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Street paper set to launch March 1

Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman has provided a voice against the homeless. Now there's a voice for the homeless.

Forgotten Voice, a newspaper written and produced by the homeless and formerly homeless, will be distributed March 1. Its founder and president, UNLV student Amanda Haymond, said the paper has been a long time coming.

"Getting Forgotten Voice off the ground has been a long and oftentimes difficult process," said Haymond in an e-mail. "We've had our share of obstacles to overcome.

But thanks to the support of people who believe in us, and to the dedication of our board of directors and volunteers, we are proud to finally introduce the publication of our first issue."

The goals of the paper, according to its website (www.forgottenvoice.org), include: empowering the homeless and giving them a voice; building a sense of community and creating dialogue between the homeless, advocates and the public; and creating awareness of the social services available to the poor and homeless. It will publish fiction, nonfiction, poetry, photos and artwork.

The March 1 issue will have a print run of 1,000, said Haymond. It will be distributed on the streets by volunteers and board members.

The paper, said Haymond, will have a "very informal" news conference at 1 p.m. March 4 at Frank Wright Plaza, announcing the launch.

"We hope that Forgotten Voice will empower homeless people, build a sense of community and facilitate positive communication between homeless people, service providers and the general public," said Haymond. "We expect Forgotten Voice to serve as a much-needed change agent in Las Vegas, making sure the voices of homeless people are not forgotten anymore."

For more information on Forgotten Voice, call Amanda Haymond at 301-8774 or e-mail her at amanda@forgottenvoice.org.

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How to cover homelessness

The launch of Forgotten Voice would probably make the National Alliance to End Homelessness very, very happy. The alliance, which analyzes policy and comes up with solutions to end homelessness, recently released its first Homelessness in America Media Handbook.

The goal of the handbook, said the alliance, is to encourage thoughtful and insightful reporting on the subject.

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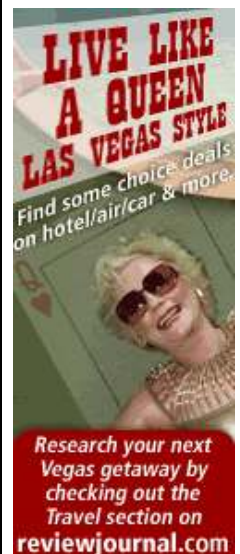


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"Homelessness is among the most complex and misunderstood social issues facing this country," said Mary Cunningham, director of the alliance's Homelessness Research Institute, in an e-mail. "We hope that by providing a resource that will equip journalists with background and up-to-date information, they will be able to capture the nuances of this important issue."

The handbook -- which was sent to major media outlets throughout the country -- includes snapshots of homeless groups (families, youths, veterans), quick facts and experts on the subject. It also includes a boatload of statistics.

For example, the handbook says that between 2.3 million and 3.5 million people are homeless in America each year. On any given night, it says, 750,000 people are homeless.

The alliance's Homelessness Counts report, which was released in January, said there were 16,402 homeless people in Nevada in January 2005 and 12,198 in Las Vegas.

More than 7,700 of the homeless in Las Vegas, said the report, were in families with children.

"Our hope is that more in-depth reporting on homelessness will result in communities nationwide," said Cunningham of the handbook. "With this, community leaders and the general public will achieve a greater understanding of the causes of and solutions to homelessness."

For more information on the Homelessness in America Media Handbook and the Homelessness Counts report, visit www.endhomelessness.org.

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