



# Talking Sidewalks

Voices of Poverty  
and Homelessness  
in Chapel Hill

Volume I

Fall 2008

## A Word from the Writers

Dear Reader,

Here we are, humble and honored to write for you. We are a unique fraternity of people—men, women, and children who have found themselves in a situation that wasn't deemed possible—we are homeless. At this time in our lives we are challenged. We are not the bane of society. We are neither happy nor sad; we just seek to find a way out of our present situation. Most of us believe it will happen.

There are times when we get a chance to reflect on our troubles, and you, dear reader, are the recipient of our labor. Brothers, sisters, friends, and family have all contributed to the following pages. It is our wish that after reading the stories, poems, and thoughts in this magazine that maybe you, too, will experience the feeling, the joy, and yes, the hurt and pain that we endure.

It is to you that these pages are dedicated with tears and laughter and hope for better days to come. Each of us has shed a little light, and where there is light there is hope, and where there is hope there is a promise, and where there is a promise there is a tomorrow, and tomorrow—who knows . . .

Enjoy,

R. Michaels

*For questions, comments, or to get involved  
please email [TalkingSidewalks@Gmail.com](mailto:TalkingSidewalks@Gmail.com)*

## What's in the Bag ?

*Thomas B.*



It was a cool fall night. The tension was high, and there was anger in the air. She thought I was cheating on her. You could see it on her face, a look of disgust.

I put my bags that she had packed in the van, they felt so light, and off we went. The journey started to Chapel Hill. I turned to her and asked her, "Why are we doing this?" She looked at me and then looked away without saying a word. I could see she was upset, her face said it all. She turned up the radio.

I started to look at the moon and the stars. They looked so bright, like you could reach out and touch them. The best times of my life flashed in my mind. It's a sunny day on the 4th of July—the church picnic. You can smell the hamburgers cooking and the hot-dogs burning, and there she was. We both said "hello" at the same time, and it all began, love.

I turned to her and asked her, “Why are we doing this?” But there was no response. It felt like I was in a ghost-town, alone, with chills running down my arms.

I turned and looked out the window again, and I remember that special day when we got married. She looked so beautiful with that dress on, it was a proud moment in my life. I took a deep breath and I turned to her, “Please don’t do this,” but nothing.

So we pulled up to the shelter, I opened the door, and I grabbed my bags. They felt so heavy, like I was carrying my whole life in them, and I was. I started walking up the stairs to the door. I looked back with a tear in my eye and fear in my heart. She was gone. I got my mat and opened my bags: some pants, my favorite shirt, and some socks. It seems so little for my whole life.

For right now this is my home. This is where I lay my head. Do I belong here? Maybe.

Am I loved?



*Thomas B.*

## **The Things We Carry**

*Thomas Gray Owens, Jr.*

Food, “clothes,” blankets, pictures, books, medicine, hygienes.  
They put their house in a bag and carry it with them.  
He carries the burden a of a long-lost love that once filled his heart,  
now he fills the void of what could have been.  
Down-trodden he seems, but the hope of another day lies ahead.

She bares the wounds of many battles—  
but the scars you cannot see,  
for it’s on the inside which you cannot touch.

She laughs it all away in the light,  
but cries when the sun goes down.

Could it be maybe a bruise instead of a scar?  
Whatever the case may be, bruised or scarred,  
they both heal from the inside out, not the outside in.

But who’s looking on the outside—  
we are all lovers of the soul. Aren’t we?

## Waking Up

*Joseph Sinkiewicz*

Finally sitting in a soft chair, in a quiet empty room, my eyes begin to fade. I awake in a coffee shop filled with familiar faces. As I look around the room, I'm reminded I am once again alone, surrounded by many. My senses are coming back as I start to feel the pain again. Cluttered idle chatter fills the air. The smell of fresh coffee, with an occasional burst of noise from milk being frothed.

Time ceases to exist or matter, as a feeling of an electric wave flows throughout my nerve endings. As I begin in thought, I can either accept it or not. Looking out of the window with thoughts of my missing piece. A piece or void many will never find. My thoughts and feelings overwhelm.

I look with amazement to see my missing piece outside with arms wide open. The self-inflicted drama and the words that fell void no longer matter; only peace and contentment remain. I ran to her chariot in the warmth of her bosom. I realize what really matters, and am enlightened of our love. Thoughts of when I was young—I found myself stuck in the middle of a thorn patch, pushing my way through the thorns, ripping my cloak of many colors. Now I find myself gliding through the soft felt rose petals.

Lost in thoughts and memories, I think of when I helped an old lady across the street. Things sometimes seem to go so right when I am wrong and so wrong when I am right. I sit on a hard bench, seeking a happy medium. I feel that my mind, body, and soul are awake from the dead, and am aware of my surroundings, of what is really going on. Looking around I start to be beyond my own opinion and perspective. I fall to my knees and get back up. Feeling the electric pulse, taking it all in, passing through me, with complete control. I am a dog no longer chasing its own tail. I take her hand and we walk down the talking sidewalks.



*Joseph Sinkiewicz*

### Label Me

*Thomas Gray Owens, Jr.*



*Mural by Michael Brown and Scott Nurkin  
Photo by Thomas Gray Owens, Jr.*

Look out. Here they come.  
Don't stare at him - She's nasty.  
Hope you got some money to give them,  
because I'm ready to go.

If anybody sees me with them,  
I'll never hear the end of -  
Oh no, not me -  
but why.

Should we be kind when they'll never help anyone.  
Ok let's go, I'm scared,  
he looks like trouble -  
Please don't,  
I know, you are,  
"Label me."

## Homeless in America

*Donald*

It seems in this day and age, for one to be homeless is an intentional act of sabotage. Substance abuse, or an unwillingness to work and pull your load are the first things to come to mind for most. Just as there seems to be a little truth in old stigmas, there is here also. I have seventy-four college-credit hours in the theory of electricity, gained as a high voltage power lineman in the air force, and that was after four years as a nuclear missile man in the U.S. Army. Eighty-four kilometers from the border of the former Czechoslovakia, and the front line of defense in the day that it was an unthinkable act of foolishness. Even in those days (the mid-eighties), things went wrong and people were hurt and killed. When everything is on the line, and people get killed, there are a lot of questions and politics. Well, let's just say that one walks away with a grief that never really washes out.

As a lineman in the Air Force, Oliver North and President Reagan pushed a few too many buttons and the Nicaraguans invaded our friend Honduras, pushing the contra rebels across the border into Honduras. Guess who got picked to go clean up that mess? I can't get into details, but I came home a changed man. It didn't kick in right away, just a dream here and there. A thought, a smell, and suddenly your mind begins to heave.

I worked for ten years in the shipyards off the Gulf Coast as a combination electrician and ship fitter (the one who cuts it and puts it together), and in those years I was rearing three boys. It seemed that everything just didn't seem right. No matter how hard I tried to make things fit together, it was difficult to be around other people who had no clue what the hell I was dealing with inside. I could no longer fit in. They laugh, I spit. They talk about women, I think about little girls who were in the wrong place at the wrong time. They work thoughtlessly while in anger I slammed a sledgehammer.

Long story short, I crashed and was later diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder. They waited too long to catch it. I ended up divorced, and suddenly the whole world changed for me. I think about how hard that was for my boys all the time, but they pulled through a whole lot better than I did. I live on a disability check that will make most of you laugh. The years in the shipyards took out my back, and the years in the service took out my head. And as for the V.A., if you have ever tried to fight the government then you may understand. So I do the best I can. I ended up here after my girlfriend and I broke up, and now it's just me again, against the world again. I'll find my way; I'm a survivor.

Now, America cannot fight an unwinnable war, borrow money from China every day and soak up an influx of illegal immigrants, and expect to be able to have the funds to take care of the sick, and there are many here. And for those who have wandered in the wrong direction there is not much pity for them, but we all lose our way at least once. And those who through disasters have come and expect to be able to have that society we all want—it just is not happening.

In closing I would like to say that there are many good-hearted people in this country who would, if they could, help. And there are those down here in the dirt with the rest of us who work hard every day for that society. The rest just give a glance and drive on. I saw a girl yesterday crying at lunch, and I watched all the people around her just blankly staring forward as they methodically chewed their food. I realized that they were all crying inside, and with some, the tears have turned into hate. Then I understood why nobody cared if she cried or not.

### Scary Places

*Jason O.*

I am writing about drug addiction. My name is Jason O. and I'm from Wilson, North Carolina. I awake some days thinking to myself, "Will I be in a homeless shelter the rest of my life?" I started out in a homeless shelter in Wilson twelve years ago after spending thirty thousand dollars on fast cars, fast women, booze, cocaine, and pot. This lifestyle only got worse and worse. I had spent all my insurance money from my father's death on being someone that I was not, only trying to fit in. The young lady I fell in love with got out of the picture real quick, soon as the life-insurance money ran out. I felt used, betrayed, and, most of all, hurt real bad on the inside.

To make matters worse, not only did I lose my Daddy, but my first love also. I got news that she started stripping, which was no real shock— I was only mad at myself for being so hardheaded. Everyone told me over and over, "She's only there for the money," but my mind was saying, "Yeah they're just jealous." A few months after we broke up, she was killed in a terrible car wreck. She and her best friend ran a stop sign, then went up under an eighteen-wheeler tractor-trailer at two in the morning. Both were drunk, and the little car was pulled a football field before stopping. State troopers had to get dental records to match their dental records, I found out later, to identify them. I've learned to overcome this now—1996 was way back. I still have thoughts of all this madness very much. So this is where my life took a turn.

I found crack cocaine, and my world shrank into nothing—"The bottomless pit," my friend once said. This was my new wife, girlfriend, my new shoes on Friday night, my new life—it's like riding down a road with no direction whatsoever. Alcohol and the drugs have put me in the freezing cold, teeth chattering, sleeping on cardboard, begging for change once again. I'll go here and it'll be

different—never different—only worse each and every binge run.

At seventeen it was new and stupid; at thirty-two today, it becomes a need that will be met, no matter what, in active addiction! It seems some days like I'm doomed or cursed; then I realize it's only the devil in my little brain again. In and out of detox, hospitals, jails, halfway homes, rehabs, shelters, sleeping in the woods, on the street, anywhere I can lay my head till the next day, to do it all over again. Asked the judge once to activate my sentence, to be sentenced to 8 months in Prison. I stayed clean the whole while, then release day I used. This is the wickedest garbage on the face of this earth. I pray to God one day this desire will be taken from my mind, heart, and soul.

I'm here for something—just don't know what it is some days. I look at life like a gift today because I did not die from this awful drug addiction. Maybe one day I can stay clean the rest of my life.

### My Sad Life

*Nolan Brian*

I entered into this world on the date of July 31, 1984. I had only a couple things that were very close to me. My grandfather and my Uncle Darren. They gave me a lot of "hope for myself." When my grandfather died on October 7, 1995, all my hope was taken away. Ten years, eight days later, I lost my Uncle D. He told me if I ever needed anything, he would be there.

Now at this point in my life the only thing I need is my grandfather and my uncle back. Life without them seemed hopeless. I'm writing this to see what kind of feedback I may get, if any.

**Prophrases and Proidioms from China***Jianling Zhou - Shanghai, China*

It has been estimated that more than two hundred thousand prophrases and proidioms exist in China today, including thousands that Chinese people use in their daily life. These are sayings and expressions that are often not translatable because they depend for their effects on the sounds of Chinese words, the structures of Chinese characters, references to Chinese anecdotal history, or familiarity with Chinese customs. The following selected sayings have been translated first literally into English, and then figuratively.

*A thousand-mile dike may collapse due to an ant's hole.*

---- For want of a nail the shoe is lost,  
for want of shoes the horse is lost,  
----For want of a horse the rider is lost,  
for want of a rider the Kingdom is lost.  
----A small leak will sink a great ship.

*The trees planted by the forerunners  
provide shade for those who came after.*

---- One man makes a chair and another man sits on it.  
---- Virtue is its own reward.

*The thunder is loud, the raindrops little*

---- Much sound and fury, but little results.  
---- Much bruit, little fruit.  
---- Great cry, little wool.

**Riddles from China***Jianling Zhou - Shanghai, China*

I. Paper wrapping the fire,  
Paper wrapping the wind,  
Paper wrapping the water.

∴ Guess three objects.

II. Having mouths,  
But cannot talk,  
Having no mouths,  
But talking loudly.

∴ Guess two objects.

III. A rope for tying with the heaven,  
A silver pebble for paving the ground,  
A pillar for hanging upon the heavens,  
A pearl for watering the flowers.

∴ Guess four forms of water.

I-Lantern, folding fan, and umbrella  
II-Puppet and gong  
III-Rain, snow, icicle, and dew



# Home Is . . .

*A Community Ensemble*

Home is a place I used to live a long time ago.

-Steve

Home is everywhere and nowhere.

-Joey

Home is where I lay my head.

-Anonymous



*Joseph Sinkiewicz*

Home is people's sanctuary.

-Anonymous

Home is where family meet.

-John

Home is the dwelling place of your soul.

-JAS

Home is a bottle of beer and a place to go to sleep.

-Anonymous

Home is comfort and a good meal.

-Sandy



*Thomas B.*

Home is where the heart is; it is where we plant our feet.

-Thomas

Home is where there is peace and quiet.

-Anonymous



*Thomas B.*

Home is where the devil pervades and peace prevails.

-Al

Home is prayer.

-Ronald

Home is being with your loved ones.

*-Michael*

Home is a gas station.

*-Zhou*

Home is my mother.

*-Anonymous*



*Joseph Sinkiewicz*

Home is where you should have peace, happiness, support, acceptance, security, comfort, love, and reassurance. Home is also a place where you can express yourself with transparency and without fear of ridicule or rejection. Home is not the four walls and roof that you live in; it is like the song says, a place where there is love surrounding you and overflowing. It's a place to gain direction, a place to rejuvenate yourself. A place that stays in your heart long after you've moved on in your life. Home is where we find our blessings, plant our roots, and grow our wings.

*-Anonymous*

## **Whisper**

*Ronin*

As I whisper  
 I hear my thoughts echoing  
 As I whisper  
 I see my past coming toward me  
 As I whisper  
 I feel my future rushing past me  
 As I whisper  
 I taste a life of despair  
 As I whisper  
 I smell the world's fear of death

## **Phoenix**

*Ronin*

I am the phoenix  
 I fly in a blaze of fire

When angered my flames are hot and bright  
 When sad I am just charred feathers

I sweat oil and cry gasoline  
 I die in a rage of inferno  
 Reborn in a pile of ashes

I am the phoenix  
 This is my story

**English Verse***Isiah O'Briant*

Nine ladies  
all dress in white,  
looking for love all night.

They dance alone  
because there's no place like home.

They dance at night.  
When morning comes,  
They're nowhere in sight.

**Without Hope***Thomas Gray Owens, Jr.*

What would you do without it?

Who would you look to for encouragement?

When would you realize that you did not have a purpose?

Where would you go for help?

Why would you even want to exist?

Your friend,  
Hopeful

**Seawell School Rap***Emily - 4th grader*

There's this girl in Seawell School,  
I think she doesn't like me.  
'Cause every time I'm doin' good,  
She wanna fight me.

I say, "Hey girl, what do you want?"  
And then she puts her hand up,  
And say, "Just don't."  
"Don't what," I say back.  
I think she jealous of my momma's  
New catalack.

She says, "Homey what you got?"  
I say "I'm everything you not."  
She said "If you everything I'm not,  
Show me what you got."

I took a breath and finally said.  
"My name is Emily people,  
Call me Lil E, my birthday  
March 22nd, and you can't see me."

**A Photojournalistic Journey**

*Arnold R Moore, Jr.*

This was to be a “homeless” man’s perspective of life on the streets of Chapel Hill and how to cope with some of them. One of the problems is where to “take a leak.” After some thought on this, I remembered a coffee table photo book about the “Famous Urinals of Europe” or something like that, so I changed my mind.

The editors of this magazine gave me a camera to take pictures of things that you may not notice as I would. So, here is my perspective on the pictures I found interesting . . .

This is a picture of me, a well known “guitar man” around town. I thought you might have seen me “busking” for some of your change. All donations accepted.



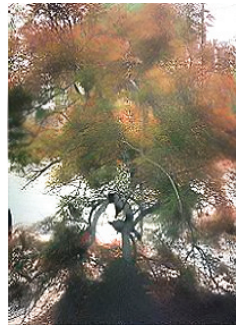
Now on with the story . . .



I know that most of the students of UNC-CH are concerned with the security of their stuff, like their bicycles, but this is the best I have seen yet!

DISCLAIMER: I hope no people take offense at this next picture or text, all is meant in fun . . .

This tree has always reminded me of the oriental art of Bonsai. I had wondered why in the WW2 movies the Japanese flyers would stand on their aircraft carriers and shout “Ornamental tree, ornamental tree, ornamental tree!”



Speaking of trees, I went in search of the “proverbial tree” that you can’t see the forest because of. After searching long and hard (outside of my tent), I found it!



The forest in the pictures has been used as a urinal several times . . . So has the tree . . .



This well-known clock in the downtown area on Franklin St. had caught my eye and camera lens because it was on the CORRECT time. That had to be a first!!!

Not known to be used as a urinal.

I have talked to many students at UNC-CH, but never about how tough it can be, until I found this light pole in the park that failed an electrical test and had to wear a dunce cap . . .



Not known to be a urinal, but you never know . . .



I traveled all around the area, looking for the things that would only be seen by the insightful eye of a photojournalist . . . As I traveled towards Carrboro, I found another myth-buster—the saying that pigs can’t fly, well, they can’t . . . but they CAN jump really high!!!



In Carrboro, I was shocked to find the Wile E. Coyote is not only REAL, but so is the “Place” he gets all his booby-traps and rocket-sleds from. Yes, the store is located right here in Carrboro, NC.

Okay, okay, I have a very unique take on things. I suppose that my photojournalism days are numbered, but I can say that I have been given a chance to express myself! Now for the rest of the story...



Since I seem to have been going back to the theme that I was NOT going to do, I thought I might as well show you these last two photos...

This is a known urinal for “man’s best friend” and may have been for a few people also.



And finally...after 2am when the bars close . . .

This well-known doorway on Franklin St. HAS been used as a urinal on many a night. I know this for a fact!

Well, this has been a journey for me, and I hope for YOU, too!

## Chasing a Ghost

*Michael Jenkins*

My life’s been on the streets for a long time. My dad died. My mom died. My mom’s been dead for almost 2 years now, but I’ve been on the street for a million. ‘Cause of crack cocaine. My mama couldn’t take it. So I got married, and she couldn’t take it either. My life started on the streets when I started using crack cocaine.

This girl I was going with, for 13 years I went with her, and I was wondering why she kept going next door. I said, “Dawg every time I come over she go next door.” So I went over there one day. Matter of fact it was at my half-sister’s house. I said, “What is more important over there than over here where I’m at—at your house?” She dodged me for a while, so I went over there with her one day. My uncles and all them were over there and they was smoking. I was smoking weed at the time and I said if that’s more important to be over here with them than me, then let me try. I threw \$1,000 on the table and asked her, “Which one would you choose—that white stuff on the table or this \$1,000?” And she said, “Well, that white stuff on the table,” and left the money—you know? And I said, “If it that good, let me try it.” ‘Cause I don’t think nobody turned down no money; not \$1,000.

So I tried it. Now really, when I tried it the first time, I really don’t think I got the full effect of it. So they told me to try it again. They showed me how I was supposed to do. So I done it, and when I done it, I had a feeling like I’d never felt before. And I wanted that same old feeling again—you know?

If you’re smoking pot, it’s more about what kind of people you’re around. Certain people can make you laugh, or it can be a downer. It can make you sleepy or make you forget some thoughts. Like—you be like—I’m going to work today, but reefer be in your mind—you’ll be like—oh forget it. Now crack, it hits you different. It’s more of a

mind thing. It goes straight to the membrane. You will have a type of high—like if there's something on that floor, you will pick it up to see if it's crack. You hear people talking outside, even if there's nobody out there. It's more of a hallucinating high. You'll think the police are out there. And you'll get to peeking out the curtains. That's how crack will do you. They call it (a high) a bus and my bus was tripping off other people that done it. I laughed at them while they was picking stuff up off the floor. I'm like what is really going on? What is really down there?

Really, you're chasing a ghost. Because you're trying to get that feeling you had the first time. And you never won't get that feeling no more. That feeling will never come back that you had the first time. That feeling I got off it the first time, I kept chasing that feeling. It was a ghost because you never get that same feeling again. It get worsen and worsen. Then your body get used to it and it make you go out there and keep going out there and it make you disconnect from your family.

Before I started doing crack cocaine, I was a hard worker. But my whole family always sold drugs. So I couldn't get out of it no kind of way. So I started gradually pulling myself away from them, and the more I got used to the streets, the more I wanted to stay out there.

It's the devil's playhouse out there, that jungle. I've slept in abandoned houses. I've slept on people's porches outside. Sometimes I don't even go to sleep. I've been shot and all. This right here, I got shot on a drive-by tip between the Bloods and the Crips. They were beefing with each other and I was at the wrong place at the wrong time—that's how I got shot in the leg. There was this dude I was trying to help sell drugs for—that's how I got shot in my arm. They had a beef with the guy because he won't stay on that side of town and I didn't know that. That's how I got shot in my arm. It's dangerous no matter what.

I've done seen people overdose. I used to shoot this guy's arm. I seen how he couldn't function, unless he got this shot. He showed

me how. He was an old man. He's dead today. I have seen my friends. . . I have picked up newspapers and heard about my friends found in houses, dead with their head cut off or their brains blown out. That took a toll on me. But it still didn't stop me. We might cry, but then I go back out to the streets and do the same thing. Life is like this here—it's what you make of it. I chose the wrong path.

I did time for selling drugs. Then, when I got out I tried to change my lifestyle. But that didn't work cause the same old people still coming around. And that ghost won't let you. In your mind—oh I'm getting that same feeling again. And you can be out there for days and weeks and years at a time and never get that same feeling. But that ghost and that gorilla always going to be there. If you go to rehab that gorilla always going to sit, and nag, and pick.

You might do good, long as your pocket is empty. You only got a dime, you might do good. You do good when you're broke. But soon as you get that money in your pocket that gorilla come back and say, "Oh come on, that ain't going to bother you. Oh you can do this once. One ain't going to hurt you." You be saying "Naw, I better go home." And that gorilla be kicking in the back of your mind like, "Come on man, you can handle this. This ain't nothing." So long as you go out there, that one leads to a thousand.

My wife tried to tell me—the kids—that she had loved me to death; why'd I ever do her like that? I chose the streets over them and she got tired of it—that's when I got homeless. Now I've been homeless, like I say, almost 7 or 8 years now. My wife always said if I ever get my life together I can come back.

The girl who really turned me on to it—I still speak to her. I don't hate her because she didn't put no gun to my head to make me smoke. She don't smoke today. She big as that door today. She just stopped, like me. I been clean now four years. In a way it was hard. But I asked myself as I lost my family, "What's more important—that crack cocaine or me and my family?" Like I said, I'd be wanting to do right, but it just didn't let me, 'cause that gorilla was always there. I'd still be chasing that ghost—you know what I'm saying?



*Thomas Gray Owens, Jr.*

## Oh the Cruelty

*Ladajah - 7th grader*

Here we lay on shelves of wood.  
They don't realize how we are misunderstood.  
We are not objects, not things.  
We are people, we are human beings.

The sharks are following these horrid boats.  
We are so packed air can barely go down our throats.  
So much disease is here to spread.  
To kill our people so we will be dead.

They think we have no way of knowing  
But we know all right, exactly where we are going.  
They split our families apart.  
Leaving the babies in the dark.

How our heart aches  
Hearing all the screams and the quakes.  
We are nude and exposed  
But they are wearing nice clean clothes.

If you are a slave.  
One's life is torn apart and miserable.  
If you on top level and your skin is pale  
One's life is nonchalant and pleasurable.

There is no explanation for the pain they have caused.  
No doubt in my mind my old life is paused.  
I will go back to my loving home.  
What they did however was wrong.

Oh the emptiness that lay inside me.

### The Brand New Life

*Thomas Gray Owens, Jr.*

The brand new life,  
Waiting, wanting, wishing, hoping, dreaming.  
Instead of lying, stealing, cheating, conning, scheming.

Sowing instead of reaping,  
Planning in place of acting on impulse.  
Smiling, rejoicing, encouraging,  
giving, remembering, loving, hoping.  
These are the few symptoms of “the brand new life.”

The word “new” to me means existence.  
“Brand new takes on a whole different order,”  
to tear down and build back up.  
Refurbish, rehabilitate.

A firm foundation is a must in this brand new life.  
Nothing old could never be made new without this concrete plan.

Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in this publication. Our time spent hearing the stories of our contributors and seeing our weekly gatherings at the men’s shelter transform into a strong community of writers and friends has been a life-changing experience. It has been a joy and an honor to work with everyone involved in this publication. We have been humbled by the honesty, the effort, and the sincerity put into each piece of this magazine, and we look forward to creating future editions.

We hope that by reading these stories, any negative preconceptions you may have of poverty and homelessness will be reconsidered, fade, and even disappear, as ours have. We encourage you to personally bridge the gaps in your society, to reach out, to eat dinner at the shelter every once in a while, to donate your time, to contribute your compassion, to look people in the eye and say “hello,” and to give everyone the second glance and second chance we all deserve.

Wonderful things can happen when a community stands together, and this magazine is concrete evidence of that truth. Thank you for taking the time to read these stories. We hope that you will remember them, knowing that we all want to be heard – that all our voices count.

Best regards,

*HOPE (Homeless Outreach Poverty Eradication)*



*For questions, comments, or to get involved  
please email [TalkingSidewalks@Gmail.com](mailto:TalkingSidewalks@Gmail.com)*



# In Memory



“I’ve been a very arrogant and elitist man in my life and got swatted like a bug until there were only pieces of me left, and I perhaps would like to redeem myself by giving a voice to people that have no voice. It reminds me of the title of one of the old science fiction novels, called ‘I have no mouth but I must scream.’ For those that have no voice, I would like to do some of the screaming, and I do.”

**Phillip Rodney Personette**  
1953 - 2008

*This publication is in memory and honor of Phillip Personette and his work as a literary advocate for the homeless community.*

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