

# VOLUNTEERS wanted

## National Charity Addresses Hunger, Homelessness

(NAPSA)—A national charity is responding to the growing number of adults and children experiencing hunger and homelessness in the United States.

In 2003, Volunteers of America served tens of thousands of homeless individuals through shelter care and street outreach services and offered free food to those in need through food banks and pantries. In 2004, the organization saw a rise in hungry and homeless adults and children due to a weak economy and the lack of affordable housing.

"Today's economic climate has had a dire effect on American workers' ability to feed and house their families. For millions of Americans, a full-time job with benefits and a living wage is only a dream," said Volunteers of America National President Charles Gould. "Instead, families must balance the income earned by working multiple low-wage jobs against the high costs of housing, child-care, medical care and utilities. Homelessness and hunger are often the results of these budget challenges."

Volunteers of America's Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter in the greater Washington, D.C. area provides three meals a day and sponsors a drop-in program on Mondays and Wednesdays so homeless adults who are not staying at the shelter can shower, have a hot meal and get out of the cold.

According to Program Director Alonzo Davis, many of the adults have part-time or full-time jobs



**Hunger and homelessness are growing problems in the U.S. Fortunately, charitable organizations are there to help.**

but the lack of affordable housing is a key factor to homelessness in one of the country's most expensive areas. Davis has a fundraising campaign to help fund the shelter and accepts donated food from area restaurants and farmers' markets. In addition, the shelter recently added 10 adult beds to accommodate the men and women who seek food and shelter during the winter.

Davis estimates the program provided 900 adults with food and shelter in 2004 and has had to turn away people in need due to the already crowded facility. "It's heartbreaking to have someone come to the shelter and say there are no beds," he said.

For more information about Volunteers of America, call 1-800-899-0089 or visit [www.VolunteersofAmerica.org](http://www.VolunteersofAmerica.org).