

THE ANTI-HUNGER

February 2004

ADVOCATE

Brought to you by the Anti-Hunger Action Committee of Crossroads Urban Center

347 South 400 East, Salt Lake City 1-888-747-8482 or 364-7765

The Anti-Hunger Action Committee (AHAC) organizes low-income individuals and their allies to take action on their own behalf to improve the social safety net and promote better jobs.



On January 29th AHAC members testified to the Health and Human Services Committee of the Utah Legislature about the need to restore vision and dental services to Medicaid. Above, Faina Raik testifies to the committee.



Joe Hudson and Darla Ball watching while Faina testifies.

3 Numbers to Remember:

1. Crossroads Urban Center: 364-7765

In addition to our food pantry and our thrift store, Crossroads also has staff members who can answer questions and help you with your food stamp case.

2. 211 / Information and Referral:

at 211 or 978-3333 Information and Referral has information about all of the services available to people in Salt Lake County.

3. Department of Workforce Services

Customer Relations: 526-4390

If you've had a good or bad experience with your caseworker, or someone else at DWS, you can call this number to make a comment about your experience.



COME WITH US NEXT TUESDAY!!!

Every Tuesday in February AHAC and members of the Disabled Rights Action Committee will deliver a cake to the speaker of the Utah House of Representatives, Marty Stephens. On January

27 over 20 people delivered a cake to

Representative Stephens with this image of someone skiing on a pile of teeth and eyeglasses painted into its frosting.

Need Teeth Pulled? Waiting for appointed date to see a dentist and are in pain?

by an anonymous AHAC member

Here are a couple of suggestions while waiting to have that painful tooth pulled.

Drink tea with plenty of sugar or koolaide. Buy mints (not chocolate covered mints), but regular to help keep the pain to a minimum, so that you can make it to your scheduled appointment to see your dentist.

What to eat while waiting to see a dentist or already have a tooth pulled and are trying to keep from getting a dry-socket? And, still trying to keep your health up.

First, follow the dentist's instructions, then try these two meal planners: boil a cup of water and add beef boullion, a sprinkle of celery salt and a little onion powder. It's rich, it's hot, and if you try it you can get cooking other dishes. Or, a bowl of wheat with some sugar and milk.

Well, that's all I have to offer. If you are lucky you may find Ora-Jel on the shelves of the stores, but remember you must follow instructions and teas, and koolaides with sugar are helpful.

Well, say "hello" to you fellow peoples, keep smiling, and should you have any tips call Bill at 364-7765, and keep those teeth brushed!

***A note to Diabetics:** be careful with the sugar, and if you have some suggestions you want to share call Crossroads Urban Center. Thanks again.

HEALTHCARE FOR ALL!

On March 4 thousands of people in Utah will be wearing stickers that say "health care for all" to work, school and wherever they go. Call 364-7765 and ask for AHAC to find out how you can be one of them.



Artwork by: Mary Torgerson

Fight Childhood Hunger in Less Than 2 Minutes!

Everyday in Utah, 32,321 children receive free or reduced price school lunch. Senator Bennett, chair of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee, needs to know how important this program is. Call Senator Bennett's office today and tell him:

*National experts estimate \$550 million in new funding is needed this year to strengthen school lunch, school breakfast, and other Child Nutrition Programs.

*His leadership is needed to enact positive improvements and expansions to already existing programs.

Call Senator Bennett's office today and make a difference!

Phone Number: 524-5933

Show Down After Sun Down

by Beth Vincent

Little did I realize what that day would bring last winter when I went to the State Capitol to protest. I can't remember the day, or even the month. Yet, I will never forget the events that transpired that day.

I went to the Capitol because somewhere inside of me I knew it wasn't fair to expect other people to keep standing up for me – people from DRAC and AHAC. I also went because the legislators were planning to cut dental, eye care, and physical therapy out of the budget. In retrospect it sounds selfish but the older I get the more I realize that if I don't stand up for myself I can't expect someone else to do the job. So I decided to step up to the plate – even though I was unsure what I'd be served!

During my day at the Capitol I wandered all over the building. What struck me the most as I looked down from each balcony was the group of folks who sat at the bottom of the west stairwell – the members of AHAC and DRAC and others who supported them. They stood out, not because they caused a scene, but because they peacefully protested by standing their ground and handing out smiles to those who walked by.

Foolishly I assumed that the legislatures would understand that we couldn't live without the basic necessities that were on the chopping block. How can anyone live with: NO dental care, NO eye care, and NO physical therapy?

As the day progressed it became blatantly obvious that the people in charge didn't KNOW much of anything. From my perspective they were simply concerned with how the budget looked on paper. I don't think it's possible to describe how frustrated I felt. "Invisible" is a more accurate word. The proposed budget was in and we weren't in it.

Late in the afternoon the leaders from DRAC and AHAC said it was time to make a decision about how to get the attention of the lawmakers. Staying overnight at the Capitol was decided on. It was an individual decision but numbers mattered. The majority voted to stay. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do.

When I felt like I couldn't find the courage to stay for myself I thought about a little 10- year old girl I met that afternoon. She was in a special wheelchair, sitting in a rigid and postured position. It was obvious that she had multiple disabilities and taking physical therapy away from her would seal her fate. The next stop was a nursing home. With her in mind I decided I was staying the night, whatever the cost was.

Once the decision was made it's hard for me to recount how everything else happened. The day had been somewhat long and now all at once people seemed to appear out of nowhere. I was overwhelmed. The building supervisor (a most unpleasant man) must have been notified of our plans. He tried to dissuade us from camping out at the Capitol, making it very clear that it was not acceptable for us to stay in a state building over night. We made it just as clear to him that we were staying, come what may.

Well, it was time for a show down after sun down. The building director sent in the Calvary; the Utah Highway Patrol. I've never seen so many uniformed men appear out of nowhere. I mean I'd seen them during the day but had no idea there were so many of them. They all stood around with grumpy glances while their boss spoke to us.

Fortunately the sergeant of the UHP was kind and caring, and it seemed apparent that he knew someone in our position – someone who would be affected by all the proposed cuts. He was a gentle man and a gentleman. He explained that we were breaking the law by spending the night at the Capitol. Two things could happen. It was possible we'd get permission to stay but he didn't get our hopes up. He emphasized the second prospect: being arrested and taken to jail. Each of us had to fill out a form providing any medical information necessary, as well as the name of a contact person for the police department in case the second scenario played out.

Like everyone I filled out the form. I'm not sure if I was dazed or confused but I know it wasn't until I called my contact person and told him what I was doing, that the full impact of my decision hit me. I was scared and elated at the same time – and wishing I'd brought a few things with me for the night.

We'd begun setting up camp when Attorney General Mark Shurtleff came and talked with us. Again he reiterated what the UHP had told us but also said he'd do some more checking (which turned out to be a call to the Governor). A little bit later he graciously brought down a TV from his office so we could watch the news at 10:00 P.M., and told us we could stay. We were cordoned off in a corner with a ladies room and two lounges.

I lucked out and had a couch to sleep on – or rest, as the case may be. I drifted in and out of sleep for several hours trying to absorb all that had and was taking place. Me, the Panic Attack Queen of Utah was sleeping with strangers on a cold, snowy night at the Capitol. WOW, what a rush!

By 5:00 I could sleep no longer. FOX 13 News was already setting up to interview the head of DRAC, Barbara Toomer. Barbara asked me to appear with her and I agreed. It was an honor and privilege to appear with my role model on TV.

People tell me all the time how powerless we are when it comes to politics and that nothing can be done to change the outcome of political decisions. I beg to differ. By 10:00 the next morning physical therapy and had been restored. And I knew one little girl who would not be going to a nursing home!!!!!!

What I did made a difference in my life and lives of others. One final note – I was flying from Salt Lake to Florida on the last day of June when a flight attendant said she recognized me from TV. I was seriously concerned about her mental health until she said "Fox News!" It all came rushing back to me. Now it's time for me to stand up and be counted again and maybe I'll have one more enchanted evening at the Capitol!