

GOING HOME

Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance

Fall 2009

Strength
Dignity
Hope

Compassion
Accountability
Respect &
Courage

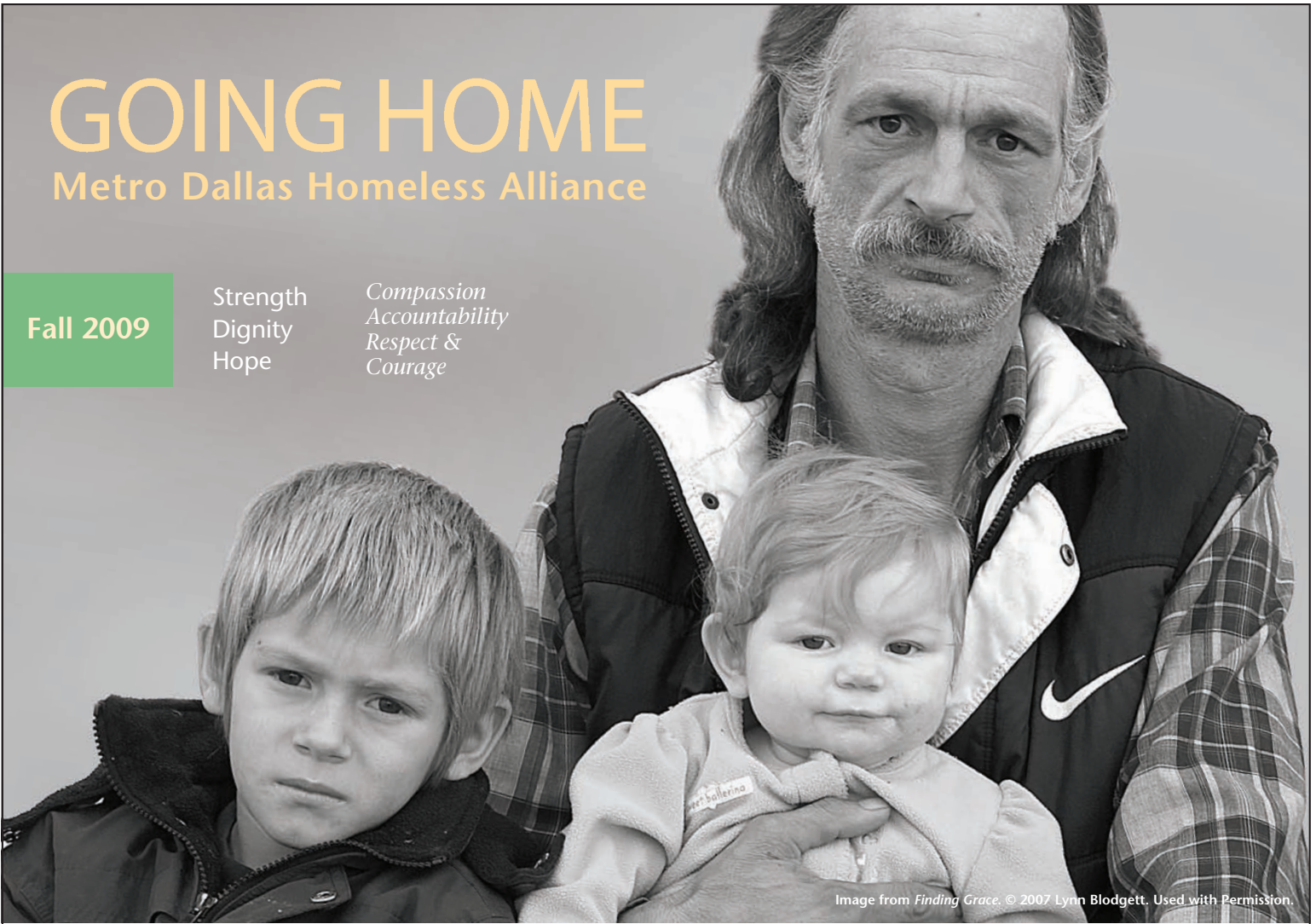


Image from *Finding Grace*. © 2007 Lynn Blodgett. Used with Permission.

A Young Family's Christmas Wish

Last year, Rosa Gonzales (not her real name) was forced to take her three young children and leave her home of 16 years to escape her abusive husband. Homeless and on the run, Rosa and her children were in and out of more shelters and homes than she can count. But throughout the ordeal, Rosa was always determined to keep her family together.

Not long ago, Rosa asked a couple on the street — total strangers — where she and her children could find shelter. These

“angels” as Rosa calls them, rescued the family by paying their bus fares to Dallas. *(continued on next page)*



MDHA is best known as operators of The Bridge, Dallas' homeless assistance center, but that is only a first step in our mission to END chronic homelessness by 2014. And we can't do it alone.

MDHA is a member organization composed of a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Through

Together we will accomplish what none of us can on our own: END chronic homelessness in Dallas.

MDHA, 86 agencies meet routinely to collaborate on issues to fight homelessness. Working together is vital to coordinate the

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A Young Family's Christmas Wish

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Upon arrival, Rosa soon found the Salvation Army Family Shelter program, an active member of the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (MDHA).

Since then, Rosa's life and that of her children have become much more stable. The

family is happy, and they are safe. Rosa enrolled in GED classes in order to be accepted into culinary school. She then plans to work and save her money to buy and run a

pastry shop so the family will have a way to make a living.

Rosa's youngest says the hardest thing about being homeless is "carrying things all the time." She also talked of the difficulties of constantly moving from place to place and of scary nights spent on the street.

Rosa and her children are popular guests among the staff and other residents at the shelter. The family is very close, hug each other a lot, and are not afraid to extend their support to others.

Rosa believes that she is emotionally stronger now since attending the shelter's programs. And she has just one wish for Christmas — she wants to get permanent housing for herself and her family. Rosa says tearfully, "I just want to give a stable life to my children. I believe they deserve more because of all they've been through."

MDHA *(continued)*

best use of limited resources and achieve the greatest possible impact.

You may be surprised to hear that there were over 4,500 homeless children and adolescents enrolled in the Dallas Independent School District this past school year. In response, MDHA has established a Steering Committee to develop a three-year plan addressing homeless services and policy for children, families, youth, and young adults under the leadership of Dr. Connie Wilson, Director of Psychological and Social Services at DISD. In this issue, we'll highlight the work of two member organizations with family centered programs, the Salvation Army and Promise House, in the profiles of Rosa and Jasmine.

We are grateful for the work of our member agencies as well as that of our many volunteers and supporters. Together we will accomplish what none of us can on our own: END chronic homelessness in Dallas.

Signs of Success

Because of the Dallas community's tremendous support of The Bridge, the City has seen a marked decrease in crime downtown and greatly reduced number of jail stays. What's more, there's been a three-fold reduction in the community hospital costs associated with mental health issues. Additionally:

864,902
meals served — an average of 1,700 a day

168,018
stays in emergency shelter

37,392
stays in transitional shelter

1,007
job placements

514
placed in permanent housing

The Bridge's unique, multi-service campus provides a broad spectrum of care — including housing, emergency, and transitional care — for people experiencing long-term homelessness.

Young Mom Gets a Second Chance



Jasmine is training to become a medical assistant, and eventually plans to become a nurse.

Although Jasmine is just 19, she is no stranger to the responsibility of parenting. Her earliest memories include caring for her younger brother and sister when her mother was sick with cancer.

After high school, Jasmine left home and moved to Dallas to enroll at ATI to train as a medical assistant.

Then when her apartment burned, along with all her possessions, Jasmine became homeless, and soon learned she was pregnant. Fortunately, Jasmine's teachers helped her enroll in Promise House, where today she is learning to pay bills, cook, clean, and arrange for day care.

Jasmine's baby girl arrived happy and healthy in early August. When she gets a job, Jasmine hopes to save enough money to continue her education and become an RN. After all, taking care of others is something she has done for a long time.



As MDHA moves forward in our mission to care for the chronically homeless in Dallas, it is only through faithful community partnerships that we can make a difference in the lives of hundreds of homeless men, women, and children who desperately need our help.

The concern that MDHA supporters show for the most vulnerable members of our community helps provide for the safety and security they need to begin to rebuild their broken lives. We thank you.

Help the Homeless Week: A RECAP

Radio-thon

On November 10, The Big 96.3 KSCS broadcast the first-ever **Bridge to Hope Radio-thon**, raising money to eradicate chronic homelessness in Dallas. The Dorsey Gang: Terry Dorsey, Hawkeye, and Rebecca (right) hosted the event from 6-9am; Trapper John (below left) took over from 9am-3pm; and Allan Peck (below right) finished up from 3-7pm.

We would like to say "Thanks y'all" to the staff at The Big 96.3 FM, especially Greg, Cari, Stephanie, Harry, and the dozens of volunteers who helped.

WalkATHon

Hundreds of walkers and runners took steps to end homelessness in Dallas at the 3rd annual Help the Homeless WalkATHon & 5K run through downtown Dallas on Saturday, November 14. Proceeds from both events support the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (MDHA), operators of The Bridge, Dallas' only centralized multi-service campus for care and housing.

To donate or see event results, visit: www.mdhadallas.org/hthrecap.



A Note from Our President

Dear Friends of MDHA,

I hope you find the stories about Jasmine and Rosa helpful in understanding two of the many scenarios that can lead to homelessness for women and children in Dallas. I think we can all agree that the services these two families are receiving from MDHA member organizations are critical to their immediate and future health and quality of life.



Dallas is blessed with terrific non-profit agencies who serve homeless children and families like these. However, our city lacks adequate capacity in a number of crucial preventive and ongoing services for this vulnerable group. We need a concrete plan to respond to the fact that the numbers of homeless children and youth continue to grow.

In fact, we estimate that homelessness in children and youth has increased by over 15% during the last two years, and that homeless children make up about 25% of Dallas' homeless population.

This fall, MDHA, along with many of our member organizations, is working on a three-year plan to identify gaps in services and will recommend implementation and financing strategies. Filling priority gaps — like greatly expanded child care, and increased transitional housing and services for poor families and those with disabled children — will not be easy. But the price we pay for allowing our numbers of homeless children and families to grow with no community response is intolerable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael M. Faenza". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael M. Faenza
President & CEO
Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance

Ways You Can Help

There are many ways you can help MDHA end homelessness.

Volunteer:

We are always looking for volunteers to serve a wide variety of needs. Our only requirement is that you be at least 18 years of age.

To get involved, contact Hayedeh Jahansouz at 214-670-1128, or hjahansouz@mdhadallas.org.

Donate:

Through the generous support of our donors, we hope to end chronic homelessness by 2014. We welcome all levels of donations.

To make an online donation to MDHA, please visit our website at www.mdhadallas.org/donate.

Immediate Needs:

Adult's winter clothing kit: (coat, sweater or sweatshirt, long pants, winter gloves, hat and socks, underwear, shoes): \$72.50

Warm Blankets/Sleeping Bag: \$10

Basic toiletries supply kit: for one person: \$3.25

Emergency clothing: (sweatsuit, socks, sports bra, and underwear): \$35

Stand-alone freezer: \$800

Towels and washcloths for five people: \$17.50

Apartment kitchen starter kit (utensils, pots, pans, storage containers): \$45

Furniture for a one-bedroom apartment: \$400

For a full list of immediate needs, go to www.mdhadallas.org/wishlist. To donate any of these items, contact Erin McFaye at 214-670-1126, or emcfaye@mdhadallas.org.



Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (operators of *The Bridge*) • 1818 Corsicana, Dallas, Texas 75201
214-670-1100 • Email: info@mdhadallas.org • Website: www.mdhadallas.org

The MDHA is a 501(c)(3) member organization composed of a broad spectrum of stakeholders committed to end homelessness. Through MDHA, 86 agencies that represent shelters, hospitals, government agencies, local municipalities, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, housing and treatment providers, individuals (including homeless consumers), businesses, medical/educational leaders, and other community members meet routinely to collaborate on issues to fight homelessness. The mission is to end homelessness in Metropolitan Dallas through advocacy, planning, and education that creates and sustains needed change.