put me on child support. They ruled in her favor because I had

no overnights because she did take him from me. So, I was still paying for daycare even though my son wasn't there because that's the agreement we had.

Once she took him out, that's when everything started unfolding. She had a lawyer that ran me through the mud. They did not know the real rea-



son my son wasn't in the daycare. I got hit with the biggest amount that you can think of and then she said that she couldn't find a safe day care to put my son in off post.

So, they gave her husband ownership over my son for the daycare on Fort Carson. They put my son back in the same daycare that everything happened at, just up under her.

Then the daycare started treating me

differently even though I worked there. That's the thing: I worked for that company. So, they were letting this man pick up my son without permission. It was because he had the card from her, but they were supposed to check him at the door.

But after that child support [was ordered], everything was good and we was on top of our bills, but I didn't know I was collecting arrears for California the whole time I was paying child support here. The child support I pay here, at that time, was \$522, and then it went up to like \$600. I thought they would only take the amount I had, so if this is all I was getting, this was all you could get at the end of the day. That's when we woke up to a \$100.00 legal fee in the bank account. We went to pay our rent and bills and we couldn't. We had a levy on the account because my name was on the account. It wasn't even my account; it was my lady's account. But because I was partnered to it, they froze everything. So, we had no money for like a month; we couldn't do any-

thing. We had an eviction notice come.

It was our second eviction notice; we couldn't back out of this one. So, I lost my place. We lost the place together because we were living as a family together. I lost both my cars. I literally lost everything. I don't really have

anything to my name at this time except the business.

Alright, so you've got the daycare expense plus Colorado and Florida child support hitting you at the same time.

At the same time. On top of my family, on top of my lady's kids and everything, and the business. I was just taking care of life, basically. We wasn't living the best, but it wasn't the worst. It was decent. We was making it happen. After they granted the child support and put my son back in the daycare, that's when things started changing. My son's mother was asking me for (additional) amounts when I was paying the daycare. Daycare was \$198 a month. That's a full-time day care. You don't find that around here. But then it went from \$198 to \$498 because her husband was in the Army and they went off his pay. So, she was asking me about money that she wanted me to pay her for the daycare because she said she wasn't getting full child support. I thought, “you kind of messed yourself over.” She should have just stuck to the \$198, but I didn't have it at the time.

I had to leave the job at Fort Carson because it was a toxic environment after that. I had to have the director type a statement for me to show proof to the courts that this man really said he wasn't going to bring my son back, but I didn't get the opportunity to present my evidence because I missed a lot of the court dates. I didn't even know I was on child support. I was moving from my mom's house to a new place with my lady, so I didn't get that mail.

It was a lot. It was a lot. I never really got to tell my story. Because when I was sitting in the courtroom, you'd tell people certain things and they don't believe you, they think it's a lie and that you're just trying to get out of whatever trouble you're in, but it's a real story.

**Continued on The Springs Echo Facebook Page
or at www.thespringsecho.com**

Getting To Know You

Alicia Kwande, LCSW

Most days you'll find Alicia Kwande, 38, meandering through the stacks at Penrose Library in downtown Colorado Springs, keeping a watchful eye on the sea of patrons who sit comfortably in chairs and at desks. She smiles, says hello, and is a calming presence for anyone who wants to chat or needs help finding a resource. One might wonder how Kwande ended up practicing social work in a library, so *The Springs Echo* sat down with her to find out.

Hi Alicia, it's a pleasure to speak with you today. For people who haven't met you yet, can you talk a bit about where you were born and what life was like growing up?

I was born in Denver. I was here until I was eight and then we came back when I was 14. We moved around a lot. My dad changed careers, we moved out to Kentucky and spent six years there, and then came back here. We kept moving until I was 16 and then we stayed in one place. So, having to adapt to new classes and new people every few years helped me understand that outsider's perspective because I was an outsider most of the time. That only started bothering me in high school. I didn't adapt so well the last two years of high school. That was not fun.

What is your title with the Pikes Peak Library District?

I'm the social worker. It's my profession and my job title.

How long have you been in this position?

Since October 2018.

What were you doing before you found this gig?

Mostly work in mental health. Directly before this job I worked for Cedar Springs and their Admissions Department doing crisis evaluations and admissions and all the insurance and crisis phone calls. Before that I was in Denver working at Jefferson Center for Mental Health. I worked for them as a therapist in a doctor's office for

a few years. I had gone to South Africa before that, but I had worked for Jefferson Center also before I went to South Africa and always in mental health, case management, therapy, crisis work.



It might seem odd to some people to learn there is a social worker on staff at the public library. Can you explain your role and what you do on a typical day?

I am here to help connect people with resources and it fits well with the library's mission of having this knowledge of resources, whether it be related to business or law or nonprofits or just general reference questions. So, all the librarians do the academic reference and I do more of the social services reference for resources that people can access in the community.

My role is identifying, along with the people who work in the library, people who might benefit from tapping in to some of the resources in the community, whether that is recovery resources for substance abuse, treatment for mental health, medical, resources for people with disabilities, housing, or legal types of issues that come up in conversations with other librarians or other patrons. A lot of my referrals

come through them and in some of my conversations. Also, I do some outreach, but I don't have as much time for that now. Most of my day looks like getting those referrals and responding to requests to meet with

me and sit down and talk with people about different things they can do to access benefits, get on housing lists, and then a lot of networking with city agencies. That might look like doing a presentation at somebody's meeting or attending weekly coordinated entry meetings where we're identifying people for housing, or one-on-one meetings with new agencies that maybe I haven't met before or just going back and visiting with people I haven't talked to in a while to keep that connection up so I make good referrals and am able to give that warm handoff or have someone I know that I can ask questions or talk to at these different places where I might be referring patrons.

Do you have to have specialized skills to work with people experiencing homelessness, many of who have some form of mental illness or trauma?

I would say at least having a basic understanding of what mental illness

can look like and how to talk to people and understand where they're coming from. I think an understanding of trauma is important as well. Even if people aren't presenting with a psychosis or something like that,

just having that awareness that a lot of people who are experiencing homelessness have trauma in their background or have experienced trauma since they've become homeless. Also, having a basic understanding of things like motivational interviewing for people who get stuck in this learned helplessness where they don't have hope anymore and don't know how to think that anything can change for them. I think at least having a basis of skills, maybe not necessarily

a college degree, but a basis of those skills on how to engage with people professionally as well as carrying awareness of a lot of these different components that you're going to be engaging with when you're working with people who are experiencing homelessness. Really, I mean, they're just people. If we can have conversations, then we can do a lot of the work. It's just knowing how to do that work.

What is your educational background?

I have both a bachelor's and a master's in social work. Then I went on to complete all the requirements, the hours, and supervision for my licensure, tested, and got my LCSW.

Do you remember your first experience working with someone who was experiencing homelessness? If so, what was it like for you?

Volunteering at the Denver Rescue Mission - preparing their meals and serving meals and talking to people

Profiles In Courage

“You Can’t Judge a Book By Its Cover” by Stacie Gonzalez

there. I was young; I think I was still a teenager, so I don’t know that I had a very well developed sense of people much less the different types of personalities and all that.

I think I still operated from this idea of lumping any group of people into a group of people, stereotypical, but overall, I would say it was a good experience. People were grateful and friendly. I don’t know that anything stood out to me like conversations, but it

was a good experience. I think doing it more from the idea of helping as opposed to connecting with people has shifted for me over time where it’s more about the relationship than “I’m here to help you.”

What do you think is the most challenging aspect of being homeless in Colorado Springs?

It seems like one of the most common things I hear is how difficult it is to get around. Being from Denver, it doesn’t seem that hard to catch a bus to almost any part of the city or a train to get where you need to go at any time of the day. So even moving here we had someone living with us who didn’t have a car and I was shocked that a bus didn’t run. We were at a major intersection and there were no buses that came by our house. So that really struck me about this city. But it’s something I hear daily: “How am I going to get there?” Even if we can help with bus passes then do they go there? Do they run at regular intervals? Do they run early or late enough? It’s such a challenge. It seems like we are expecting people to access this resource or go work here, or go do this, and they can’t get there. I don’t know that we need to be paying for people to get somewhere, but even if they have the money to get there, they can’t because the bus doesn’t go there! It’s crazy because this is not a tiny city. It’s smaller in population, but it’s so spread out. It’s a huge challenge.

Many people in our community are concerned for those experiencing homelessness and want to help. What would you suggest?

...but even if they have the money...they can’t because the bus doesn’t go there! It’s crazy because this is not a tiny city!

I would suggest learning about the organizations who are helping people experiencing homelessness and getting involved with one whose mission you would align with. If you think food is important or if you think shelter is important or housing, find those organizations and participate in some way. I would say treating people like they’re people is important - that dignity piece - and knowing who people are and getting to know their stories. Helping them feel like they’re not disenfranchised, non-human entities in our community is an important thing. A willingness to let the solution be in your neighborhood, you know, like YIMBY. [Alicia points to the necklace around her neck that has a round button on it. It reads, YIMBY.]

You’re pointing to a button on your necklace.

“Yes, in my backyard.” Because the

whole attitude that we should do something for them, but not here, which I still don’t really understand. I guess I get a bit of that mentality, but

if we want to help, let the help be where we are, whether that’s in Briargate, or downtown, or in the Broadmoor. If people can’t afford housing let the affordable housing be

Can you talk a little about the misconceptions people have about homelessness and what do you want the public to know?

I think there’s a big misconception like I carried when I was younger, that homelessness has the same face, you know, that it’s people who don’t want to work, who are using drugs, and even people experiencing homelessness say this to me: “I just want you to know I’m not one of those drug users.” It’s a common misconception that everyone fits this one mold. I think it’s important to know that every single person has a story that has led them to where they are today.

Would it surprise people to learn the stories behind the people who are experiencing homelessness? We are often taught not to judge a book by its cover, so who are we judging here?

Right? Yeah, I have met people who made six-figure salaries and were doing well at different points in their life and maybe even recently. Even people staying at the shelters might be working full time. This idea they just need to get a job... There are plenty of people working hard and getting over some of the barriers to get back into housing whether they had an eviction, owed a past landlord money, or have a bad credit score. How easy is it for any of us to have a bad credit score and not be able to rent a place? They don’t have the rental history for however long they’ve been experiencing homelessness. I think we forget that there are all these other hoops that every one of us has to jump through to rent a place and once you’re out of a place those hoops get that much higher to jump through. You would be surprised at some of the people you’ll talk to and what their stories are. It’s like, “That’s me I’m looking at right there.” You know, college-educated, well-employed, and went through a layoff. You just never know. You never know.



where it makes sense to build it: on a bus line or where there’s land. So yeah, just the willingness to let the solutions be where they need to be.

Continued on The Springs Echo Facebook Page or at www.thespringsecho.com



Terese Howard-Denver Homeless Out Loud

by Miclan Quorpencetta



Denver Homeless Out Loud is an organization made up of homeless and formerly homeless people, as well as supporters, that has been on the front lines of political action on the issue of homelessness in the Denver area. We recently spoke to Terese Howard, a founding member of DHOL, to find out how the group advocates for themselves and others. Here is what she told us:

MQ: Would you like to introduce yourself and describe how you became involved with Denver Homeless Out Loud?

TH: My name is Terese Howard. I got involved in DHOL when we started the organization back in September 2012. After trying to stop the city from passing the camping ban, and then 6 months later seeing no one was listening to folks on the street about the effect of the law, we started DHOL in order to survey folks who are homeless about the effect of the camping ban – which we did, surveying over 500 people who are homeless. The findings were disturbing to say the least. That was 7 years ago and we have been organizing and fighting for our rights and housing ever since.

MQ: Denver's response to homelessness includes sweeps that confiscate and destroy people's camps and belongings, as well as various forms of criminalization. How do these policies effect the people who are experiencing homelessness?

TH: When one is living on the streets everything you have to stay warm, dry, food, anything you have, you carry with you. When the city comes through and sweeps a camp, or just an individual, you have to start from scratch finding what you need just to survive. When police sweep through

enforcing the camping ban, focused on moving the human, you are forced to scatter, drag your belongings, separate from your community, lose sleep, put yourself in danger – all just for the fake guise of disappearing homelessness. Whether a sweep is of a person or their property, the effects are destructive to the person's life and to the whole community. I could go on and on... but I will just encourage folks to read the words of people on the streets effected in either of these reports

MQ: DHOL has recently been involved with several projects - from the campaign to end the camping ban to the effort to create a tiny home community. Starting on July 15th, you



called for 100 days of action for rights, dignity, and housing. Can you talk about what you hope to accomplish with this initiative?

TH: 100 Days of Action is our way of holding the city accountable to the promises they made to “do better” by homeless people and to tell them what doing better means. We wrote a 13-page plan for what the city should do to address the crisis of homelessness and we are holding the

city accountable to follow through on those actions. And action must start now – homelessness was named a priority during campaign session again and again, so if it is a priority, action should start right away in this first hundred days. You can read the full and immediate 100-day plan at our website. In summary, we hope to decriminalize homelessness, replace sweeps with services like bathrooms and trash cans that actually address the need, and dedicate at least 60 mil a year to real low income housing.

MQ: It is often said that homelessness is a full-time job. What do you say to people who are fighting to survive to convince them to organize with you and take political action?

TH: Our job as DHOL is not to convince people who are surviving without housing to take political action. Our job is to move aside as many of the barriers as we can that prevent people living without housing from being politically involved and to build easier onroads for people's voice and direction to be heard. People in general in our society do not tend to think of

political involvement beyond voting once a year, so the barriers are also societally vast. Most of our members are people who are currently or formerly homeless, and these members did not need convincing – they just needed a group to organize with. Furthermore, our work is to get the voice of people who can't attend meetings or speak publically into the public through surveys, interviews, and long-term connection.

MQ: Denver Homeless Out Loud has

been very successful in raising awareness about homelessness in Denver. What advice would you give those interested in starting something like DHOL in another city?

TH: I hope we have been successful in raising awareness...so much more is needed. The advice I would give is first and foremost to stay true to methods of accountability to those directly affected. That does not mean having a leader or two who come from the streets – token representation does not work. It means staying connected to the streets, shelters, homeless world, all the time – through surveys, interviews, relationships, life – asking lots of people who are homeless consistent questions, watching constant patterns, and organizing in line with that. Secondly, I would say, don't get sucked into details and lose sight of the big picture. It is 100% clear that people can't afford housing and that criminalizing people for surviving does not end homelessness. Start from the basics and stay true to these basics. Homelessness was not caused by individuals, it was caused by systems that value profit in commodifying housing and an economy that divides rich and poor. If we are going organize for change – we must start and end there. Thirdly, be bold. Do what is right, not what is easy. The crisis at hand requires it.

MQ: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me about the fantastic work you are all doing! More information about Denver Homeless Out Loud is at <https://denverhomelessoutloud.org> and on Facebook at @DenverHomelessOutLoud. Are there any other organizations you would like our readers to know about?

Yes! I recommend folks get familiar with Western Regional Advocacy Project (<https://wraphome.org/>). WRAP is the most bad ass group fighting regionally to expose the root causes of homelessness and fight for rights and housing for all. We at DHOL are members of WRAP and are honored to work along side the other members groups in WRAP.

RESOURCE GUIDE

Ecumenical Social Ministries

201 N. Weber St.
(719) 636-1916
Mon - Fri 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. & 12:30 - 3:00 p.m.
Sat & Sun - Closed
Food, clothing, laundry, showers for men & women, and a part time nurse.

Meals

Marian House

14 W. Bijou St.
(719) 475-7314
Mon - Sat 10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Sun- 8:45 - 10 a.m.

Project Angel Heart

1625 W. Uintah St., Suite 1
(719) 323-0084
Delivers meals to those with chronic illness.

Springs Rescue Mission

5 W. Las Vegas St.
(719) 632-1822
Mon - Sun 5:45 a.m.
Mon - Sun 4:00 p.m.

Shelter/Housing

Crawford House

415 S. Weber St. (719) 477-1639
Emergency shelter for veterans receiving mental health services.

Family Life Services

1880 S. Cascade Ave.
(719) 632-4661
Transitional housing for mothers and children.

Family Promise

19 N. Tejon St. (719) 329-1244
Transitional housing for families.

Mary's Home

3650 Airport Rd.
(719) 301-5411
Transitional housing for mothers and children.

Partners in Housing

455 Gold Pass Hts.
(719) 473-8890
Transitional housing program for families.

Rocky Mountain Human

Services
17 S. Weber St.
(855) 838-7428
Homes for all veterans.

Salvation Army

709 S. Sierra Madre St.
(719) 578-9190
Shelter for families, men, & women.

Springs Rescue Mission

5 W. Las Vegas St
(719) 632-1822
Shelter for men and women.

TESSA

435 Gold Pass Hts.
(719) 633-3819
Emergency shelter - domestic abuse.

The Place

423 E. Cucharas (719) 630-3223
Shelter for people ages 15 - 20.

Sober Living

Crawford House

415 S. Weber St. (719) 477-1639
Sober living for veterans receiving substance abuse services.

Gospel Homes for Women

30 Lawrence Ave. (719) 291-3406
gospelhomesforwomen.org
Sober living for women.

Homeward Pikes Peak

2010 E. Bijou St. (719) 473-5557
HUD-subsidized sober living.

My Brother's Keeper

523 E. Las Animas St.
(719) 360-3847
Sober living for men.

Legal Resources

Catholic Charities

14 W. Bijou St. (719) 475-7314
Legal Clinic every fourth Saturday of the month from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Colorado Legal Services

617 S. Nevada St. (719) 471-0380

Mercy's Gate

4360 Montebello Dr., Suite 300
(719) 277-7470

El Paso County Bar Pro Bono Program

Apply online for free legal assistance:
elpasocountybar.org/publicresource

Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators for El Paso County

270 S. Tejon St., Room S101
Assistance with court paperwork.

Medical

Dream Center Women's Clinic

4360 Montebello Dr., Suite 900
(719) 388-1594 Free medical care for women who qualify.

El Paso County Public Health

1675 W. Garden of the Gods Rd., Suite 2044 (719) 578-3199
Immunizations, STD testing, and family medical care.

Mission Medical

2125 E. LaSalle St. (719) 219-3402
Medical, dental, vision, behavioral, and diabetes care.

Memorial Hospital

1400 E. Boulder St. (719) 365-5221
Emergency care and full-service hospital.

Peak Vista

(719) 632-5700
Multiple locations.
Medical, dental, and behavioral health care.

SET Family Health Clinic

2864 S. Circle Dr., Suite 450.
(719) 776-8850

SET Homeless Health Clinic

Marian House
14 W. Bijou St. (719) 475-7314

Westside CARES

2808 W. Colorado Ave.
(719) 389-0759

Crisis Centers

Aspen Pointe

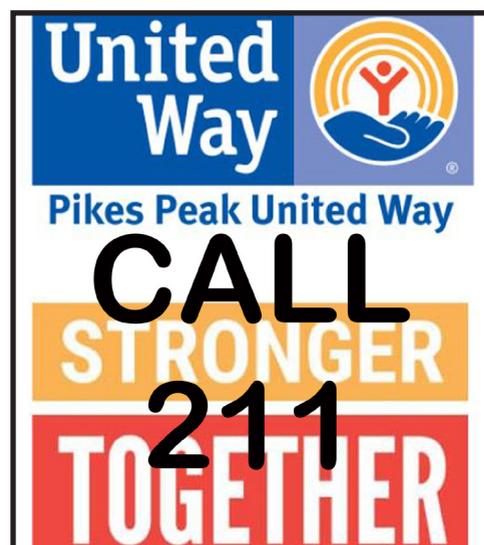
115 South Parkside Dr.
(719) 635-7000
24-hour crisis center.

Cedar Springs Hospital

2135 Southgate Rd.
(719) 633-4114
24-hour crisis center and inpatient hospital.

TESSA

435 Gold Pass Hts.
(719) 633-3819
Crisis support - For victims of domestic abuse.



Suicide Hotline
(844) 493-8255 or text 38255

FRIENDS & FAMILY



Homeward Pikes Peak



To Chris & Nick!

Our Sincerest Thanks for
Your Support.
You're the best!

The Springs Echo Team!

Kathy!!



THE SPRINGS ECHO
Vendor of the Quarter

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Vendor Training
with Kathy and Judy!

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thespringsecho.com
for more details.

**BEACON
FELLOWSHIP
CHURCH**

*Sunday
Afternoon*
**@ Penrose Library
20 N. Cascade Ave
DOWNTOWN
1:30 p.m.**

**Meeting Room
Varies**

We are a church filled with
imperfect people, just trying our
best to live life God's way.



Sharing the HOPE of Jesus to a
community who needs it.

