

THE HOMELESS VOICE

FLORIDAS LARGEST STREET NEWSPAPER



COSAC Foundation | PO Box 292-577 Davie, FL 33329 | 954-924-3571

Homeless Voice Outreach Team Battles the Cold

South Florida hit by cold weather with even colder air yet to come

Katrina Bush WSVN 7NEWS

Several South Florida farmers spent Wednesday morning drenching acres of their produce fields with water in order to prepare for a powerful incoming cold front.

John Alger of Alger Farms made sure every square inch of his field was soaked in order to protect a multi-million dollar corn crop from the cold.

According to Alger, the water mixes with ground water and will bring warmth to the surface, hopefully salvaging the crop.

“Ground water’s always a little bit warmer than the surface water, so we’re bringing up that heat from underneath and kind of bringing the heat to the surface,” he said.

“We’re just gonna try to cover everything we can,” said Wesley Money from Alger Farms.

Farmers had plenty of extra duties the day before their first corn harvest of the year.

“We got the water trucks going,” said Money. “We got every pivot on the farm running.”

Even though South Florida is not expected to dip into freezing temperatures, farmers said they will keep an eye on the thermometer for the next couple of days.

“Very, very, very, very closely,” said Alger. “We have a lot of money in the ground, and an hour at under 32 degrees could be financially damaging.”

Farmers aren’t the only ones preparing for the cold weather. Businesses along Lincoln Road are bringing out the heaters for outdoor dining.

The Homeless Voice in Davie is also asking for help with cold weather supplies.

“We need blankets, obviously, sweatshirts, sweatpants, beanies,” said Sean Cononie from The Homeless Voice.

Donations can be dropped off at 4700 SW 51st St., Suite 208.

And as the mercury continues to drop, officials gave a few reminders to stay safe: dress in layers, check on elderly neighbors, protect pets, bring plants indoors, and observe caution with space heaters

Broward County Animal Care and Adoption Center has bundled up the fur babies, and they’re encouraging others to do the same and bring pets in out of the cold.

Space heaters should be used only with the proper safety precautions.

“You want to make sure that [the space heater] is on a flat surface — not on the furniture, not on the carpet, not anywhere where the heat from that space heater could cause a fire,” said Miami Fire Rescue Capt. Ignatius Carroll.

You should also keep space heaters at least three feet from kids, curtains and furniture.

Note: For continued donations or if you are someone in need of supplies visit our website at www.homelessvoice.org or call us 954-924-3571



Homeless Voice Staff rounded up items to distribute during the cold snap to homeless who decided not to take shelter. Donations are still being accepted at 4700 SW 51 St Suite 208 Davie, FL

Our Purpose: To Help the Homeless Learn How to Help Themselves

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Your contribution keeps our organization afloat! Our Angels are a very important part of our service and ease the burden of our monthly bills. Thank you for your help in caring for our poor! With your donation, we are happy to send you our Homeless Voice newspaper. Choose your preferred method of subscription below:

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Thank you for your support Angels! Your support keeps our doors open!

About the Homeless Voice

The Homeless Voice houses, feeds, and finds jobs for anyone who is homeless. We serve up to 500 homeless daily and serve over 45,000 meals each month.

The Homeless Voice distributes a street newspaper in all major cities throughout Florida including Tallahassee, Lake City, Jacksonville, Tampa, Orlando, Daytona, Ft. Lauderdale, and Miami.

The Homeless Voice Newspaper has three functions.

- 1-Educate the public on homelessness and poverty issues
- 2-Provide temporary employment to those without a job
- 3-Raise additional funds for the Florida based shelter

We have grown into a multifaceted agency that feeds, shelters, and arranges for each homeless person to receive the necessary access to social and noncompulsory religious services to enable a return to a self-reliant lifestyle.

For the small percentage of people incapable of living independent lives, we provide a caring and supportive environment for their long-term residency.



Homeless Voice Newspaper Staff

Publisher- Sean Cononie

Editor in Chief- Mark Targett **Executive Editor-** Sara Cunningham

www.HomelessVoice.org/contact

~ CATHY'S PRAYER LIST ~

- * Brian
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- * Betsy
- * Romeo
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- * Devon
- * Diane Karm
- * Jefferson Wilson
- * Amy & Mr. Jason
- * Lorena
- * Lilly
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To add a name to Cathy's Prayer List, text 954-410-6275

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Community Corner

Are Coffee Shops the New Homeless Drop-In Centers?

JUDY JOY JONES

Recently, while visiting several different coffee shops in San Francisco, I noticed many of their restrooms have signs on the doors saying, "Closed Until Further Notice." Upon questioning the employees, they immediately tried to re-direct me to other establishments in the neighborhood that offer public restrooms.

When I asked if their restrooms would be repaired soon, the clerks explained they cannot keep them open because the homeless take baths in them, flooding the floors as well as shooting up drugs and throwing their dirty needles on the ground.

The clerks are quickly learning that a homeless person has no choice but to remain dirty because of no access to baths, and are compelled to sometimes steal food because of hunger, and are forced to sleep when and where they can because they have no beds like most people do.

But the employees still have to remember that their job is to take care of the paying customers who are entitled to a clean establishment with restrooms available.

The employees told me that they often find homeless people asleep in their restrooms and in order to get them to leave, they sometimes have to call the police for help.

One young clerk told me that since the homeless don't get to bathe regularly, customers in the store complain that restrooms sometimes smell so badly. He said it is easier for them to place an "Out of Order" sign on the door than it is to try and explain the situation to the paying customers who are out of luck in their need for a restroom, and frequently take out their frustrations on the employees.

Often, he continued, homeless people will fall asleep with their heads on the tables surrounded by large garbage bags filled with their belongings and the customers will not sit near them.

In areas of cities with a large homeless population, employees not only put "Out of Order" signs on their restroom doors, they remove the chairs and tables, forcing customers to stand to drink their coffee, hoping to deter the poor from coming in to bathe and sleep.

In the coffee houses that do provide chairs, the employees explain that they feel sorry for the homeless who are

often young people close to their own ages, and sometimes they let them sleep for several hours before asking them to leave.

Since the other customers will not sit near them while they sleep and often choose to leave the establishment, business in some areas is declining. I wonder if the employees training prepares them to gently yet firmly deal with the poor people of their neighborhoods as well as serve the paying customers.

The need for shelters for the poor is extremely critical and I applaud the employees at the coffee houses for trying to sensitively deal with the homeless situation, though I am certain they are not paid to both serve paying customers as well as interact with homeless people.

A young woman working at one coffee shop in San Francisco shared with me that telling someone who obviously hadn't had a bath for days to leave the establishment seemed intensely cruel to her. She is in college and this is her first job, as well as her first experience in dealing with the poor.

At her shop, she added, they have to remove the cream after each customer uses it instead of leaving it out, because homeless people will drink it all. The clerk said there have been times she was not certain if the people are homeless or not, and finds it awkward to have to be the judge.

Many establishments are literally throwing homeless people out of their stores, yet some actually teach their employees that treating all people with dignity and respect is the number one requirement of all jobs.

Theft in some coffee shops continues to take its toll. The employees are expected to police the products on the shelves as well as keep homeless people out of their restrooms and also keep them from falling asleep in their chairs.

That, on top of doing their normal customer service work, seems over and above the line of duty for young adults who are often trying to pay their way through college with their part-time coffee shop jobs.

Watching the rapidly growing population of homeless people, and simply saying "build houses for everyone" is in the meantime not offering the poor ways to bathe, sleep, eat, store their belongings, as well as take care of their bodily needs, which we all have to do in order to survive.

Perhaps the clerks in these coffee shops working with the homeless population everyday are the very ones that will lead us to much-needed solutions!

WOUNDS OF THE POOR

today i did see
a man in a wheelchair
all alone was he

ravaged by great suffering
few will ever know
his deeply lined face
showed every tear
he had shed

silently his soul screamed
no longer could he
ask for anything

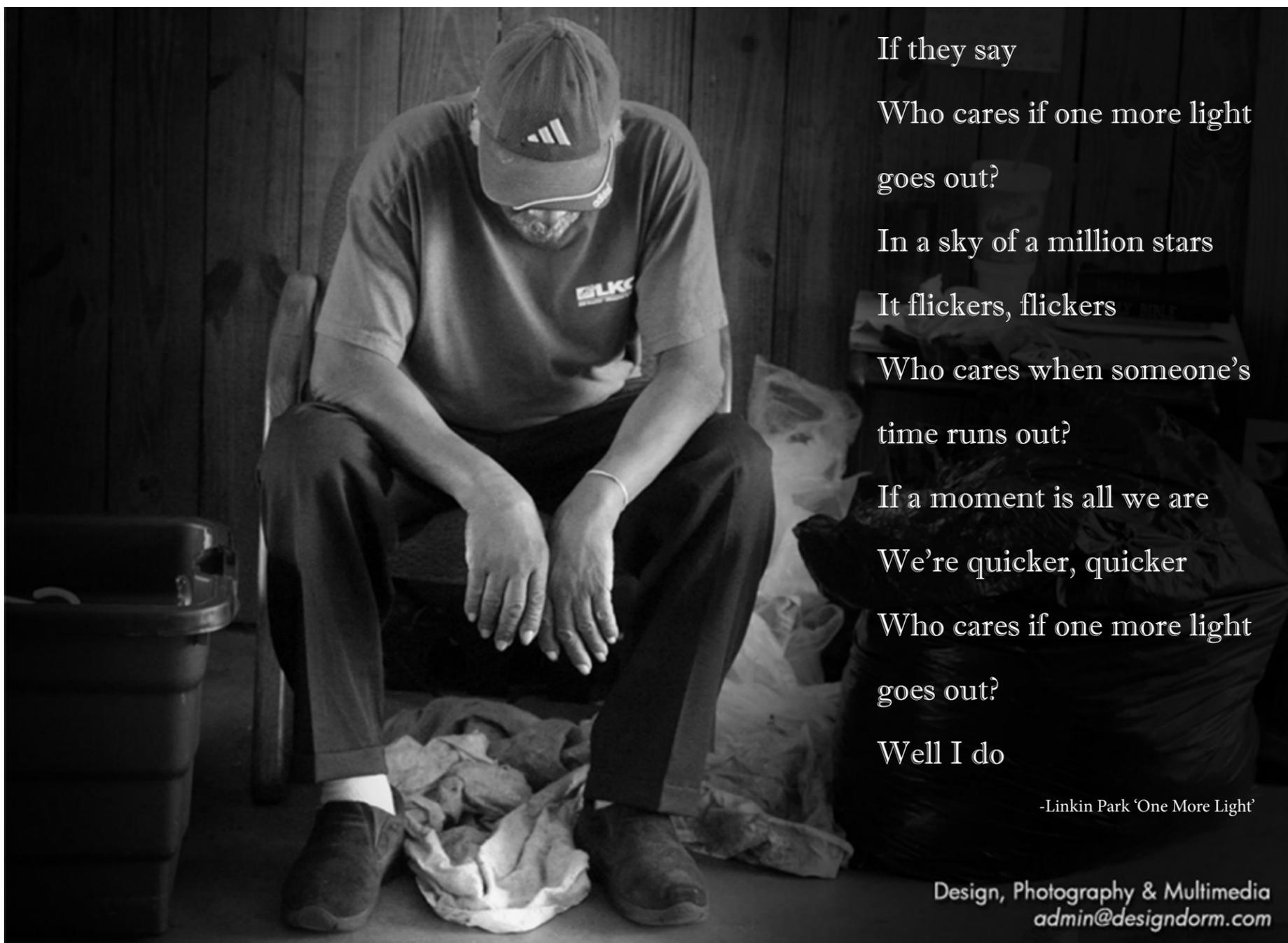
with no home except city streets
and not one passerby even said hi

i wanted to
bathe his red swollen feet
and spread ointment
on his every wound
for he is my brother
in desperate need

i will try through eternity
to get others to see
our beloved brothers in need

we are one heartbeat
he is you and me

-JUDY JOY JONES



If they say
Who cares if one more light
goes out?
In a sky of a million stars
It flickers, flickers
Who cares when someone's
time runs out?
If a moment is all we are
We're quicker, quicker
Who cares if one more light
goes out?
Well I do

-Linkin Park 'One More Light'

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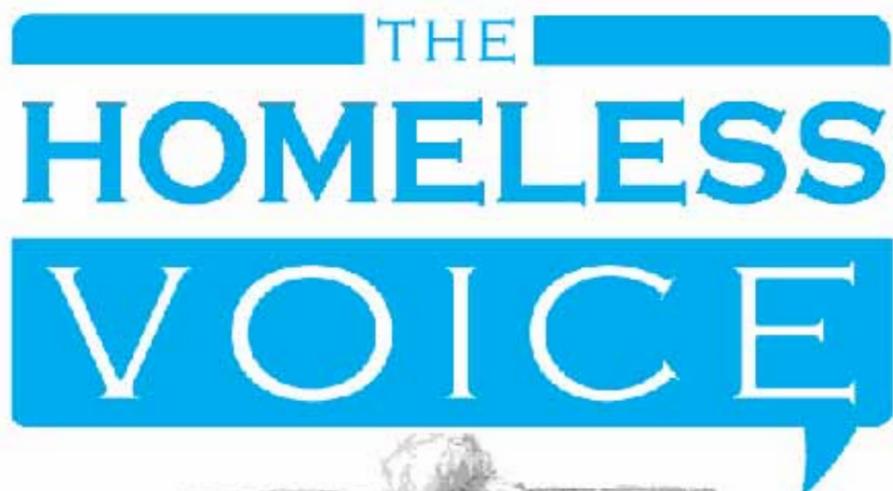
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Helping Our Heroes: Veterans Inn

The suicide rate among veterans has increased 35% since 2001. Nearly 50,000 veterans are homeless and another 1.4 million are at risk of being homeless.

These heroic men and women risk their lives and sacrifice personal comfort and relationships to serve their country. When they return, they are often plagued by PTSD and lack of support from family and friends, and have little or no framework for re-entering civilian life.

Our solution to this epidemic? Veterans Inn.

Located in Lake City, Florida — only two hours south of Jacksonville — Veterans Inn fights daily against the adverse circumstances that plague our heroes. Veterans receive housing, food, employment assistance, and the support and resources they need to recover, rehabilitate and reintegrate themselves into civilian life.

Lake City is richly steeped in American culture, hosting everything from Civil War reenactments to blueberry festivals. It's a booming city with a small-town feel, offering both rejuvenating

outdoor excursions and chic shopping and dining options. This variety makes it a desirable location for tourists, offering something for everyone. Lake City has been incorporated for over 150 years and continues to grow — but so does the number of homeless veterans.

Formerly a low-budget motel, Veterans Inn has been renovated to

Our veterans need our help, your help

include updated accommodations and act as a central resource center for

the homeless veterans in the community. Our goal is to support and equip veterans with the tools they need to move forward after life in the service.

Despite our progress, the work is far from finished. We want to wipe out these statistics



Get Involved: VeteransInn.org

and save our veterans, who have given so much to save us. From volunteering time to donating needed funds, the opportunities to help are vast. Our veterans need our help — your help. Donate now to find out how you can help save a life. www.VeteransInn.org

New Blood Pressure Guidelines have many Americans now considered Hypertensive

Westside Regional Medical Center
For the first time in 14 years, the American Heart Association changed their blood pressure guidelines. The new guidelines have lowered the number for what's considered high blood pressure, also called hypertension. The result: Nearly half of American adults are now considered hypertensive.

Blood pressure is depicted as a fraction or a division equation, with a larger number on top and a small number on the bottom, separated by a slash.

The top number is systolic blood pressure, which measures the pressure inside the arteries when the heart contracts or beats. The bottom number, diastolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in the arteries at rest, between heartbeats. So, a blood pressure reading that's 120/80 means the systolic blood pressure is 120 and diastolic is 80.

"If your blood pressure is high, your heart muscle is pumping against high resistance," explains Khalil Afsh, MD, an internist and clinical lipidologist with Orange Park Medical Center in Jacksonville, Florida. Given enough time pumping against high resistance, says Dr. Afsh, the heart will hypertrophy, or grow bigger. This can lead to impaired blood flow, arrhythmia and cardiac arrest.

Under the new guidelines, approximately 103 million adults in the US have high blood pressure. Prior to the new guideline release, about 70 million Americans had hypertension. It's in your best interest to know your numbers because high blood pressure can lead to a host of problems, such as artery damage, stroke, heart attack and even kidney and eye damage.

The guidelines for what's considered normal blood pressure have remained the same: A blood pressure reading of less than 120 mm Hg systolic and less than 80 mm Hg diastolic is considered normal. However, the new guidelines now define hypertension as a reading above 130 mm Hg systolic or 80 mm Hg diastolic. This is a change from the old definition of hypertension—140/90 and higher.

Under new guidelines, 46 percent of American

adults will be considered hypertensive, up from 32 percent under old guidelines.

The new guidelines also eliminated the category of prehypertension, once defined as a blood pressure reading between 120 and 139 systolic or 80 to 89 diastolic. Now, the guidelines list: Elevated: Systolic between 120 and 129 and diastolic less than 80 Stage 1: Systolic between 130 and 139 or diastolic between 80-89 Stage 2: Systolic at least 140 or diastolic at least 90—previously classified as stage 1

If your reading shows systolic blood pressure above 180 or diastolic above 120, this is considered a hypertensive crisis, and patients should seek prompt medical care.

Research suggests complications can arise before blood pressure reaches 140/90. These changes will encourage early intervention to prevent any further increase in blood pressure levels and reduce the likelihood of hypertension-related complications, like stroke, vision loss and heart attack

But pressure that's too low can cause its own set of problems. Hypotension, or low blood pressure, can lead to blurry vision, confusion, dizziness, fainting, lightheadedness, nausea and vomiting, fatigue and weakness. Sudden and drastic drops in blood pressure can starve vital organs like the heart and brain of oxygen. Hypotension, unlike hypertension, doesn't have a hard and fast range. As long as your low blood pressure doesn't cause any symptoms, you don't need to worry.

Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury or mm Hg. Why mercury? Take a closer look at the blood pressure cuff the nurse or doctor puts around your arm. The cuff is called a sphygmomanometer and, even today, many contain mercury to measure barometric pressure in the arteries, according to Afsh.

The cuff is inflated to squeeze the artery and prevent blood from flowing, then the air is released. When the blood starts flowing again, the doctor or nurse will look at the pressure reading and determine the systolic blood pressure. "When the pulse goes away, we're measuring diastolic blood pressure," says Afsh.

Afsh says he tests blood pressure at least once more after a reading comes back high. "When someone comes to our practice and we find high blood pressure, we ask the patient to relax and then measure again," he says. "Anxiety can raise blood pressure."

Talking while your blood pressure is being monitored or having a full bladder can also throw the reading off. Sometimes someone can have high blood pressure in one arm and not the other due to a problem with their veins, adds Afsh. "I usually go with the lower reading because when you have high blood pressure in one arm, there's probably a blockage."

You might want to get a device to monitor your blood pressure at home. Many people's readings are higher in the doctor's office than they are at home because doctors make them nervous; it's a phenomenon known as white coat hypertension.

Look for a device that takes measurements from the upper arm and can be used on both arms. It's a good idea to bring the device to your healthcare provider's office to make sure it works correctly and you know how to use it properly.

There is no cure for high blood pressure, but a combination of lifestyle modifications and medication can help manage the condition, and reduce your risk of complications. Your doctor is most adept to guide you through the changes you should be making, which might include:

Quitting smoking, Limiting salt intake, Scaling back alcohol consumption, Eating a well-balanced diet, Upping daily physical activity, Maintaining healthy weight, Sticking to your medication schedule

Disclaimer
Content is reviewed regularly and is updated when new and relevant evidence is made available. This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider prior to starting any new treatment or with questions regarding a medical condition.

103 million adults in the US have high blood pressure

From Homeless Hairdresser to Motivational Speaker

It was about six years ago I would see this young lady come into the shelter and cut peoples hair. She would do this all day. After seeing her come in a few times a month for several months I finally went up to her and introduced myself to her. So I met up with her and found out that this is what she wanted to do for the homeless. I had no idea at first she was coming in to get community service hours for a small arrest she had. She was ordered to do I think 40 hours but for three years after she kept on coming in for free.

I found out she lost 150 or 200 pounds all by herself and I was so amazed she did it on her own. One day I had an emergency press conference on a homeless person murder and my hair was a mess. I worked so many hours and at times I wouldn't leave the shelter for months at a time. So the press was coming in one hour and she was at the shelter. I called her up over the PA system to my office and said hey can you cut my hair in a hurry for a press conference and she said yes and in a matter of minutes she was at my desk cutting my hair. She went to work and 20 minutes later my hair looked better than ever before. I asked her how much and she said "Free." I said no, I have money and you should get something as a reward for coming here all the time. So after a few minutes of her saying no I finally got her and she took my cash for my haircut. It has been a few years now and I see her at my home every month.

This little, now skinny girl was just a child in her new life and she shared it with me before her book came out. She said "Sean can I sit down and talk to you. I think you will be ok with me after I tell you something but I am scared." She had tears coming from her little eyes and was shaking. I said to her honey you can tell me anything and you should know I don't judge people. So she went on to tell me her story. She came to the shelter for a crime of prostitution and she looked so relieved when she told me this. I said to her relax, that's it you were a hooker. Big deal. She went on to tell me more and she started to smile and smile.

This young lady had the tools to recover from every aspect of her life. That in itself is a hard job to do. She was the mechanic and she repaired herself one repair at a time until she was normal weight, healthy and no longer prostituting herself. I got the book and I am using the book to lose weight and to improve my own health. Follow her journey and see if this book can help you. It is a really good way to understand how to improve yourself where you are broken.—Sean Cononie

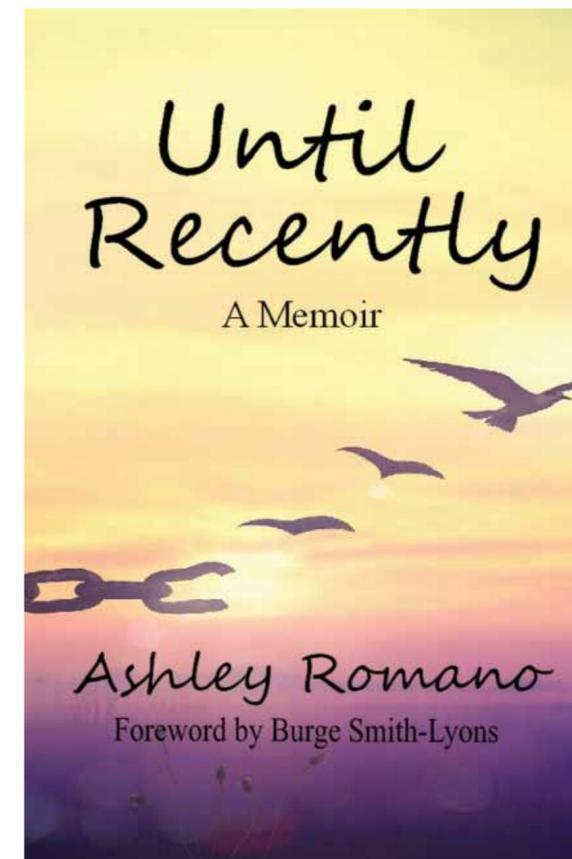
I started writing this book, believe it or not, nine years ago. I had nowhere to call home and was spending my nights in my car, or when I could scrape the money together, in a hotel room I'd been turning tricks in that day. I was nearly 300lbs and in a desperate and depressed mental state. I was ashamed of my life and knew there was no way I could live like this forever. I began journaling my experience and committed that someday this would be the beginning of my own personal success story.

Unfortunately, things only seemed to get worse from there. Two years later I found myself in jail. I didn't know how to even begin to change my whole life, but with my health declining, I decided to put my focus there. Within a year I had lost 100lbs with clean eating and exercise and the physical transformation became a catalyst for a total life transformation. For the first time, I began to value myself and actively work toward living a life I could be proud of.

Today I work as a lifestyle change and fitness mentor, hosting retreats and helping women all over the country to realize that not only the body, but life they dream of, is within reach. I've maintained more than a 100lb weight loss for over five years and even though I am off depression and anxiety medication for the first time since childhood, I feel better than ever mentally. I am living a life even better than the one I was dreaming of and it's finally time to share my story.

In *Until Recently* I share the details of my early life experiences, dark past, and the steps I took to create a life I am excited to wake up for. This book is my heart and soul on paper and will inspire anyone to believe the changes they want to make and the life they want to live can be reality.

Until Recently will be available on Amazon.com and BarnesAndNoble.com on December 28, 2017. You can also find it on Kindle, Nook and iTunes in early 2018. —Ashley Romano



Orlando News

6-year-old boy dies of rabies - what preventions can be taken?

A 6-year-old Florida boy has died from rabies he contracted after being scratched by an infected bat.

The father of Ryker Roque told NBC that the boy died Sunday at an Orlando hospital.

Father Henry Roque said he had found a sick bat, put it in a bucket and told his son not to touch it, but he did and was scratched.

He said he washed the wound thoroughly but didn't take the boy to the hospital because he cried when he was told he would get shots. About a week later the boy developed numb fingers and a headache and his parents took him for hospital treatment.

Rabies is almost always fatal once symp-

toms develop. A vaccine given after a wound but before symptoms almost always prevents the disease.

Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The vast majority of rabies cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) each year occur in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes.

The rabies virus infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death. The early symptoms of rabies in people are similar to that of many other illnesses, including fever, headache, and general weakness or discomfort. As the disease

progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hypersalivation (increase in saliva), difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia (fear of water). Death usually occurs within days of the onset of these symptoms.

What can you do? Vaccinate your pet, Maintain control of your pets to reduce their exposure to wildlife, Spay or neuter to decrease the number of stray animals, Report any stray or ill animals to animal control

Never touch an animal you are unfamiliar with

Miami News

Miami Beach Honors Vigilante Group Criticized by ACLU

Brittany Shammass Miami New Times, LLC MVN Miami Beach leaders took turns last week heaping praise on the founders of a secret Facebook group aimed at banishing criminals from the city. "You've taken an active role to become part of a solution for your community, and it's just beautiful," Commissioner John Elizabeth Alemán gushed. Added Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez: "I am just so proud of you guys... I think that the word in county jail is going to be, 'Go to Hollywood Beach!'"

Mayor Dan Gelber thanked group founders John Deutzman and Michael DeFilippi "on behalf of the city." Commissioner Michael Góngora handed each of them a certificate of appreciation. Then the commissioners and Police Chief Dan Oates lined up behind the two and everyone smiled for a commemorative photo.

What no one mentioned during this glad-handed love fest is that the group, Miami Beach Crime Prevention & Awareness, has been criticized by advocates and groups including the ACLU for its methods and attitudes toward minorities and the homeless. Among many troubling aspects: Some of its members have openly suggested inflicting pain on suspected criminals, its leaders' street patrols often seem to focus on minorities and the homeless, and its push for higher bonds punishes people who haven't even been convicted.

Is this the sort of thing the city should be gleefully endorsing?

Asked whether he was familiar with the controversy surrounding the group, Commissioner Góngora, who came up with the idea of giving certificates to the group, acknowledges, "I'm not as aware of it as maybe I should have been."

New Times detailed the rise of the group — as well as its controversies — in a cover story earlier this month, which Góngora says he has not yet read. ("I have not read your story yet beyond the headline," Góngora admitted on Twitter.)

The group of about 1,500 members has, for starters, discussed setting up civilian stings, with DeFilippi apparently placing a bait backpack on the beach. "I'd love to entrap a scumbag," he wrote.

One member suggested taking things further by placing razor blades in bait bags as a means of injuring would-be thieves. New Times reporters, along with other local journalists, were booted from the group after the story was published.

Góngora, who is in the group, says of the razor blades post, "I do not agree with that comment at all." For his part, Oates said previously he doesn't think it's appropriate for civilians to set up stings.

But there he was posing for a photo with DeFilippi and Deutzman.

The captain of the police department's entertainment district squad, Ian Robinson, was "counseled" after New Times asked the department about a comment. A FB user refers to the free bus service as a Homeless Party Bus to which Robinson responds, "divert it to TGK!"

TGK is a reference to Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center, the implication being that people who are poor or homeless belong in jail. In a statement included in the cover story, Oates said the post was "an attempt at humor and clearly inappropriate," and that Robinson "understands the importance of our department maintaining a proper and objective posture in regards to all issues involving the homeless."

You might expect these kinds of comments to make city officials — many of whom are members of the group and therefore have access to them — hesitant to slap a seal of approval on the operation. Nope.

DeFilippi and Deutzman's efforts aren't limited to the online realm. In the real world, they often walk around the city sending police after people they consider suspicious. Problem is, in many cases (or at least many of the cases New Times observed during two nights with them), the people flagged as "suspicious" were either homeless or minorities.

(DeFilippi and Deutzman vehemently deny that what they're doing amounts to racial profiling.)

Nancy Abudu, director of legal operations for the ACLU of Florida, cautioned that police need to "make sure they are not cosigning on any profiling or other unlawful type of quasi-policing" in dealing with the group. She also warned of the group potentially leading to a "George Zimmerman" type of situation.

Góngora says he hasn't seen evidence of those issues, adding that he's a Democrat who embraces all kinds of people.

"If I hear that somebody is being profiled because of their race, that would be of concern to me," he says. "Any type of profiling, I think, is bad. I don't think any specific type of group or person should be profiled based on how they look, who they are, how they speak."

But civil rights advocates' concerns with the group's efforts go beyond their citizen patrols. DeFilippi and Deutzman have also been showing up to court to implore judges to impose higher bonds for repeat offenders, keeping them behind bars before



...placing razor blades in bait bags as a means of injuring would-be thieves

trial. This goes against current criminal justice reform efforts that argue bond is a burden inflicted only on the poor, since the wealthy can simply buy their way out.

Judging by comments in the Facebook group, that's not a concern for some members.

Góngora argues that raising bonds sends a message to repeat offenders: "If you're picked up for a crime one night and you know you're going to be released the next day, pretrial release on your own recognizance, there's no incentive for you to comply with the law."

Except the purpose of bond isn't to punish a defendant — bond is set before trial, before a person has been convicted. The purpose is to make sure a defendant returns for trial and to keep the community safe.

The Miami-Dade Public Defender's Office has clashed with the group, repeatedly fighting its members' ability to testify for higher bond for the sake of punishment.

"That circumvents our Constitution's fundamental underpinnings," Richard De Maria, Miami-Dade's executive chief assistant public defender for administration, told New Times. "The presumption of innocence is key."

Góngora says the city wanted to recognize DeFilippi and Deutzman for "donating their time to helping keep our city safe." It's not a response, he says, to any of the criticism.

"The ACLU is focused on individual rights and civil liberties," he says. "I respect that and support that, but I have to focus on the safety of the city overall. And at times those two issues come into conflict."

Hmm.

Tallahassee News

Our opinion: Tiny houses and bike sharing: New frontiers in Tallahassee

Tallahassee Democrat

While the prospect of skyline shifting developments like the Cascades Project and Washington Square will no doubt loom large in 2017, two smaller but still significant movements have gained traction this year.

Both tiny houses and bike sharing have arrived. And both could transform life for those living and moving about the capital city.

The tiny home development called the Dwellings represents a novel approach to the city's affordable housing crunch. Modeled after the success of programs in other cities and states, the homes off Blountstown Highway just west of Capital Circle Southwest range from 220 to 410 square feet. They are designed to help the homeless and those at risk of being on the streets. They cost about \$50,000 to build and rents range from \$650 to \$850 a month, which includes the essentials of utilities, water and high-speed internet.

When first proposed back in April 2016, the tiny houses drew some big opposition from neighbors and residents in the nearby Wolf Creek Subdivision. They feared the homes would be a magnet for ex-cons and the homeless since the project was bankrolled by businessman Rick Kearney, who is the namesake benefactor for the city's homeless shelter.

In response, developers established a better

vetting process for those who would call the Dwellings home.

Hopefully, residents like Russell Wallace, who was among the first wave to move into their new homes, have allayed any residual NIMBY concerns. Wallace, a 70-year-old retired state worker who gets around in a wheelchair, is the happiest he's been in a long while and described his new home like this: "It felt like something I could hug and say, 'You're mine.'"

That sense of ownership also extends to those taking one of the new bikes for a spin up and down the City of Seven Hills. The Cambridge-based startup Zagster recently polled 3,500 riders who have used the bike sharing service nationwide.

"More than 60 percent of Zagster members surveyed said that they feel more connected to their communities as a result of being able to access parks, trails,

businesses and other key destinations on a bike," the survey said.

Zagster is betting that community connection will drive bike rentals in downtown, midtown and on campus in Tallahassee. With a rental fee of \$1 for 30 minutes, 300 bikes will be stationed at 50 bike racks mostly staggered around central Tallahassee. You can find one near your location by downloading the Pace app or visiting ridepace.com/tallahassee.

And in a true win for private enterprise, the program comes at zero expense to the taxpayers.

"The city of Tallahassee has tried very, very hard to lean in to our pedestrian and bike-friendly nature," said Mayor Andrew Gillum speaking at the ribbon-cutting, "and this

In a true win for private enterprise, the program comes at zero expense to the taxpayers



Mayor Andrew Gillum tries out a Pace bike in front of City Hall on Monday, one of more than 200 Zagster has deployed in Tallahassee as part of their new bike-sharing program. (Photo: Hali Tauxe/Democrat)

program is going to help us take it just a little bit further."

We'd go a step further and say when it comes to bike sharing and tiny houses, a little bit goes a long way in developing a better and more sustainable Tallahassee.

Ormond Beach News

Man defrauding supporters of homeless veterans' charity

By Emilee Speck - Digital journalist, Clay LePard - Reporter

An Ormond Beach man was arrested Friday after detectives said he defrauded local businesses and a former NFL player while running a charity for homeless veterans.

Detectives with the Volusia County Sheriff's Office said they started investigating Christopher Blake, 46, after one of the business owners deputies said he defrauded stepped forward because he saw a picture of Blake and Volusia County Sheriff Mike Chitwood on Facebook.

Blake, the founder of Second Chance for Veterans Foundation, is accused of defrauding people out of less than \$20,000 under the guise of hosting a charity golf tournament to benefit homeless veterans in Debarry. He was arrested Friday, Sheriff's Office spokesman Andrew Gant said.

"I have not helped myself to any of this funding," said Blake as he was leaving the Volusia County Sheriff's Office. "I was not taking advantage of veterans."

Sheriff's Office detectives said Blake hosted the Oct. 28 event at the Debarry Golf and Country Club, where people donated \$100 to play golf and eat lunch.

Former NFL running back Gerald Riggs agreed to make an appearance at the event for \$2,500. He attended the tournament, but when he returned home, the check Blake wrote him bounced, detectives said.

Riggs told detectives he contacted Blake and told him to stop using his name in association with Second Chance Veterans Foundation.

Payments by credit card and check that Blake sent to the country club and Holiday Inn also bounced, according to the report.

One of the victims, a sign and graphics business owner, contacted the Sheriff's Office on Dec. 18 after he saw a photo of Blake and Chitwood on Facebook and thought Blake was defrauding people, according to the report.

The business owner told detectives that Blake said he was hosting a charity golf tournament at the Debarry Golf and Country Club and asked for more than \$500 in banners for the event, according to the report. The victim said he never received payment despite multiple attempts to contact Blake.

Detectives also determined a 2018 Memorial Day raffle of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle listed on Blake's website, in which ticket purchases would go toward helping homeless veterans, was a fraud. Blake said the bike was donated by Bruce Rossmeyer's Harley-Davidson and on display at Ace Cafe in Orlando.

Volusia County Sheriff's Office detectives determined this raffle on Second Chance Veterans Foundation is fraudulent.

No bike was on display at Ace Cafe and the Harley-Davidson dealership did not donate a bike to Second Chance for Veterans, management at both businesses told detectives.

"There was just something off about it and we all felt uncomfortable at times," said Faye Crow, the property manager of Realty

Pros Commercial.

Crow detailed to News 6 how Blake rented office space for his nonprofit in May. But after the first month, those rent checks stopped coming.

"He kept saying, 'I've got this going on and I think we can do it,'" she said. "Then it became apparent that it wasn't working and the money isn't coming in."

On Friday, Blake's Facebook profile picture still featured the Volusia County sheriff with a "Merry Christmas" photo frame.

"Neither Sheriff Chitwood nor the Sheriff's Office were affiliated with Blake or his organization," Gant said.

"You just never know what kind of clothes a wolf is going to wear," Chitwood said. "I think within 24 hours that he posted that selfie, my phone lit up."

The day before he was arrested, Blake posted a Facebook message offering forgiveness and an apology:

"I'm walking into 2018 with a clear heart and mind...If you owe me, don't worry about it - you're welcome ... If you've wronged me, it's all good - lesson learned...If you're angry with me, you've won ... If we aren't speaking, its cool (I love you and I wish you well) ... If you feel I've wronged you, I apolo-

he defrauded a former NFL player while running a charity for homeless veterans



gize...Life is too short for all the pent up anger, holding grudges and extra pain! ... Here's to 2018!!!...Feel free to copy and paste, spread the positive forgiveness! Love to all."

In another post, he asked for donations to Second Chance for Veterans. The Sheriff's Office is warning people against donating to Blake's website and Gant said there may be other fraud victims.

Second Chance Veterans Foundation is registered to a post office box in Ormond Beach, according to nonprofit tracker Guidestar.org. IRS records show that the nonprofit did not file its required tax-exempt Form 990.

Anyone who has donated money to Second Chance Veterans Foundation or thinks they have been victimized by Blake's alleged schemes to defraud is asked to contact the Sheriff's Office at 386-254-1537.

Blake is charged with an organized scheme to defraud. His bail is set at \$10,000, Volusia County Jail records show.

7 Bad Driving Habits That May Also Be Illegal

Let's face it: Driver's Ed was a while ago. Over the years, our perfect double-handed grip on the steering wheel may have slipped a little; perhaps other bad habits have crept in as well.

And whether we realize it or not, some of those habits may be illegal.

It's true that traffic laws can be confusing. They can vary by state, and even by municipality. A violation in one place—say, turning right on red in New York City—can be perfectly legal just over the city border.

The evolution of our traffic laws can also be a source of confusion. As the use of mobile phones has spread, for example, safety experts have recognized their role in distracting drivers—and states are adopting laws to combat the problem. Those laws are still developing. While most states have outlawed texting while driving, some have made it illegal to use a phone at all while driving, although others have barred it only for younger drivers.

Still, when it comes to driving, the patchwork quilt of traffic laws should take a back seat to safety. Here are seven habits to change today.

1. Using Your Mobile Phone While Driving- It may be difficult to ignore the ping of an incoming text message, but it's essential to keep your eyes on the road. With distracted driving becoming an increasingly important issue, expect more states to crack down on any use of a mobile phone. In fact, Washington State just did so in an innovative way with its new DUIE (Driving Under the Influence of Electronics) regulation. But regardless of where you are, put that phone in airplane mode before you hit the gas. (Check out other surprising causes of distracted driving.)

2. Driving With Headphones On- Listening to music on your car radio can be distracting enough. But with headphones at your ears, you may be shutting out important noises—like car horns, railroad-crossing alarms or emergency vehicle sirens—as well as breaking the law in some states.

3. Tailgating- Following a car too closely can happen when a driver isn't paying close enough attention to the surrounding traffic. It can also result in a ticket. The space you should leave depends on your speed and the local conditions



(e.g., a traffic jam or rain storm); try to keep what's generally referred to as a "reasonable and prudent" distance from other cars.

4. Changing Lanes Without Signaling- In heavy traffic, using your blinker to signal a lane change is a necessity; without it, other drivers won't know your intention. When traffic is light, though, it's easier to be lazy about turning it on. You may or may not be pulled over for this infraction, but good habits begin with good communication, regardless of conditions or laws.

5. Speeding- You're running late and traffic is light—you could shave a couple of minutes off your travel time if you speed up, right? Not so fast. High speeds make a crash more likely, says the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, since it takes longer to stop or slow down. Statistics prove the point: In 2015, says the IIHS, 27 percent of all crash fatalities—more than 9,000 deaths—were related to speed. That appointment you're late for can wait. Abide by the speed limit.

6. Not Having Your Headlights On Obviously you need headlights for nighttime driving, but you may not always think to pop them on at dusk or in bad weather. Just remember to over-communicate while driving—and in this case, headlights advertise your presence as well as help you navigate. Laws vary on when to use headlights, but if there's any question, don't hesitate: It's as easy as flipping a switch.

7. Not Wearing a Seatbelt- While clicking a seatbelt is pretty standard practice for most drivers—more than 90 percent of us use one, according to NHTSA—at least 27 million Americans still don't buckle up. Yet seatbelts saved almost 14,000 lives in 2015 alone. And of course, "click it or ticket" is a familiar phrase for a reason. So don't neglect the seatbelt—it's important, even if you're just driving around the corner.

7 percent of all crash fatalities more than 9,000 deaths, were related to speed

Overcoming obstacles to chase dream

Nicole Linsalata

A South Florida woman is overcoming obstacles to chase a longtime dream. She might not have a place to call home, but her aspirations are greater than her circumstances.

Beauty is Lala Diior's passion. "Being pretty, feeling pretty, makes me just feel like I'm on top of the world, makes me feel beautiful," she said.

Diior, who is transgender, applied her favorite purple lipstick as she waited to catch a bus to go to school at the Florida Barber College.

"I love doing makeup, I love doing hair," she said.

But it might be difficult for Diior to find beauty in her immediate surroundings. She lives at a park in Downtown Fort Lauderdale, and for about two years, she's had nowhere else to go.

Diior listed a series of challenges she must deal with on a daily basis. "The rats, the mosquitoes, sleeping outside," she said. "When you put something down, they steal it. You have to guard it with your life."

Diior was born Jonathan and adopted at age 7. She said her adoptive parents threw her out at age 15 because she did not want to live as a male.

"Growing up, I always wore my mom's shoes, my mom's dresses, so it was always there," she said. "I came home from school, and they told me that I had to leave because they didn't want people like me in the home."

Her adoptive parents' decision affected Diior's self-esteem. "It made me feel really, really low because they're the only parents that I ever knew," she said.

Diior bounced from group homes to friends' houses, until one day... "My roommate moved out when I went to work, so eventually I lost the place, and that's why I'm here now," she said.

She leans on her boyfriend Eric, who also lives at the park. They keep their belongings under a tarp.

Diior was able to get a loan to go to school. Meanwhile, Eric's job as a telemarketer gives them some money.

"Some people do come here and pass out food, and it helps, but sometimes," said Eric. "What about the days when they don't come out here?"

But Diior's vision goes beyond this park. "It's actually going to be called 'Lala Land,' and it's going to be for a full spa, whatever you want," she said. "You can get your hair done, your nails done. I want people to come there one way and leave another way."

2018 will be the year that, Diior hopes, she and Eric will leave the park — and "Lala Land" becomes a reality.

Until then, the beauty is in the journey. "If I see a person, I can see the potential of them being beautiful, being done up, you know, just having high self-esteem," said Diior. "Sometimes the world's on my shoulders, and I try to shake it off and just hold my head up and keep going."

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Save Money Grocery Shopping

We spend a great deal of our earnings and overall budget on groceries, but there are ways to make it more affordable, while both saving and earning money for the things we shop for. Consider the wide range of phone apps that assist in saving money, or also said as making money. You can use a coupon for an item and also get cash back from apps that those coupon purchased items will pay you back for. Top 5 apps for this are:

Ibotta: This app lets you collect money via chosen items and calculates based on your store receipt what you have earned for certain these items. You can use a coupon on an item then get paid more money for that item via the app. As you total \$20 you can then have it deposited into your bank account or PayPal account.

Find & Save: Works very similar to Ibotta and also works with what is called a Venmo account and or PayPal or your bank account.

Checkout 51: Also very similar to the two above letting you deposit after earning \$20 into various bank accounts.

Walmart savings catcher: Compares your Walmart purchased items with many other stores and if any are priced cheaper saves the savings in the app for later use as a coupon on your bill at

Shopkick: This app let you scan items in stores for 'kicks' and get walk in "kicks" at stores that build up and then can be used to purchase gift cards at many of the same stores, the two mains ones being target and Walmart. We all have this app in a 4 person family and use it for groceries and anything these stores sell, even gift and iTunes cards.

How to Make Wise Grocery Shopping Choices.
1-Shop on a full stomach. You'll buy less snacks and/or things you don't usually buy - and only buy groceries, not gifts and all the extra stuff, at the grocery store!
2-Go armed with a list and stick to it, especially if your kids are "helping".
3-Plan your meals for the week before you shop and then buy what's on the menu. Start with planning for 3 or 4 days if all week seems too much.
4-Shop only once a week. You'll tend to spend more if you stop at the store every day or several times a week.
5-Shop when you have

energy and aren't worn out from a busy day. It's easier to focus and make wise choices when you've got energy and aren't preoccupied.
6-Return your bottles and cans for the deposit that you paid. If you've got kids, get them to help with this job and let them keep the cash they earn.
7-Shop in familiar stores when you're tired, stressed or in a hurry. You'll find what you need and be able to get out with what you need quickly.
8-Don't buy items stacked at the end of isles, they are more likely to be closer to expiration dates and not a great deal.

Plan Ahead to Save Money on Food and Grocery Shopping.
1- Plan meals so that you have leftovers for lunch the next day, or freeze leftovers for a quick meal another day. Save that protein as it makes great salad fillers.
2-Package your own treats, juices and snacks. Buy the large package or snacks and a box of baggies and make your own individually wrapped packages to grab on the run.
3-Buy less canned and packaged convenience foods and shred your own lettuce and cheese (cheeses often freeze well too!). Blocked and shredded cheeses are healthier and less pasteurized, this means they digest easier in the system.
4-Clean out your fridge

and cupboards once a month. Use up what you bought before buying more.
5-Organize your food storage cupboards and drawers. If you don't know what you have or can't find what you bought, you'll end up buying more of the same unnecessarily.
6-If you stock up, watch expiry dates and package the food to preserve it as long as needed.
7-If you buy

large packages or meat, pre-cook or marinate it and then freeze it to speed up meal times. If you know that you've got food ready at home, it's less tempting to eat out.
8-Spend some time once a week washing and/or cutting up fruit and vegetables. This will speed up dinner and lunch preparations and provide healthy snacks that are ready to go.
Shop with a Budget and Save Money at the Grocery Store.
1-Don't buy snacks on the run. They are often less healthy and more expensive.
2-Get creative and try new foods. You may find less expensive food that you enjoy just as much!
3-Shop with a calculator and add things up as you put them in your cart. If you're shopping with kids, give them the job to tally what's in the cart. It does help & give life skills.
4-Learn how to cook or bake. Hit up a family member for help or take a class.
5-Buy non-food grocery items like detergent or garbage bags at a discount store.
6-Only buy what you need and can afford; 3-for-1 is only a good deal if you can use three.
7-Price check and shop around for discounts on items you buy regularly.

plan your meals and snacks
ahead of time to save the most
amount of money

Make Your Grocery List In Less Than 5 Minutes!!



Use store and manufacturer coupons when you can. Consider using one of these 5 apps on either a smartphone or tablet mentioned above, they all work well..
8-Remember that smaller sizes can sometimes be a good deal. Do the math, either on your phone or with your calculator.
9-Don't automatically overlook no-name or store brands. Many are made by the brand name companies, just with a different label.
10-Even if it's "on sale," it's only a good buy if you will use it!

If You Only Try One or Two Tips to Save Money on Grocery Shopping, that still helps.

If you only want to try one tip, make it a really good one. In fact, the one tip that will likely save you the most money when you're grocery shopping on a budget is to plan your meals and snacks ahead of time. By planning ahead, you can make your shopping list based on what you already have, what you still need to buy and what's on sale.

Making an easy meals that are budget conscious doesn't have to be hard. Start with two or three dinners, plan for leftovers so that you've got work lunches, add in some snacks and keep quick and easy breakfast foods on hand. Just like with anything new, give it a try before you decide that you don't like it.

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Socks and Hygiene Kits

Cleaning Supplies

Plastic Cutlery and Cups

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Go to pg 2 to cut out the mail in membership form

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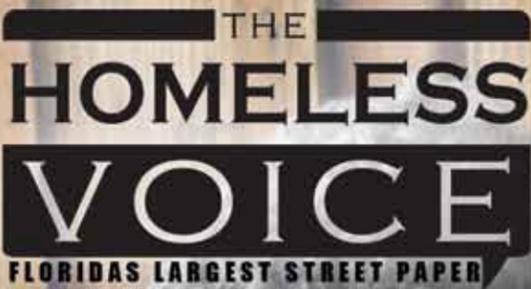
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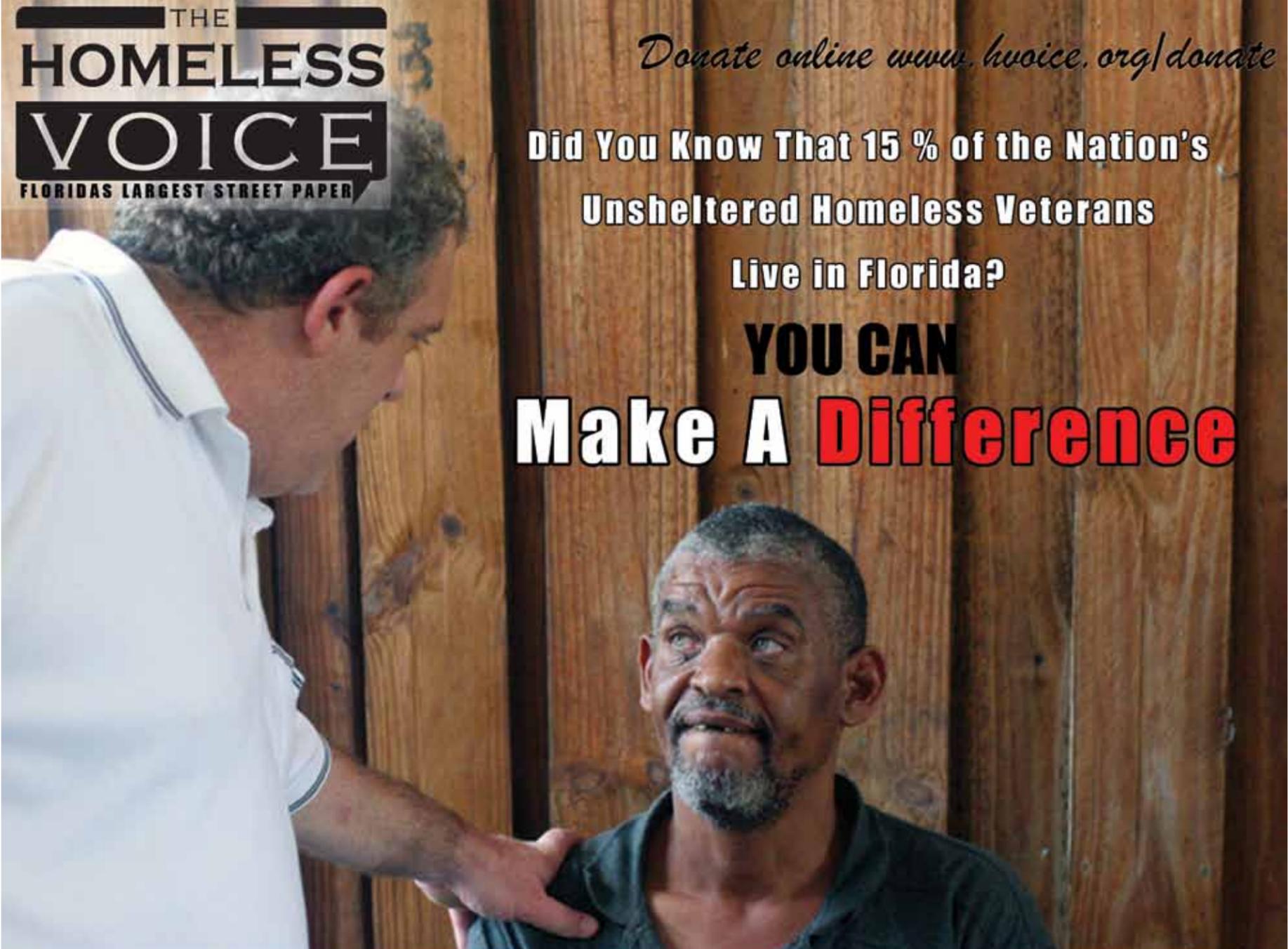
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