



MarchingON

A Newsletter of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union

UPDATE FROM KWRU TENT CITY



By Galen Tyler, Director
Words can't describe the mental and physical abuse thousands of poor and homeless families go through during the cold months of winter. During the weeks of the Bushville tent city at Broad & Clearfield, KWRU had a total of 29 adults and 63 children who were homeless. The Tent City was a way to

house some families as well as show this homeless crisis in our city.

When we tried to meet with our local HUD officials to express concerns and seek solutions to these families' crises, we were denied access to their offices. With nowhere else to go, we along with other community groups marched to the military recruitment center where many of us protested that "billions for the war meant still nothing for the poor".

On Dec. 6, we had a bus ready to take our families and supporters to Washington DC to demand a meeting with the National HUD Secretary, but that morning at 6am one of the Bushville children was hit by a car. This child is in stable condition but, as a result of this tragedy, we arrived later than anticipated to the HUD office in DC. Upon arrival we were denied access to the public building. We expressed we still weren't leaving until we met with someone to help solve these homeless families' problems. After hours of protesting in the cold, HUD negotiated with us; 8 members were allowed to meet with officials. In the meeting we discussed the budget cuts to Section 8 and the lack of access to our local HUD office and beds for domestic violence victims.

In the end, we won a meeting with our local HUD officials. At this meeting with Milton Pratt, the HUD Regional Secretary and others, we got HUD to commit to solving 5 out of 28 families' situations immediately, and to working with us to solve the other families' housing crises.

UPCOMING DATES



January 17

Martin Luther King Day

January 24

Join us for the World Social Forum in Brazil

February 14 time TBA

Join us in Harrisburg to protest proposed SEPTA cuts

February 23 10pm

"Can I Live" fundraiser at Silk City

Call us at 215-203-1945 or email kwru@kwru.org for further details and to sign up.

Get Involved Today!

1. Support our Human Rights Houses. We are looking for donations of time(rehabbing houses), furniture, and money to keep the houses open.
2. Come to a Monday Night Membership Meeting. 6pm at 2825 N. 5th St.
4. Collect Documentation in your area and join our Faces of the Fallen Project
5. Host a speaker or video at your church or school to learn more about the Kensington Welfare Rights Union
6. Join the Philadelphia Affordable Housing Coalition. Contact us today to learn more about joining.

*The Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU) is a **multiracial organization of, by and for poor and homeless people.** We believe that we have a right to thrive - not just barely survive. KWRU is dedicated to organizing of welfare recipients, the homeless, the working poor and all people concerned with economic justice.*

Kensington Welfare Rights Union
PO Box 50678
Philadelphia, PA 19132
www.kwru.org

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FACES OF THE FALLEN PROJECT

The Kensington Welfare Rights Union along with the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign has been committed to building a movement to end poverty in this country and the world. The war on America's poor and working families has left many of us without our economic human rights to food, housing, healthcare, education and living wage jobs. Over the past four years, our conditions have worsened. There are now over 31 million Americans living in poverty; 12.2 million children in our nation are poor, with over 1.35 million of them homeless. Over 43 million people in the US have no healthcare and there are currently almost 10 million unemployed Americans.

The poor have been disappeared from not only the welfare rolls and the workforce, but from the media and the political debates. Our stories are not told and our images are not seen.

If the general public knew our stories and saw our faces, we know that something would be done. We need economic human rights to be a priority over the next four years. For many of us who have been abandoned by political parties in the past, we simply will not make it.

We are asking everyone to conduct face-to-face interviews with the people in their community who are experiencing human rights violations. Ask people what going on in their lives and invite them to share their story including it in the Faces of the Fallen Documentation Project. We need your Help. Please take the time to fill out the documentation form insert in this newsletter.



Organizer of the Month

“KWRU is trying to put an end to poverty, an issue that has always been silenced. But, history shows that demonstrating in the masses is an important, effective, and necessary way to assure future generations are granted the right to live. “

Charles Tyler is a very active member of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union. At twenty years old he is a part of our general staff and was introduced to KWRU by his older brother, Galen, who is also KWRU's director.

Charles works very hard with donations, membership meetings, local organizing, housing crises, and every day office needs. In 2002, after going on one of KWRU's Freedom Bus Tours and being exposed to the unfortunate abundance of poverty in this country, Charles decided to dedicate all of his time to helping families survive in Philadelphia. Charles believes that Philadelphia, as well as the rest of the country, has a great need for social and educational programs that deal with poverty especially now that the wartime economy is setting in and jobs are becoming scarcer

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