

The Beam

June 2005

We need your help to make *The Beam* the most helpful resource it can be!

- Share successful practices you have developed or helpful resources you have used;
- Submit an interest story about the success of a student or family in your program; or
- Write a feature about an issue that needs our attention!

Send submissions to:
tstahlke@mail.utexas.edu

Deadline for the August issue is July 15, 2005;

Deadline for the October Conference issue is September 15.

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Extreme Makeover : *Homeless Student Edition*

By Tom Norlen, McKinney-Vento Site Coordinator; Bucks County Schools, Pennsylvania

One of the current popular television shows is Extreme Makeover: Home Edition. Every week new families are blessed with an unbelievable home that is beyond their wildest dreams. It is a wonderful blend of creativity, volunteerism, marketing, craftsmanship, generosity and showmanship. Through the tears and excitement it shows that there truly is no place like home.

There is another version of Extreme Makeover. Let's call it the Homeless Student Edition. While the creation of a new home is the focus of the TV show, the building of a child's education on a solid foundation is the central theme of the Homeless Student Edition. For homeless students, school is their home away from home-their stability for 7 hours of the day when they don't have a permanent place to live.

Just as the TV episodes utilize a multitude of people to demolish and rebuild the houses, so it is with the Homeless Student Edition. Barriers to the students' education need to be demolished. Old pillars of resistance need to be taken down. And to make school stability a reality, large crews are also needed to nail down effective homeless policies, build self-esteem, sand over the rough spots of displaced lives, all with the goal of carving new memories and opening windows of opportunity.

Those families who are selected for the TV show must prepare a video, present their case, and hope that it pulls at the heartstrings of the ABC Producers and the Design Team. But for all the "contestants" on the Homeless Student Makeover, there should be no pretests-no proof of residency, no delays, no competition. Everyone who comes should be welcomed into halls of accep-

tance, nurturing and care. This is the blueprint for school success.

The main Design Team for the *Homeless Student Edition* is NAEHCY and its members. Donning their hard hats, this dedicated team has its own unique tool box. Inside are tools of advocacy, legislation, communication, leadership and training. The NAEHCY crew wants to continue to build a national network of partnerships where the theme, "Everyone Believing... Every Child Achieving," becomes a reality. Part of the Association's special training is at the national conference, where workshops will be buzzing with opportunities to learn new skills and strategies.

What would a building inspector find at your *Extreme Makeover: Homeless Student Edition*? Would the McKinney-Vento Act be a cornerstone for decision-making? Would the Homeless Liaison be the central support beam? Would the insulation for the kids include full participation in school activities and help with school supplies? Would the staff be wired to be sensitive to homelessness, domestic violence and loss? Do people have the opportunity to attend the national conference to network and fill their tool boxes?

Do you need an Extreme Makeover, or are you already renovated and ready to help homeless students succeed? Just as Ty is the host of the TV show, NAEHCY is the voice for homeless students and shouts out "Move that school bus!"

Let's hope the students will smile at their school, just like the TV families smile upon seeing their new home. And just maybe, if everything is constructed to specifications, they might think, "There's no place like school." ■

17th Annual Conference Preview

Preconference institutes will be offered on the following topics on Saturday, October 22, 2005:

Working With Children in Out-of-Home Care: Awaiting Foster Care and Beyond
½ day session; offered am and pm

Young Homeless Children and Families: Strategies for Increasing Access to Services and Support
½ day session; offered am and pm

Unlocking Potential! Meeting the Needs of Students With Disabilities Who Experience Homelessness
½ day session; offered am and pm

It's a Numbers Game: Building Algebra Skills for Mobile Students
½ day session; offered am and pm

Complying with the McKinney-Vento Act
½ day session; offered am only

Moving from Compliance to Commitment
½ day session; offered pm only

Lunch will not be provided for the institutes. For the preconference institute schedule, full descriptions of each institute, and registration information, please visit:

<http://www.naehcy.org>



**NAEHCY 17th Annual Conference
October 22-25, 2005
Hyatt Regency New Orleans
at Louisiana Superdome
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Co-Sponsored by Teachscape, The Louisiana Department of Education, The Louisiana Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, The National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness

NAEHCY Membership

By Mary Herrington, NAEHCY Board; Membership Chairperson

Associations are created out of a need for like-minded individuals to share information and learn from one another. NAEHCY is an association made up of individuals just like you - men and women who work to improve the lives of children and youth in homeless situations and are determined to find a solution! NAEHCY has been in existence for seventeen years; however, as a membership organization it is only three years old.

If you are receiving this newsletter, you are currently on our membership list and we appreciate your continued support. In an effort to streamline and clarify our membership operations, we are initiating an online registration process that is very similar to the conference registration system used last year. Annual memberships are renewable throughout the year. You will receive an email when your membership is up for renewal, including the link to the membership system which you will access and enter your information. Please note that you will enter as a "new member" since this is a clean, fresh new system, with no names entered to date.

Payment is accepted in three ways; 1) Credit Card (Master Card & Visa), 2) Purchase Order (you simply indicate the PO # and print out the invoice and submit for payment), or 3) Check (you print out the invoice and send it in with your check).

One of the benefits of membership is receiving a discount on the annual conference registration fee. If you renewed your membership last October, or paid the non-member rate, you may want to include your membership fee in this year's conference registration, knowing that your membership is renewable every October.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Darlyne Erickson (toll free 866-862-2562) or email info@naehcy.org, and she will walk you through the process. The bottom line is we want to continue to serve you as a member. ■

NAEHCY Update... *from the President*

Dear Fellow NAEHCY Member:

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) has been quite busy since our October conference. Looking for ways to provide our members with meaningful support is an ongoing priority. I hope you have found our participation with **GrantStation** an exciting new initiative. You should be receiving the GrantStation Insider weekly in your email. This eNewsletter provides you with the latest information on new funding programs, upcoming grant deadlines, conferences, and general information for grantseekers. This convenient and relevant newsletter includes the most up-to-date information about funders' priorities and initiatives. If you haven't noticed this addition to your email, please check your email filter which may be removing this resource. Just "white list" the address to avoid future removals.

Legislation is another area of great activity. The passage of **IDEA 2004** provided NAEHCY with an opportunity to submit comments on the proposed regulations being developed by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U. S. Department of Education. The draft regulations should be announced shortly. If you work with students experiencing homelessness who have disabilities, please consider reviewing these draft regulations and offering comments. Areas of special interest for students who are homeless can be found at the NAEHCY website and further legislative information can be found in the article by Barbara Duffield in this issue.

Planning for the October 22-25, 2005 **17th Annual Conference**, "Everyone Believing - Every Child Achieving!" in New Orleans, LA is moving along well. Proposals have been received and potential concurrent speakers will be notified by the beginning of June. Our Louisiana partners have been especially busy planning unique events with their own special flare. Registration and additional details will be available soon. Be sure to mark your calendars!

Finally, the NAEHCY Board offers a resounding "Thank You!" to Tim Stahlke who has agreed to take on the leadership for organizing **The BEAM**. Tim, your efforts are greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,



Patricia A. Popp, Ph.D.
NAEHCY President

GrantStation

IDEA 2004

**Annual
Conference**

The Beam

"Looking for ways to provide our members with meaningful support is an ongoing priority."

NAEHCY Awards

By Melinda Dyer, NAEHCY Board; Awards Chairperson

Each year, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) provides a terrific opportunity for us to recognize the outstanding work of our colleagues! The NAEHCY Awards are presented each year at the National Conference, and they highlight the achievements and efforts of those who have positively impacted the lives of homeless children and youths. Awards are presented in several categories, including: Outstanding School-Based Program, Outstanding Individual, Distinguished Service and Leadership, Outstanding Student or Class, and Outstanding Media Presentation. The very special Sandra Neese Lifetime Achievement Award is also presented at the awards ceremony. Nomination forms for the 2005 awards are available at the NAEHCY website at www.naehcy.org. **Completed nominations are due no later than Friday, June 10, 2005.**

Please take a few minutes to complete a nomination form and recognize the great work being done by your school staff, liaisons, community partners, advocates, students, colleagues and others! The 2005 NAEHCY Awards will be presented during the upcoming 17th Annual NAEHCY Conference in New Orleans. For more information, please contact Melinda Dyer, Awards Chair, at mdyer@ospi.wednet.edu or (360) 725-4968. ■

Legislative Update

By Barbara Duffield, NAEHCY Policy Director

Thus far, the 109th Congress has taken up numerous legislative initiatives related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness; more activity is planned for the summer and fall months. Below is a brief summary of current and anticipated activity. **If you would like to receive timely legislative updates via email, please contact Barbara Duffield at bduffield@naehcy.org to be added to the NAEHCY legislative email list.**

FY2006 Funding for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

Congress has begun work on the FY2006 budget. This year's federal budget will be the tightest in recent years, with many programs slated for cuts and/or elimination. Although the President's budget proposal includes level funding for the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, all programs are at risk. The authorized funding level for the EHCY program is \$70 million. Last year Congress appropriated \$62.5 million for the program. More funding is desperately needed to reach more children and provide direct services for school enrollment, attendance, and success. Please write and fax your Members of Congress and urge them to support \$70 million for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program in the FY2006 appropriations bills. An alert and sample letter can be found at http://www.naehcy.org/legislative_update.html.

Initial appropriations legislation will be marked up in June and July, so please act soon!

FY2006 Funding for HUD Homeless Assistance Programs

The President's FY 2006 budget includes a proposal to add \$174 million to HUD's Homeless Assistance Grant program. These funds would be earmarked for the "Samaritan Initiative," a currently unauthorized program that would provide permanent housing and case management services for the long-term or "chronic" homeless population – defined as single adults with disabilities who have been homeless for over a year, or at least four times over a three

year period. NAEHCY joins other national organizations in urging Members of Congress to support the proposed funding increase, while opposing the manner in which it is earmarked. For more information, please see <http://www.npach.org/alerts.htm>.

Head Start Reauthorization

Both House and Senate education committees have passed legislation to reauthorize the Head Start Act. Both bills – H.R. 2123 and S. 1107 – contain numerous amendments to remove barriers to Head Start faced by children experiencing homelessness. These amendments include requirements for Head Start programs to identify and prioritize homeless children for enrollment; to allow homeless families to apply to and enroll in Head Start programs while paperwork is being obtained; and to coordinate with efforts to implement the McKinney-Vento Act. Both bills help ensure categorical eligibility for homeless children: the House bill would deem homeless children to meet the low-income criteria, while the Senate bill would deem homeless children eligible for Head Start services. Numerous other amendments addressing service, coordination, planning, and technical assistance needs are included in the legislation. The House bill is expected to reach the floor for a vote in June, with the Senate bill following shortly after. For more information, please see http://www.naehcy.org/legislative_update.html.

Higher Education Act Reauthorization

Legislation was introduced in the House in February to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. The bill – H.R. 609, the *College Access & Opportunity Act* – does not cur-

rently address the specific needs of youth experiencing homelessness. NAEHCY is working with Members of Congress on both the House and Senate side to support amendments to increase access to student service programs for middle and high school youth who are homeless, as well as to remove barriers to accessing federal financial aid for unaccompanied homeless youth. For more information, contact Barbara Duffield at 202.364.7392 or bduffield@naehcy.org

Proposed Regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004)

President Bush signed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvements Act in December 2004. The act contains many new provisions to increase access to special education services for children and youth with disabilities who are homeless. The U.S. Department of Education is expected to issue proposed regulations for IDEA in early June. NAEHCY anticipates that these proposed regulations will address at least some of the new homeless-related provisions. A public comment period (usually 60 to 90 days), and several public comment meetings, will be held following the publication of the proposed regulations. Please stay tuned for updates on this process. Your input and recommendations to the U.S. Department of Education on the proposed IDEA regulations is of critical importance in the implementation of the new provisions. A summary of the IDEA amendments related to children and youth experiencing homelessness and wards of the state, may be found at <http://www.naehcy.org/ideasummary.html>.

Northwest Region Update

On April 22, 2005, the McKinney-Vento State Coordinators from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington joined forces to discuss issues facing Pacific Northwest school districts that provide services to homeless children and youth across state boundaries. Oregon State Coordinator, Dona Bolt, hosted Mike Stoy (ID) and Melinda Dyer (WA) for a lively lunch meeting where such topics as enrollment, transportation, dispute resolution, and best practices were discussed. The

possibility of holding a combined tri-state liaison training was also raised. It was a terrific opportunity to share ideas and collaborate with colleagues on the issues that all state coordinators are challenged with.

The state coordinators from the Northwest plan to continue their collaboration, and the results of their efforts will be highlighted in future issues of *The Beam*. ■

Idaho
Oregon
Washington

Northeast Region Update

An important step was taken this spring to improve the lives of the more than 1.35 million young homeless children and their families who face tremendous challenges every day in our country. Horizons for Homeless Children, in partnership with many dedicated and energetic partners from across the country and representing a range of fields, held the first ever Young Children Without Homes National Conference in Boston, MA, April 27-29, 2005.

The conference brought together 550 participants from 40 states to focus on the importance of quality early care and education in the lives of young homeless children. Participants attended over 60 workshops covering many related topics. A strong speaking

program, including keynote speaker Dr. Jack P. Shonkoff, Dean of The Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, helped to set the stage for information sharing, problem-solving, and most importantly a message of hope that we can make a difference in the lives of young homeless children and their families.

Additional speakers included Ralph da Costa Nunez, President and Chief Executive Officer for Homes for the Homeless and the Institute for Children and Poverty, Ellen Bassuk, President of the National Center on Family Homelessness, Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of the City of Boston, and Marijata Daniel-Echols, Chair of the Research Division at the High/Scope Education Research Foundation. ■

Integral to the conference was the message that scientifically sound research demonstrates how trauma, including homelessness, can impact a child's development.

South Region Update

The 2005 Regional Spring Professional Development Training for states in the South was hosted by the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Innovative Support, April 20-22 at the Biloxi Grand Bayview Hotel in Biloxi, Mississippi. Gloria E. Adams, Coordinator of the Mississippi Homeless Education Program, and conference facilitators from school districts across the state offered many opportunities for a rich exchange of information at this 5th annual conference.

Keynote speakers included Dr. Susan Johnstone ("Diamonds from Coal") of

the Tupelo Public School District, and Frank C. Winstead, Founder/President of Advocate for Excellence in America's Classrooms. Concurrent sessions dealt with meeting the needs of students with disabilities who experience homelessness, early childhood intervention strategies, organizing tutorial programs, linking to literacy resources, and community collaboration.

The **6th Annual Regional Conference** will be hosted by the Texas Homeless Education Office at the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, March 20-23, 2006. ■

Alabama
Arkansas
Louisiana
Mississippi
Texas



**NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION FOR THE
EDUCATION OF
HOMELESS CHILDREN
AND YOUTH**

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We're on the web!
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Closing the gap between home and school.

NAEHCY, a national grassroots membership association, serves as the voice and the social conscience for the education of children and youth in homeless situations.

NAEHCY connects educators, parents, advocates, researchers and service providers to ensure school academic achievement and overall success for children and youth whose lives have been disrupted by the lack of safe, permanent and adequate housing.

NAEHCY accomplishes these goals through advocacy, partnerships and education.

Everyone with an interest in supporting children and youth in homeless situations is encouraged to become a member of the Association.

Please Excuse

By Rooster Valentini; McKinney-Vento Site Coordinator; Allentown School District, Pennsylvania

**Please excuse Eric from attending school today.
Code Enforcement closed our building, took our home away.
If you look in the front window,
Or go around to the back door,
You'll see most of our belongings
Piled up on the floor.**

**Please excuse, also, my darling daughter Nancy.
I doubt that tomorrow she'll be dressed so fancy.
We could only grab a few of her things—
Her dress shoes, but not her gym clothes.
She made sure she had her school bag,
But where her library book is, who knows.**

**Please excuse the kids the rest of the week.
We could not find the shelter we seek.
I don't know when they can get to school,
'Cause I'm not sure where we will be.
Could you ask their teachers for home work?
If I can pick it up . . . we will just have to see.**

**Please excuse these excuses I make.
I got to keep writing them, we can't catch a break
Please excuse these excuses I give.
This is the way we now have to live.
Please excuse . . .**