I’ve heard it said before that economics “is all in our heads.” Meaning, amongst other things, that “poor”, “rich” and “middle-class” are statuses that shift depending on one’s perspective. The Berkeley Food and Housing Project (BFHP) sits at a unique vantage point to explore such a concept. Our office is adjacent to the University of California at Berkeley campus and as the fall semester began, students could be seen moving into new apartments, buying books and lunching at local eateries. To most it would not seem jarring to hear these young people bemoaning the outrageous cost of their housing, the unfair prices of their books, and the hardships caused by ever rising tuition. They often seem genuine when they announce in the coffee line that they are “broke”, “struggling” or even “poor.” But would they feel so confident of that status if they worked across the street? Could they, as they wield their $4 organic cappuccino and vegan muffin made of local ingredients, honestly say to one of our clients who did not have enough to eat, that they are poor?

Around the country, the rich and the poor brush elbows more than we realize. The Tenderloin borders Union Square in San Francisco, and billionaires in Manhattan stroll past the homeless on the way to their penthouses. Right here, UC Berkeley students park $500 mountain bikes, and on the other side of the sidewalk BFHP clients wonder how they will buy enough food for the week. Although these worlds intimately coexist, rarely does one side understand the perspective of the other. With a foot on each side of the proverbial and literal sidewalk, BFHP often serves as a line of communication between the poor college student and the poor homeless mother. This allows us to offer to college students opportunities to communicate and understand the plight of the poor. We — the staff and clients — are grateful that students have served us well as Bonner Leaders, volunteers and fundraisers. Their presence opens lines of communication and understanding on both sides of the sidewalk. I hope that with a better understanding of the nuanced nature of poverty and severe economic struggle we will be better equipped to eradicate them.

Our administrative offices are now located at 2362 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Please send all correspondence to this address.
Berkeley Food and Housing Project’s mission is to “ease and end the crisis of homelessness in our community.” In our first 35 years of operation, the focus was on easing the crisis by providing a strong “safety net” of services. This was achieved so excellently that BFHP developed our well-deserved reputation as the leading provider of homeless and housing services in Berkeley.

As the crisis grew in the mid-2000’s, BFHP created a strategic plan to concentrate more of its efforts and resources on “ending the crisis of homelessness.” In the fall of 2007, BFHP launched the first phase of its H.O.P.E. (Housing OPPortunities Expanded) project to increase our housing efforts, create more permanent housing opportunities for our clients, and to increase the number of men, women and children we assisted each year in moving from homelessness to permanent housing, stability, and personal and economic self-sufficiency.

A major step in this effort was the development, in the fall of 2008, of the Housing Case Management Team (HCMT), comprised of case managers from every agency program and service site. Team members design housing case management strategies. They develop participant intake and assessment materials, landlord outreach and placement strategies, and housing activities and workshops for clients interested and ready for housing placement assistance. The team facilitates the clients' flow between programs and greatly enhances the housing search and placement activities for each client enrolled in Housing Case Management, including identifying and resolving client barriers to obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.

BFHP has committed its full resources to making this effort successful. HCMT results in its first full year of operation have been outstanding. In 2008, we wrote a grant and obtained a full-time Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC) case manager intern to work with HCMT. She worked out so well that we hired her as a case manager in our Multi Service Center. We then expanded this effort in 2009 and obtained the services of another LVC intern and a new Jesuit Volunteer Corps case manager intern. We also hired a new case manager coordinator to supervise the efforts of 6 case managers and coordinate the activities of HCMT.

Since 2008, HCMT accomplishments include:

- Development of a bi-monthly housing clinic. The first clinic was held in July 2009. BFHP staff anticipated about 30 participants, but over 100 people showed up for the initial orientation.
- In 2008, Alameda County’s EveryOneHome (coordinating agency for Alameda County’s plan to end homelessness by 2023) did a survey to ascertain the number of homeless individuals and families placed into permanent housing in the prior 12 months by its 39 participating agencies. BFHP accounted for 17% of the total housing placements in the county.
- In the program year ending June 30, 2009, HCMT assisted 197 men, women and children in moving from homelessness to permanent housing, its highest one-year total ever!
- In August, BFHP received three years’ worth of funding from President Obama’s stimulus package to provide homeless prevention and rapid housing services, and was designated the City of Berkeley’s Housing Assistance Center. Although this is a separate effort, it will allow us to further coordinate and expand the work of the HCMT and project H.O.P.E.
Changes occurred in the Development Department over the summer. Wanda Williams, who served as manager of the Men’s Overnight Shelter, is now our community services coordinator. Wanda handles all volunteers and in-kind donations. Her presence will strengthen BFHP’s relationships with local faith communities, businesses and corporations. Wanda can be reached at 510-649-4965 x506 or wwilliams@bfhp.org.

BFHP has new brochures that are available for distribution. If you would like to put some brochures in a public setting, please contact Wanda.

Our new Development Associate is Joanna Lavenberg. Joanna handles the database, assists in the grant writing process, and provides administrative support. She also manages the website and BFHP’s online presence. Joanna can be reached at 510-649-4965 x512 or jlavenberg@bfhp.org.

BFHP has a new look online and in print. Over the summer, we worked on creating a new website. Take a moment to view the site and the updates at www.bfhp.org.

Still Getting the Paper Newsletter?

If you would like to receive the electronic version of this newsletter or receive occasional BFHP news, updates and events, please send us your e-mail address. We will respect your wishes about which communications you want to receive and you can opt out of our e-mail list anytime. We will never sell, rent or trade your personal information. Please send an e-mail to jlavenberg@bfhp.org indicating which e-correspondence you would like to receive.

As of 2009, BFHP adopted an environmental policy that requires us to reduce the amount of waste we generate. One way to eliminate waste is by eliminating the paper it takes to list our donors in the printed version of our newsletter. Donor acknowledgements can be found on the contributions page of our website (www.bfhp.org). Thank you for understanding and supporting our desire to be an environmentally conscious agency.
The Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s (PG&E) East Bay Chapter of the Black Employee Association (BEA) donated $3,750 to BFHP in July.

Pictured (L-R): Rose Newell of PG&E; Linda Maio of Berkeley City Council; Anthony Boudreaux, the vice president of the PG&E BEA; Terrie Light, BFHP’s executive director; Delia Chew, the president of the PG&E BEA.

Beyond Feeding the Hungry

The employees of Eurest/Compass Group donated $1,500 worth of backpacks and school supplies this summer.

Pictured (L-R): Maria Edwards, case manager; an Eurest employee; Julie Hambrick, shelter monitor.

Bayer employees painted our Multi Service Center this summer. This has become an annual event for Bayer, which is located at 800 Dwight Way in Berkeley.
Before being employed at BFHP, my experience with the homeless population was seeing them on the streets and trying to get as far away as possible. Frankly, I was afraid of them; and had no idea what to expect in a homeless shelter. Since I have started working at BFHP I have a totally different outlook. People who are homeless are regular people who need a helping hand at a difficult time in their lives, and BFHP is there to lend this helping hand.

As the office manager, one of my first projects was to plan the logistics for moving our administrative offices to 2362 Bancroft Way. One morning when I went to the Bancroft site to meet a vendor, I was surprised to find a number of clients having breakfast in our Multi Service Center. Feeling more comfortable, I walked through the dining room saying, “good morning” to every person who looked at me. Some answered me and some of them looked at me like I was crazy. At that moment, I knew that I was an employee of BFHP, because I was no longer afraid of the homeless.

As a BFHP employee, I am privileged to work with people who are passionate about the work we do. The staff invests their hearts and souls in our mission to ease and end the crisis of homelessness. The staff and clients have welcomed me into the BFHP family, and I am proud to tell people, “I work for Berkeley Food and Housing Project.”

Arlene Seifert started working for BFHP in June 2009 as the office manager. Her responsibilities include human resources, information technology, service contracts and general administrative functions. Arlene worked as a human resource manager for the last 11 years in Trinidad, The Bahamas and the US. She graduated from Seton Hall University and Florida Atlantic University, and is a member of the International Human Resources Network and the Society of Human Resource Management.

Where would one find 8,421 coins?

On the streets of Berkeley, of course.

An anonymous couple walks daily through the city and finds coins – a lot of coins – and donates them to BFHP twice a year. They brought us over $400 in December and another $400+ in August. They call themselves the Coinwalkers and they are trying to create a national movement of people who walk, find money, and donate it to local charities.

Remember the Forgotten

Our Annual Gifts for the Forgotten project is underway. Consider donating $10 towards the purchase of a gift bag that provides homeless men and women with a knit hat, gloves, warm thermal socks and a fleece scarf.

Please mark your check “GFTF” and mail it to BFHP, 2362 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94704 or donate online at www bfhp.org.
NEW BOARD MEMBERS & OFFICERS

Berkeley Food and Housing Project added three new board members over the past year: Eve L. Howard, John L. Abrate and Luther T. Jessie, Jr.

Eve is the president of Change the Game Consulting. John is the priority manager at Union Bank in Berkeley. Luther is the division director of Project Pride for the East Bay Community Recovery Project in Oakland.

The board also elected new officers. Bart Grossman was elected president, succeeding Carol Huffine. He joined the board in January 2008. Barb is an adjunct professor and the director of field work at UC Berkeley. Larry Rosenthal was elected vice president. Larry joined the board in September 2006. He is an adjunct professor at the Goldman School of Public Policy and the executive director of the Berkeley Program on Housing and Urban Policy. Krista Kim was elected secretary. Krista joined the board in November 2007. She is an attorney in commercial and real estate law with Reed Smith.

Thanks to Estrella Fichter, who resigned after serving faithfully on the board for several years. We appreciate all that Estrella did to further the mission of BFHP.

INTERNS

Danielle Shields and Maria Anderson are eager to apply what they learned in college towards the issues that impact the Bay Area homeless.

Both women will be serving as interns for a year at BFHP. Danielle is volunteering through Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC), and Maria is volunteering through the Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC).

Originally from Media, Pennsylvania, Danielle attended Boston College, where she became interested in JVC. Maria is from a small town near the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

CLIENT SUCCESSES

Celebrating clients who remained housed for over a year, BFHP staff and clients gathered for our Client Success Event on August 14 at the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley.

Last year, BFHP’s Housing Case Management Team successfully placed 197 formerly homeless individuals in permanent private housing.

Pictured (L-R): Caroline Barajas; Robin Guyton; Darlene Gardner, case manager; Myra Fields.

Sherrol Gray, the transitional services manager, congratulated Paula Lighting, a client, during a recent graduation service at the North County Women’s Center.
2009 has seen an increased emphasis on health at BFHP. Though perhaps unsurprising, the health statistics of the homeless population are staggering. A majority of our clients are dealing with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and mental illness. Those who live on the streets deal with a number of acute conditions as well, due to harsh weather and poor living conditions. Many of our clients are also uninsured or underinsured and without consistent access to medical services.

BFHP has identified health as a major component of the successful rehabilitation and housing of our clients. With funding from Cisco, BFHP hired me as a part-time health care coordinator to improve access to health services for our clients. Since then, I have worked with local agencies to facilitate greater access to health services. Our primary partners are Suitcase Clinic, LifeLong Medical and Health Care for the Homeless – all of which provide on-site services at Dwight Way. We are aiming to make these services available to more clients, targeting their needs.

We also created relationships with Berkeley Public Health, EveryWoman Counts and First Resort Pregnancy Counseling.

This resulted in monthly “Healthy Living” workshops at Dwight Way and address primary care needs of our clients to improve their overall wellness.

Dianna Kane and Michael Yutrzenka, the executive director of Cisco Systems Foundation. Cisco donated $15,000 in 2008 and 2009 to fund BFHP’s health care coordinator.

Dianna Kane started working for BFHP in March as the health care coordinator. Prior to joining BFHP, Dianna lived in South Africa for 4 years, obtaining her master’s degree in HIV/AIDS and Society at the University of Cape Town. There she worked on community health projects focusing on women and children.

Stand Up and Be Counted!

The 2010 Census is right around the corner, and BFHP is involved in an effort with Congresswoman Barbara Lee to increase community awareness.

Sherrol Gray, our transitional services manager, is taking the lead in this endeavor. Ensuring that the underserved population is counted, Sherrol plans on having census booths at the Men’s Overnight Shelter, North County Women’s Center and the Multi Service Center to assist individuals who may not receive or complete their census forms.

She assures people that the Census Bureau must maintain confidentiality about what individuals report on their census forms. She also wants to send the message that completing census information benefits the community.

For more information on the 2010 Census, go to www.2010census.gov. For information on BFHP’s involvement, check our website (www.bfhp.org).
Dear Beloved BFHP Reader,

For fall, we wish for:

| Women's Shelter (we need these the most!) |
| Twin beds, single-size dressers |

| Administrative Offices |
| Book cases, camera (for events), conference table and chairs, file cabinets |

| General |
| **Toiletries:** (Especially trial/travel size) |
| Deodorant, foot powder, foot spray, bar soap, razors, shampoo, lotion, sunscreen, toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash, Q-Tips |

| **First Aid/Medical Supplies:** (These items must be unopened and in their original package) |
| Cortizone Cream, Band-Aids, peroxide, ear plugs, feminine hygiene products, OTC pain relievers, adult/child cold medicine, adult incontinence products |

| **Kitchen Items:** |
| Glassware, silverware, slow cookers, tea kettles, pots and pans, dishes |

| **Food Supplies:** |
| Peanut butter, jelly, coffee, bread |

| **Household Items:** |
| Laundry detergent, mops, brooms, sewing kits, kitchen/bathroom cleaning supplies |

| **Linens:** |
| Warm blankets/ comforters, pillows, towels (all sizes), sleeping bags |

| **Entertainment:** |
| Children’s books, non-violent DVDs, CDs and games, holiday gifts for men, women, teens and children |

To arrange a donation, please contact Wanda Williams at (510) 649-4965 x506 or e-mail wwilliams@bfhp.org.

BFHP cannot pick up donations or accept clothing donations. On the Wish List page of our website are some referrals for organizations that do accept clothing donations (www.bfhp.org).