

Connecting  
the Homeless  
Population to  
the Services



Volume 1, Issue 1  
Fall 2007

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## Points of Interest

- PITS Numbers
- Shortage of Services
- CoC News
- HMIS Progress
- Thoughts from the Staff

# M-TOC Chronicle



## Numbers are Real

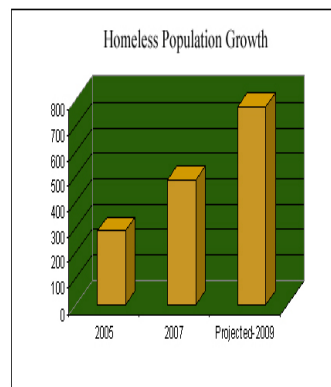
During May of 2005, a Point-In-Time Survey (PITS) was conducted by the Virgin Islands Alliance against Homelessness Continuum of Care and coordinated by the Methodist Training and Outreach Center (MTOC). The PITS was designed to count the number of homeless individuals in the Virgin Islands. It took into account both unsheltered homeless who had no roof over their heads, and the sheltered homeless who were living in various types of shelters. A similar survey was done during March of 2007 and increases in the numbers were reported across the board.

The total number of homeless counted in 2005 was 288, with St. John counting 45, St. Croix 50 and St. Thomas having the majority with 193. The numbers increased in 2007, though

the percentage breakdown among the islands were basically the same. St. John counted 87, St. Croix numbered 96 and St. Thomas reported 304, giving the V.I. a count of 487 for that survey.

Considering St. Croix' population and size, as well as the fact that other surveys have reported the number of homeless there to be much greater than what was reported, it is thought that the number of homeless in St. Croix was actually 50-75% greater. That would increase St. Croix' numbers to between 75 and 88 in 2005, and between 144 and 170 in 2007. This would also impact the totals for the entire V.I., giving totals of 313-326 in 2005 and 535-561 in 2007.

Based on the PITS, the numbers



projected to 2009 should yield about 775 homeless individuals. Should the St. Croix homeless population have a more accurate count, the total number for the VI could be approaching 1,000 homeless individuals.

Thirty years ago, widespread homelessness did not exist in the Virgin Islands.  
(Continued on Pg. 6)

## Shelters/Services are Unrealized

Our community needs a sufficient supply of affordable permanent housing to meet the needs of extremely low income and chronically homeless people.

Our community needs a Safe Haven (shelter with low-demand services and care) intended to reach the hard-to-reach/hard-to-serve homeless people with mental illnesses

and substance addictions. When people feel safe and secure they are more likely to participate in treatment.

Our community needs a discharge policy that would ensure that institutions (hospitals, prisons, jails, mental health facilities, child foster care system) are not discharging people into homelessness.

Our community needs to identify a funding source that would permit community based organizations to implement these programs and ensure their sustainability.

Our community needs to end chronic homelessness by the year 2012, and having these services in place would be a great, big step in the right direction.

## HMIS Progress Update

*There was an understanding of what HUD expected the HMIS to provide.*

*All of the agencies and their resources have been setup...*

The progress of Methodist Training & Outreach Center's (MTOC) territory-wide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) can be measured in the amount of phases completed. There were five phases that took the HMIS from inception through completion, or "Go LIVE". They are the Discovery, Acquisition, Setup, Training/Testing and Go Live phases.

### Discovery

At the end of this phase, MTOC had a technical staff that was comprised of a Project Manager, a System/Network Administrator and a Web Master. There was also an understanding of what was expected of the HMIS, what the HMIS could actually do, and most importantly, what HUD expected the HMIS to provide.

### Acquisition

During the Acquisition Phase, there were two sub-phases, Hardware Acquisition and Software Acquisition. During Hardware Acquisition, MTOC did the necessary work

that enabled them to provide the hardware to the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that make up the Continuum of Care. In the Software Acquisition, the Client-Track HMIS provided by Data Systems International (DSI) out of Utah was selected and purchased.

### Setup

In order to make the software available to the CoC, the various agencies had to be setup within the Client Track system. Two databases also had to be created, one for training/testing purposes, and the other for production or real data. All of the agencies and their resources (users, programs, grants, and services) have been setup within the "Train" database. Only the organizations that have completed training have been setup within the "Prod" database.

### Training/Testing

DSI was responsible for training the staff of MTOC who would then be responsible for training the

remaining CoC organizations. DSI provided training such as Administration & Tools, Train the Trainer, Reports Training and Other Provider Tasks training. The majority of these training have been completed with the balance being accomplished as time provides. MTOC has completed user training for Catholic Charities and for the St. Croix based CoC organizations. Testing of users' functionality, system capability and reporting capability has been completed. Testing of the security features, backup and Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity is ongoing and continuous.

### Go Live

MTOC has started using the HMIS "Prod" database. The data currently being entered are real data and are being reflected in the Annual Progress Report (APR) that is submitted annually to HUD. Other organizations will be ready to "go live" at the completion of their training.

*Employees from St. Croix' CBOs train on Client-Track HMIS as MTOC's training team answers questions.*

## HMIS Training



## A Success Story

Mrs. Margaret Subero had been living on the streets of French Town. She did odd jobs for the Sea Wire Way Marina in exchange for food and a place to take a shower. She is 60 years old now and had been on the Streets of French Town for the past seventeen years. Coming from Elmira, N.Y., she relocated to St. Thomas when she was fourteen years old, immediately after the death of her parents. Widowed in 1987, she became very despondent about her situation. Her life began to spiral out of control as she had no skills and could only find menial work with little pay.

Mrs. Subero agreed to attend the

Village Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Program in St. Croix. Soon after returning, she was involved in a major accident in



which she suffered major injuries. The injuries consisted of head trauma and a crushed left foot that resulted in amputation from the ankle down. She stayed two months at the RLS Hospital where she was treated.

Upon discharge from the hospital, Mrs. Subero had nothing to her name but a hospital bill of thirty-six thousand nine hundred ninety eight dollars (\$36,998.00). This was a result of her being chronically homeless for so many years. MTOC was then called to assist in finding housing for Mrs. Subero.

*...she had nothing to her name but a hospital bill of \$36,998.00*

(Continued on Page 6)



*...we were able to purchase an old historic building in the Market Square...*



Atty. K.Purcell, M.Smith, R.Chen, L.Petersen & D.Roberts close deal on new MTOC home.

New location...to be renovated.

## MTOC Moving to Historic Dwelling

Methodist Training & Outreach Center, Inc. (MTOC) is the central outreach center for the territory, established since 2002 for the purpose of connecting the homeless population to mainstream services and shelters. With limited funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), and the Housing for People with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) grant, MTOC has put in place an emergency homelessness prevention program that includes rent, mortgage and utility assistance, case management, landlord intervention, and other services to pre-

vent eviction and homelessness.

MTOC is currently renting the space which we now occupy at a cost of three thousand one hundred fifty dollars (\$3,150) per month. With the help of Mr. Lawrence Joshua at DPNR, we were able to purchase an old historic building in the Market Square which will be used as our permanent administrative office. Funds for this purchase were made available through reprogrammed CDBG funds from DPNR. Once we have repaired the building and it becomes habitable, we would then be able to utilize

more of our funding for services to the homeless.

MTOC is in need of funding (an annual allotment) to ensure continued operation and expansion of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for the territory. We need to ensure that all service providers and mainstream programs are linked with the HMIS, as this would enable us to gain a more accurate count of the homeless and hopefully, gain the resources that would empower us to better serve them.

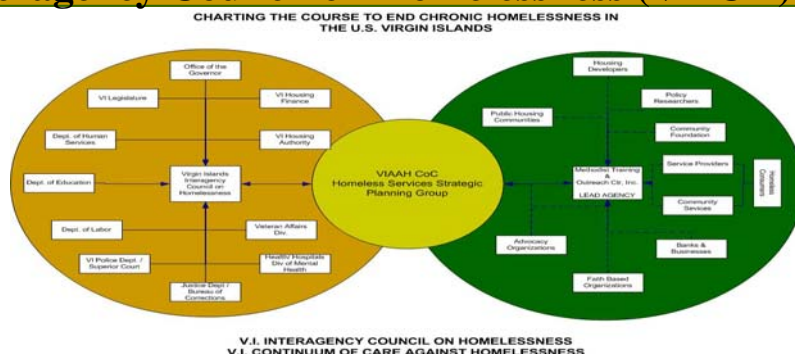
*With limited funds ... MTOC has put in place an emergency homelessness prevention program...*



***The Council serves as the single territorial resource for homelessness planning and policy development.***

## The Virgin Islands Interagency Council on Homelessness (VIICH)

The VIICH was formed through a mandate out of the National Council of Governors to all states and territories. The mandate stated that a plan must be put in place that would end chronic homelessness by the year 2012. The VIICH is comprised of twenty-six (26) members from mainstream service providers, government & non-government, advocacy agencies, homeless or former homeless persons, and faith based organizations. The members were appointed by former Governor Charles W. Turnbull, and the Commissioner of the Dept. of Human Services served as the Chairperson. The Council serves as the



single territorial resource for homelessness planning and policy development, and advises the Governor and the Legislature on issues related to the problems of persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The council also provides recommendations for joint and cooperative efforts and policy initiative in carrying out programs to meet the needs of the homeless. The council meets quarterly.

## The V.I. Alliance Against Homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC)

The CoC is our community's method of organizing and delivering housing and services to people in need. The CoC attempts to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. The organization is made up of community based organizations and service providers who serve the homeless populations in areas such as Outreach, Intake & Assessment, Emergency/Transitional Housing, Supportive Services, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Permanent Housing. The VIAAH CoC meets every

month in an effort to identify ways of coordinating and linking resources in order to avoid duplication and facilitate movement toward permanent housing and self-sufficiency. The organizations that comprise the CoC are Methodist Training & Outreach Center, Catholic Charities, Family Resource Center, The Salvation Army, The Safety Zone, Ten Thousand Helpers, Eagle's Nest, The Village, V.I. Care, St. Croix Mission Outreach, The Women's Coalition, My Brother's Table and various community advocates.



## News From The CoC

***MTOC has also implemented HMIS training, both in St. Thomas and St. Croix...***

1. As a result of reprogrammed CDBG Funds, MTOC has completed the purchase of a building that will be used for administrative purposes. MTOC has also implemented HMIS training, both in St. Thomas and St. Croix, for organizations of the CoC. Soon, training will also be implemented for the St. John based organizations.

2. Ten Thousand Helpers also celebrate the closing of the purchase of a building in Fredericksted for their operation of serving mentally ill homeless individuals.

3. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the CoC will be held on Friday, Sept. 21, 2007 at the UVI campus. The meeting will be video-conferenced between campuses. There will be a guest speaker from HUD's regional office in Puerto Rico.

4. The CoC will be gearing up for the Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week of Activities, to be held November 11 to 17, 2007. The week begins with a day of prayer on Sunday, Nov. 11, and with a march to end Homelessness on Monday, Nov. 12. The march

will be held on the Waterfront, from Emile Griffith Park to the Emancipation Garden. On Friday, Nov. 16, we will join with the United Way and other organizations in a Homeless Connect Day of Activities for the homeless population. This will be held at the Lionel Roberts Stadium. Other activities will be taking place throughout the week.



## MTOC Musings (Thoughts from the Staff)

### *Just a Glimmer of Hope*

The Bible states in Hebrews 6:18b-19 "We who have fled to take hold of the *hope* offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this *hope* as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." As human beings, we are encouraged by *Hope*, which is an anchor for human survival and gives us security as we deal with life's challenges. Where would you be without that encouragement and security you garner from the God given gift of *Hope*? There's a possibility that you could be homeless. I say this because as I have worked with the homeless population for the past two and a half years, I've found that a lack of *Hope* has kept this population in their plight of homelessness. As a community, if we can stop the condemnation and stigmatizing and encourage the victims with a glimmer of *hope*, we'll be starting the restoration process.

People are homeless for a myriad of reasons: abandonment, acts of nature, changes in family dynamics, substance abuse, and relocation. However, I have found that regardless of the reason for their condition, a glimmer of *hope* can and do make a difference. We who are providers have found that restoring just a glimmer of *hope* is an important step in the recovery process

- Marilyn David

### *Homeless People & Street People*

After many years of life on the streets, the homeless person has become very frail. To introduce them to independent living has become a process.

1. Restore physical health
2. Restore financial health
3. Restore sound mental health
4. Return to work

- Navle Fleming

### *Homelessness is just a payday away*

We, the people of this community, need to become more involved in the awareness of homelessness here in the US Virgin Islands. You may not think that homelessness is a payday away, until you lose that money and have no means of obtaining basic survival needs. The next homeless person on the street may be either you or me. My experience dealing with the homeless has proven that many would have never dreamed that they would one day be in such a position.

Homelessness stems from a series of events, including, but not limited to, high medical expenses, low income and unbelievably high childcare expenses. We need to implement more programs (especially financial programs) in the territory and provide more counseling for the homeless.

- LuAnn Roberts

### *It Takes A Village...*

It's going to take the entire community to reduce the homeless count to zero by the year 2012. The expectation of no more homelessness in our beautiful Virgin Islands is real. It is going to take all agencies that provide support services for the homeless to play their role in order to reduce the homeless count to zero.

The process of eliminating homelessness has begun. If your organization provides support services for the homeless, reach out and let's tackle this cause together.

- Evelyn Glasby

### *Caring for the Homeless*

First I must say, "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work."

My task is not an easy one. Dealing with the homeless clients can be very difficult at times. In this field, one comes across people who have schizophrenia, bipolar disorders and other mental illnesses. Others are substance abusers. It could be very difficult communicating with them. At times it gets very stressful, but one has to try and be cool, calm and collected. You must have a caring disposition; otherwise you will not be able to function properly. I help and counsel people who have multiple problems. These problems include, trying to get their rent paid, getting their life back on track, keeping their medical appointments, shopping for groceries and sundries, picking up their medication and any other task that needs to be done to enhance their way of living.

In spite of the challenges mentioned, it gives me great pleasure to do this work, and to do it well.

- Althea Azille

MTOC has developed a plan for improving communications with all stakeholders. Our efforts include the launching of our website, e-mail access, and several printed publications to follow. MTOC now has a website which provides information in regards to the fight against homelessness. We encourage everyone to visit our site at [www.mtoc.vi](http://www.mtoc.vi). In addition to our website, we have also created an email account for all general inquiries. All persons interested in contacting MTOC for further information can reach us at [info@mtoc.vi](mailto:info@mtoc.vi). We also realize that though we are in the digital age, we still have to keep our less computer savvy users informed. In order to fulfill our goal of reaching as many people as possible, we have decided to produce a series of printed publications, with this newsletter being the first of that venture. We hope that our efforts to communicate with our community can provide the necessary information to assist in the fight against homelessness.

- Herman Hart

*...with a glimmer of hope, we'll be starting the restoration process.*

*...it gets very stressful, but one has to try and be cool, calm and collected.*

*The next homeless person ... may be you or me.*

*...there needs to be a shift from managing homelessness to finding the underlying causes and ending it.*

## Views From The Outside

I know homelessness is a problem here in the Virgin Islands, just like everywhere else in the world, but frankly, I don't think it receives the attention it deserves. So much so, it's gotten to the point where because of the lack of focus on the number of people this unfortunate situation affects, it seems as if it doesn't exist.

I must admit, this mindset has affected me to the point where I really don't think about homelessness until I see someone like Crazy Tony walking on the street, or until I'm watching or reading a news story about it and worst of all, until my closet gets too full and I'm ready to make my bi-annual trip to the Salvation Army. I'm not sure I know what could be done to help raise awareness regarding homelessness in the territory, but if this problem is to be rectified, it's going to have to start with the community taking a staunch interest in, if not making it disappear all together, at least decreasing the number of families it affects. -- **Government employee**

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From ever since I could remember, there were homeless people living on the streets. It can seem, at times, that no matter what is being done to resolve this problem, it continues to exist. I was alarmed and troubled to discover the amount of homeless people that exist in a small community such as the Virgin Islands. But I realized that in many instances it is very easy for people to fall through the cracks and end up on the streets, thus being considered homeless.

Homeless refers to the condition and societal category of people who lack fixed housing or a regular or adequate nighttime residence. It is my opinion that everyone should have a place to live. For this to become reality, there needs to be a shift from managing homelessness to finding the underlying causes and ending it. As I look around our community, I realize that homelessness is real and can result in many tragic outcomes. For example, it can result in starvation, malnutrition and diseases. It can also influence people to steal and turn to a life of crime. Many may become depressed and suicidal and in many cases turn to drugs in an effort to deal with or forget their problems. Homelessness affects individuals specifically and a country as a whole. It is obvious that all the effects of homelessness are negative. Thus, we need to work together as a community to help end homelessness. Only then we can begin to overcome homelessness and its bad effects, and change the lives of many people for the better.

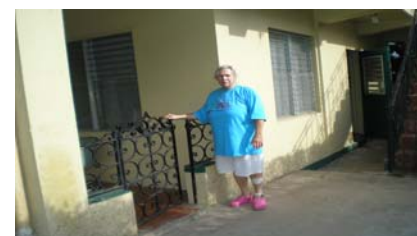
-- **Elementary school teacher**

## Success Story (Cont'd)

(continued from page 3) Subero. There was space available in our Single Room Occupancy Program (SRO) in which she was placed. MTOC's case manager was able to assist her in **acquiring food stamps** and **financial assistance** from the Department of Human Services.

We were also able to **acquire her social security card and a copy of her birth certificate**. In addition, we enrolled her in the **Medical Assistance Program** which enabled her to pay her outstanding hospital debt. Finally, as a result of a donation, Mrs. Subero is now the proud owner of a prosthesis

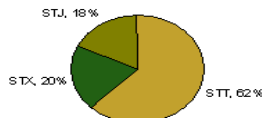
which enables her to walk. She finally has a **place to call home!**



## Numbers Are Real (Cont'd.)

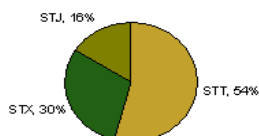
**PITS 2007**

Total: 487 Homeless



**Adjusted PITS 2007**

Total: 561 Homeless



(continued from front page)

Today, nearly a thousand people are homeless despite an infrastructure designed to deal with the problem. Several factors have contributed to the growth over the last few decades. Substance abuse, mental illness and economics are some of the main contributors. Housing has become scarcer for individuals with low income as the cost of housing has increased much faster than wages. Services that these families need for support and stability are too expensive or

can't be found. But that's another story!

Numbers, such as those reported in this article, are important to our community's quest to end homelessness. With the advent of our HMIS and the numbers that will be produced as a result, we will be better able to evaluate programs, identify gaps in the programs or services offered and to properly allocate resources.

*Services that these families need ... can't be found.*

## MTOC News

MTOC has two buildings in Estate Contant used for permanent housing in the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) program. Our buildings house eight individuals and are currently filled to capacity. We are seeking another building to be used for the same purpose.

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MTOC thanks the community and all of the organizations that supported us at the farewell banquet for the former President of our Board of Directors, Dr. Wycherley Gumbs. The banquet was held in July and it was a great success.

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Our case managers have been working tirelessly and making great strides with the clients, assisting them to acquire needed items such as birth certificates, official picture IDs, food stamps and medical assistance. They have also been involved in moving clients from transitional or temporary housing into permanent subsisted housing.

**Great job ladies!**

\*\*\*\*\*

We have had some clients with terminal illnesses who have required an enormous amount of assistance in getting back and forth to their appointments and treat-

ments. Thank you to the RLS Hospital and the Department of Human Services staff for the care that they have provided to our homeless clients.

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We also take this moment to say a prayer for two of our clients who recently passed, and for the ones who are currently struggling with serious and terminal illnesses.



***Our buildings ... are currently filled to capacity.***

## Quotes (From & Of the Homeless)

- *"I would work all week, pay my bills and have six dollars left over at the end of the week. I made too much to be helped by the system and not enough to make it on my own."* — **member of the working poor**
- *"I've been homeless. I've worked at 7-Eleven."* — **Dennis Rodman**
- *"Government alone cannot solve the problems we deal with in our correctional facilities, treatment centers, homeless shelters and crisis centers - we need our faith-based and community partners."* — **Dirk Kempthorne**
- *"We have come dangerously close to accepting the homeless situation as a problem that we just can't solve."* — **Linda Lingle**
- *"The average family earning minimum wage spends 141 percent of their income struggling to meet basic needs - food, shelter, clothing.."* — **Sherrod Brown**
- *I don't think I'm alone when I look at the homeless person or the bum or the psychotic or the drunk or the drug addict or the criminal and see their baby pictures in my mind's eye. You don't think they were cute like every other baby?"* — **Dustin Hoffman**
- *"Poverty is a weapon of mass destruction. Homelessness is a weapon of mass destruction. Unemployment is a weapon of mass destruction."* — **Dennis Kucinich**

## Word Search (Find the hidden words in the puzzle.)

|    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| 1  | P | E | O | E | N | I | L | M | A | P  | O  | D  | E  | L  | J  | E  | U  |   |
| 2  | B | I | P | O | L | A | R | A | R | S  | M  | R  | D  | V  | F  | T  | N  |   |
| 3  | G | H | O | P | E | L | E | S | S | E  | Q  | Y  | Z  | A  | I  | U  | W  |   |
| 4  | S | Y | O | H | I | B | N | J | E | U  | O  | E  | S  | U  | B  | A  | P  |   |
| 5  | C | T | D | X | T | U | K | A | R | R  | S  | O  | P  | C  | X  | T  | U  |   |
| 6  | K | R | R | N | H | L | M | R | D | E  | V  | F  | T  | N  | G  | U  | F  |   |
| 7  | U | E | U | N | O | B | R | A | I | N  | T  | W  | S  | O  | H  | I  | Q  |   |
| 8  | Y | V | G | Z | U | I | A | I | B | I  | L  | T  | M  | A  | D  | P  | E  |   |
| 9  | O | O | S | E | S | N | T | I | L | Y  | M  | A  | A  | P  | O  | D  | E  |   |
| 10 | L | P | J | E | I | U | A | C | A | R  | R  | S  | M  | U  | R  | D  | V  |   |
| 11 | F | T | N | G | N | E | Q | Y | I | L  | Z  | G  | A  | I  | Q  | U  | W  |   |
| 12 | S | O | H | I | G | B | N | J | E | D  | O  | U  | N  | O  | P  | S  | C  |   |
| 13 | X | T | U | K | A | R | S | O | P | C  | D  | N  | X  | U  | T  | U  | K  |   |
| 14 | L | M | R | D | V | F | T | N | G | U  | F  | A  | E  | U  | H  | N  | B  |   |
| 15 | R | A | T | N | W | S | O | H | I | Q  | Y  | Z  | A  | I  | B  | I  | L  |   |
| 16 | M | A | D | P | E | O | E | N | I | L  | M  | A  | P  | O  | D  | E  | L  |   |
| 17 | J | E | U | A | R | S | E | M | R | D  | V  | F  | T  | N  | G  | E  | Q  | Y |
|    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |   |

### HIDDEN WORDS

HOUSING      DRUGS  
 ADDICTION      ABUSE  
 POVERTY      HUNGRY  
 HOPELESS      BIPOLAR  
 SQUATTER      ALONE  
 RAIN      HURT



## **MTOC**

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M-TOC Chronicle is a free newsletter published by the Methodist Training & Outreach Center, Inc. This newsletter is one of the resources that MTOC uses to dispense information about the homeless. Some of the issues surrounding homelessness, including the number of people who are homeless and the services that are available or not available for the homeless population, are discussed in this medium.

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If you are interested in joining our mailing list, submitting story ideas or being a volunteer with our program, please send an e-mail to [lopete@mtoc.vi](mailto:lopete@mtoc.vi) or write to:  
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Here

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We can be contacted at the following:

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Check out our website:  
[www.mtoc.vi](http://www.mtoc.vi)



## **Upcoming Events**

1. **November 7, 2007** Face-2-Face (WTJX)
2. **November 8, 2007** Talk 2 (TV 2)

### **Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week**

3. **November 11, 2007** Day of Prayer
4. **November 12, 2007** March to End Homelessness
5. **November 14, 2007** Skip a Lunch Day
6. **November 16, 2007** United Way Project (Homeless Connect)



MTOC's Louise Petersen and other panelists meet with host Addie Ottley on WTJX' Face 2 Face during Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week in November 2005.