



OUR HOME

Opening Doors: Statewide Access to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

Volume 1, Issue 1

May 2002

Congresswoman Judy Biggert Receives NAEHCY Award for Congressional Leadership

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Pictured with the congresswoman are members of the NCH staff: (L-R) Cathy Sheffel, McKinney-Vento Liaison for Fairfax County Schools, VA; Barbara Duffield, Education Director for the National Coalition for the Homeless; Donald Whitehead, Executive Director of the National Coalition for the Homeless; U.S. Congresswoman Judy Biggert (Republican - 13th/Illinois); Pat Popp, Director of Virginia's Education for Homeless Children and Youth program; Sherry Matsen, Director of FACETS (Fairfax Area Christian Emergency & Transitional Services).

Hotline Assistance

If you have questions or comments regarding the Opening Doors Project, or a homeless student, you may contact the ISBE Homeless Hotline at:

800/215-6379

or contact :

Gary Dickirson,

Principal Consultant

New Learning Partnerships Division

Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street

Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Phone 217/782-0086

Fax 217/524-1090

No Child Left Behind

On Tuesday, January 8, President Bush signed into law the "No Child Left Behind Act." This legislation reauthorizes the McKinney - Vento Homeless Assistance Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, along with most other federal elementary and secondary education programs.

The McKinney - Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Subtitle VII-B, is the federal law that

entitles children who are homeless to a free, appropriate public education, and requires schools to remove barriers to their enrollment, attendance, and success in school. The law will go into effect on July 1st.

The new legislation incorporates many policies and practices that have proven successful at the local and state level. These provisions are designed to improve the

school stability, access, and support and therefore the academic achievement of children and youth who are homeless.

A comprehensive summary of amendments, as well as a copy of the legislation itself, is available at:

NCH Web Site:
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/reauthorization.html>
 NLCHP Web Site
<http://www.nlchp.org>



Opening Doors

Who are we?

Opening Doors is an Illinois State Board of Education grant-funded project provided through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001.

Under the direction of Gary Dickirson, Principal Consultant, New Learning Opportunities Division, the goal of this initiative is to disseminate information and provide technical assistance to Illinois schools and shelters as to the educational rights and needs of homeless children and youth. The Opening Doors project partners include:

Adult Learning Resource Center

1855 Mt. Prospect Road
Des Plaines, IL 60018
Phone 847/803-3535
Fax 847/803-3231

Regional Office of Education #26

130 S. Lafayette Street
Suite 200
Macomb, IL 61455
Phone 309/837-4821
Fax 309/837-2887

Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness

P.O. Box 1267
Elgin, IL 60121
Phone 847/742-4227
Fax 847/742-3260

*Be sure and visit us on the world wide web at:
<http://homelessed.net>*

Moving On . . .

At the end of the 2002 school year the Illinois McKinney Programs will be saying good-bye to two long-time friends. These individuals have done much to improve the lives of homeless children and youth, providing a solid educational foundation in an otherwise tenuous existence. They will be missed by students and colleagues alike!

Dr. Margaret Fostiak

District U46 will be saying good-bye to a valued employee this spring. Channing Memorial Elementary School Principal Margaret Fostiak will be leaving to fill the position of superintendent of Gavin School District 37, in northern Lake County.

Fostiak will start her new position as superintendent July 1. She has served as principal of Channing for the past eight years. Fostiak's 15-year career in the U46 District includes tenure as a teacher of science, health, and social studies. Margaret has also been involved in

alternative and adult education, as well as pre-kindergarten, at-risk, and U46's homeless program, Project Access.

Project Access provides advocacy and collaborative services for homeless students, pre-k through high school. The program provides enrollment assistance, school supplies, transportation, tutoring, mentoring, participation in before and after school programs, and community referrals.

Connie Falconer

Connie Falconer has served as superintendent of Pleasant Hill District #69, located in Peoria County, since 1993. On July 1, she will be leaving Pleasant Hill to assume duties as superintendent of Panhandle CUSD in Raymond, IL.

Prior to her assuming her administrative assignment at Pleasant Hill, Connie taught P.E., Health, Drivers Education, Science and Adaptive Physical Education for Developmentally Disabled Adults; was principal

of Central A&M Middle School in Assumption and principal of the Jr.-Sr. High and Kemmerer Village in Assumption; and served as Director of Employee Relations with the Coles County Association for the Retarded in Charleston, IL. Connie earned her B.S. and specialist degrees from Eastern Illinois University.

Connie and Bob Caruthers, Home-School Liaison at Pleasant Hill, provide educational, transportation, supportive advocacy and collaborative services to the students of South Side Mission, located just blocks from the school.

Pleasant Hill's efforts with homeless families over the past six years have been responsible for the reduction in school changes for many of these pupils. As a result the families make every effort to remain within the district, making a positive impact on the lives of these young students.

*Thank you & good luck
Margaret & Connie!!*

McKinney - Vento 2001 Reauthorization - At a Glance

Who is Homeless?
According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11435(2). "Sec. 725. Definitions - For purposes of this subtitle...(2) The term 'homeless children and youths' - (A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence

(within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and (B) includes- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in

emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement; (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of

McKinney - Vento 2001 Reauthorization - At a Glance - continued

section 103(a)(2)(C)); (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and (iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii)."

The McKinney - Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This summary provides a brief overview of key provisions of the reauthorized Act. A comprehensive summary of amendments, as well as a copy of the legislation itself, is available at the NCH web site at: <http://www.national.homeless.org/reauthorization.html>, the NLCHP website at <http://www.nlchp.org>, and the NCHE website at <http://www.serve.org/nche>. In addition, issue briefs that explain key legislative provisions, and offer strategies for implementing them, will soon be available on topics designated with an asterisk on the NCH, NCHE, and NLCHP web sites.*

Definitions*

The 2001 reauthorization includes definitions of who is considered homeless for the purposes of this subtitle of the McKinney - Vento Act, and therefore who is eligible for the rights and protections it provides. These definitions include children and youth who are living with a friend, relative or someone else because they lost their home or can't afford housing; children and youth who are staying in a motel or hotel due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations; children and youth who are living in an emer-

gency or transitional shelter or a domestic violence shelter, and many other situations (see side panel for full definition).

Academic Achievement

States must describe in their state McKinney - Vento plan how students in homeless situations are or will be given the opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic achievement standards all students are expected to meet. It is the policy of Congress that students in homeless situations should have access to the education and other services they need to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

School Selection*

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must, to the extent feasible, keep students in homeless situations in their school of origin (defined as the school attended when permanently housed, or the school in which they were last enrolled), unless it is against the parent's or guardian's wishes. (See Transportation, below, for information on transportation to the school of origin.) Students can stay in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless, and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing. Students may also choose to enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend. (See Enrollment, below). If a student is sent to a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by a parent/guardian, the LEA must provide a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal, whether or not the parent/guardian disputes the placement. (See Dispute Resolution, below.)

Homeless liaisons must help unaccompanied youth (youth

who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youth's wishes, and provide youth with notice of their right to appeal an enrollment choice that goes against their wishes. (See Liaisons, below, for the appointment and duties of the liaison.)

Enrollment*

LEAs must immediately enroll students in homeless situations, even if they do not have required documents, such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documents. The term "enroll" is defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities. Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are obtained.

If a student does not have immunizations or immunization or medical records, the liaison must immediately assist in obtaining them, and the student must be enrolled in school in the interim. Schools must maintain records for students who are homeless so they are available quickly.

States must address problems resulting from enrollment delays caused by immunization and medical records requirements, residency requirements, lack of birth certificates, school records or other documentation, guardianship issues, or uniform or dress code requirements.

States and LEAs must develop, review and revise their policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations.

Dispute Resolution*

Every state must establish procedures to promptly resolve disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless students. Whenever a dispute arises, the student must be immediately

admitted to the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved.

A written explanation of the school's decision must be provided if a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth disputes a school placement or enrollment decision.

The school must refer the student, parent or guardian to the local liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible (see Liaisons for the duties of liaisons).

Liaisons must ensure that this provision is followed for unaccompanied youth.

Transportation*

At a parent's or guardian's request, homeless students must be provided with transportation to and from their school of origin. For unaccompanied youth, transportation to and from the school of origin must be provided at the liaison's request.

If the student's temporary residence and the school of origin are in the same LEA, that LEA must provide transportation. If the student is living outside the school of origin's LEA, the LEA where the student is living and the school of origin's LEA must determine how to divide the responsibility and cost of providing transportation, or they must share the responsibility and cost equally. In addition to providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students.

Liaisons*

Every LEA must designate an appropriate staff person as a local educational agency liaison for students in homeless situations. Liaisons must ensure that: Children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies*

Continued on page 4

McKinney-Vento 2001 Reauthorization - At a Glance

Children and youth enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the LEA. Families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and pre-school programs administered by the LEA, and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services. Parents or guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children. Public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services under the Act (such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens).

Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the Enrollment Disputes section (see Dispute Resolution, above). Parents and guardians, and unaccompanied youth, are fully informed of all transportation services, including to the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services.

Liaisons must collaborate and coordinate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to children and youth in homeless situations.

State coordinators and LEAs must inform school personnel, service providers, and advocates who work with families in homeless situations of the duties of the liaison.

Segregation*

It is the policy of the Congress that homelessness alone is not sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment. States that receive McKinney-Vento Act assistance are prohibited from segregating

homeless students in separate schools, separate programs within schools, or separate settings within schools, except: States that have separate schools operated in FY 2000 in a "covered county" are excluded from the prohibition, and are eligible to receive McKinney funds, providing that the covered schools, and the LEAs that the homeless children enrolled in the covered schools are eligible to attend, meet the requirements specified for them in the Act (Covered counties are Orange County, CA; San Diego County, CA; San Joaquin County, CA; and Maricopa County, AZ).

If McKinney-Vento services are provided on school grounds, schools must not provide services in settings within a school that segregate homeless children and youth from other children and youth, except as is necessary for short periods of time for health and safety emergencies, or to provide temporary, special, and supplementary services. SEAs and LEAs must adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and youth are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, or stigmatized. Services provided with McKinney-Vento Act funds must not replace the regular academic program and must be designed to expand upon or improve services provided as part of the school's regular academic program.

This document was developed collaboratively by:

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

National Center for Homeless Education

National Coalition for the Homeless

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

National Network for Youth

Locating Community Resources

Homeless students often have many needs outside the classroom, some of which may include finding food, clothing, transportation, and counseling. To most efficiently assist homeless students and their families, it is important to become familiar with resources and services that are available locally. The following points may help you to locate resources that will appropriately meet their needs.

Begin your search using personal connections to resources. For example, you may know a secretary at a church, a clerk at a resale shop, a nurse at a public health facility, or an administrator at a community-based agency. Ask them where they would refer homeless families for basic services. Be sure to ask them for the name and phone of a helpful staff person at the resource agency.

If you do not have personal contacts in the community, directly call local organizations such as township offices, newspaper offices, police stations, and/or churches. Explain your role at school and ask them where you can find free or low-cost meals, shelter, and other basic needs. Also ask them to call you if/when they sponsor special community programs for families in need.

Check out the resources as personally as possible – make a visit or a phone call to find out what services they really provide.

Attempt to identify both public and private resources, but be aware that the services of private organizations may be available only on a temporary basis. Keep up-to-date on their existence.

Keep up-to-date on changes in resources' phone numbers, addresses, and services by calling them periodically.

Be aware that some resources do not want to become widely-known; they may be providing services with very limited supplies. Find out their philosophy from the start.

Avoid handing out resource listings that have a definite order; the first resource on the list will become overwhelmed while the final ones will be under-utilized.

Try to avoid making inappropriate referrals by carefully matching the families' needs to the service providers' resources. Be aware that the family may not have the spare time or money to spend on dead-end phone calls.

Try to locate resources for services beyond the obvious. For example, service clubs may be able to provide mentoring or tutoring, camps for children, or summer employment for youth.

Recognize that the contacts you make at community agencies may become your allies in getting children into school. Ask them to call you when they "hear" about homeless families in the community.

Do you know?

Where in your community you could obtain these free or low cost basic services:

- Housing Assistance
- Rental Assistance
- Cash Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Food & Clothing
- Health Care
- Dental Care
- School Supplies
- Transportation

Welcome ROE #49

ROE #49 - Rock Island, Henry, Stark Counties, is the newest Illinois McKinney Program. Administered by Regional Superintendent Joseph Vermeire, ROE #49's Homeless Youth Connection strives to ensure that homeless in-school youth have access to education, supportive services, educational success, and referrals to the appropriate community resources.

The Homeless Youth Connection services include:

- ♦ Community resource coordination - i.e. clothing, transportation, school supplies
- ♦ Emergency transportation assistance
- ♦ Tutoring and academic enrichment activities
- ♦ Community awareness
- ♦ Coordination of services between school and community agencies
- ♦ Assistance with physical and psychological health services
- ♦ Staff development for school personnel

For further information contact:

Delano Gilkey,
Program Director
309-736-1111

dgilkey@riroe.k12.il.us
or

Lachelle Guy, Liaison
lguy@riroe.k12.il.us
309-736-3607

ROE #49

3430 23rd Ave.

Moline, IL 61265

<http://www.riroe.k12.il.us/riroe>

Merle Horwedel, Liaison
mhorwede@bhsroe.k12.il.us
309-935-6789

ROE #28

313 Canal St.

Annawan, IL 61234

A program directory, listing all 20 McKinney Programs, contact information, and services, can be found on the Opening Doors web at: <http://homelessed.net>

The Men for Whom The McKinney-Vento Act Was Named



Stewart B. McKinney:

The Man

By

Carol Lundin

In 1987 President Ronald Reagan signed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, authorizing federal funds for all emergency food and shelter programs. Revised in 1990 and again in 1994, the Act now ensures that homeless children have access to an appropriate education. BUT, WHO WAS STEWART B. MCKINNEY?

Stewart Brett McKinney was born of wealth in 1931 in Pittsburgh, but raised in Connecticut. His educational background included Princeton University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale University. He also served in the U.S. Air Force from 1951 to 1955. McKinney was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1970. He represented his home state of Connecticut in Congress for nine terms.

Contrary to being the wealthiest congressmen during his terms, McKinney was regarded by his peers as a fighter for the causes of the forgotten. An independent-minded, liberal republican, McKinney worked tirelessly for urban aid and social welfare programs. He supported the availability of low and moderate income housing. In the 97th Congress, he spearheaded the passage of the Amerasian Immigration Act, which gave children of military servicemen in Asia the right to obtain visas. However, McKinney was most outspoken of

the plight of the homeless, especially those with mental illness, left on the street.

Stewart B. McKinney was a heavy smoker and plagued with heart disease. He died at the age of 56 on May 7, 1987 from pneumonia brought on by acquired immune deficiency syndrome. In his eulogy Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R-Conn.) said of McKinney, "From alleviating wretchedness in housing...to loving the unwanted children of Americans in Vietnam, this was a working patriot..."

Biography from the 2001 Spring/Summer Project HOPE Newsletter

Bruce Vento

By

Joyce Austin

The Spring/Summer 2001 Project HOPE Newsletter included an article providing biographical information about Stewart B. McKinney. Now that the law has been reauthorized as The McKinney-Vento Act, it seems fitting to add to the biographical archives. Vento, refers to Bruce F. Vento; but, who you may ask, was Bruce F. Vento?

Bruce F. Vento was born October 7, 1940 in St. Paul, Minnesota. The second of eight children, Bruce took great pride in calling himself a life-long resident of St. Paul's East Side. He was educated at Thomas College, Wisconsin State University, and the University of Minnesota.

Elected to the Minnesota State Legislature in 1970, Vento served three consecutive terms. In 1977, he was elected by the Fourth District for the state of Minnesota to the U.S. House of Representatives. Committed to improving the welfare of his fellow men and protecting natural

resources and the environment, his work on behalf of the environment earned him the 1994 Ansel Adams Conservation Award from the Wilderness Society, honors from the Sierra Club, and the National Parks Conservation Association's Conservationist of the Year Award for 1987.

In June of 2000, Vento received special recognition from President Clinton for his years of work on behalf of America's homeless population. Bruce F. Vento worked alongside Stewart B. McKinney and was co-author of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, which created federal funding for support services, transitional housing, and emergency shelter grants for the nation's homeless. He was an honored member of the National Alliance to End Homelessness and earned a host of awards for his leadership and legislative contributions to improving the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness.

After being diagnosed with lung cancer, brought on by asbestos exposure during his early work as a laborer, Congressman Vento decided not to seek another term. In a released statement, he stressed that many of the best ideas were the "can do attitudes" and the expectations that the government and I could make a difference in the quality of life." He further quoted Hubert Humphrey in his closing statements: "The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped." Congressman Vento died at his home on October 10, 2000, three days after his 60th birthday.

Biography from the 2002 Winter Project HOPE newsletter

SERVE

The National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE offers information and technical assistance to parents, school personnel, shelter providers, community organizations and individuals interested in networking on behalf of homeless children and their families. Whether accessing SERVE on the web, or through their Toll-Free HelpLine, you will find a variety of source material, resources, and assistance in protecting the rights of homeless children and youth obtain a free and appropriate public education. On the web SERVE is located at: <http://www.serve.org> The SERVE Toll-Free HelpLine can be reached by dialing: 1-800-308-2145.

Homeless Outreach

HUD'S Homeless Outreach Information Center has been operated a hotline for the past three years. This national outline offers two basic services. First, it refers parents and other homeless people to shelters across the United States. Second, it helps refer volunteers to agencies and organizations that can use their services or their monetary donations.

1-800-483-1010

DID YOU KNOW?**Numbers of School-Age Homeless Children & Youth**

1989 - States reported approximately 272,773 school-age homeless (K-12)

1991 - States reported approximately 327,416 school-age homeless (K-12)

1993 - States reported approximately 744,266 school-age homeless (K-12)

1998 - States reported approximately 615,336 school-age homeless (K-12)

School Enrollment & Regular School Attendance

-1989 -

28% of homeless children & youth (K-12) were not attending school during their homelessness

- 1991 -

20% of homeless children & youth (K-12) were not attending school during their homelessness

- 1993 -

23% of homeless children & youth (K-12) were not attending school during their homelessness

- 1998 -

12% of homeless children & youth (K-12) were not attending school during their homelessness

10% of homeless children (K-5) were not enrolled in school during their homelessness

24% of homeless youth (9-12) were not enrolled in school during their homelessness

1998 - 45% of homeless children & youth (K-12) were not attending school on a regular basis during their homelessness

1. *National Center for Homeless Education Data on Homeless Children & Youth*
<http://www.serve.org>

Illinois

- ♦ 150,000 children, women, and men will be homeless this year
 - ♦ 47,000 are in suburban Cook and the collar counties
- ♦ 60,000 are part of families - 37,500 are children - 12,000 are unaccompanied teenagers.
- ♦ More than 60% are in the state's suburban, small-city, small town, and rural regions.
 - ♦ 85% of those seeking assistance are from the area where they seek it.

2. *Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness*
<http://www.illinoiscoalition.org>

Families and Children

One of the largest, and fastest growing, segments of the homeless population is families with children. Families with children constitute approximately 40% of people who become homeless.

A survey of 30 U.S. cities found that in 1998, children accounted for 25% of the homeless population. These proportions are likely to be higher in rural areas; research indicates that families, single mothers, and children make up the largest group of people who are homeless in rural areas,

3. *National Coalition for the Homeless*
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>



(Text provided by NCH)
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org>

The January 2002 amendment to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) clarified the definition of homeless children and youth. Another provision of the statute requires each school district to designate a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths. Many districts already have designated a liaison. Other districts may appoint an individual to act as the liaison until one is designated.

Definition of "homeless"

As specified in the statute, the term "homeless" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The definition includes:

- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public

spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings and:

iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described above.

Cooperation with local educational agency liaison

In general, some of the duties of the local educational agency liaison are to ensure that homeless children are identified by school personnel, that they have full opportunity to enroll and succeed in school, and that they receive educational and other services for which they are eligible. We are asking State agencies and school food authorities to be particularly sensitive to children and households who are identified by the local educational agency liaison as homeless.

Although many homeless individuals will be living in emergency and transitional shelters, under the expanded definition of homeless, some children or households that temporarily reside with other households may meet the definition of homeless. School food authorities should work with their local educational agency liaison for homeless youths and, where appropriate, the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths to help ensure that these children, as well as other children who are defined as homeless by a director of a homeless shelter, have access to the benefits of the child nutrition programs.

Documentation of free meal eligibility for homeless children

To expedite the delivery of nutritional benefits, school officials may accept documenta-

tion that the children are homeless from the local educational liaison or directors of homeless shelters where the children reside. Documentation to substantiate free meal eligibility must consist of the child's name or a list of names, effective date(s), and the signature of the local educational liaison or the director of the homeless shelter. This documentation is acceptable in lieu of a free and reduced price meal application.

To implement these expedited procedures, school officials must work closely with the educational liaison and directors of homeless shelters to ensure that children are provided free meal benefits as promptly as possible, as well as to ensure that the school food service is promptly advised when children leave the school or are no longer considered homeless. In the latter case, school officials must provide the household with an application for free and reduced price meals.

Homeless children residing with another household

A child or family may temporarily reside with another household and still be considered homeless under the definition of homeless in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. In these cases the household size and income of the host family is not taken into consideration in determining the free meal eligibility for the child(ren) designated as homeless by the local educational agency liaison. Additionally, when a host family applies for free and reduced price meals for their own children, the host family may include the homeless family as household members if the host family provides financial support to the home-

less family, such as shelter, utilities, clothing or food. In such cases, the host family must also include any income received by the homeless family. School officials must determine eligibility for the host family in the traditional manner. However, free meal eligibility for the homeless child is based on the documentation provided by the local education liaison, even when the child is included on the host family's free and reduced price meal application. If the host family meets the free or reduced price meal eligibility criteria, school officials should provide the host family with temporary approval for free or reduced price meal benefits, as appropriate. The host family's eligibility should be reevaluated when their household size decreases, i.e., the homeless family leaves.

We encourage school food authorities to identify and work with the local educational agency liaison and directors of homeless shelter to expedite benefits to homeless children. We believe this policy complements the policy included in our memorandum of April 6, 1992.* Please contact Mary Jane Whitney or Barbara Semper at (703) 305-2590 if you have any questions.

STANLEY C. GARNETT
 Director, Child Nutrition Division

"We encourage school food authorities to identify and work with the local educational agency liaison and directors of homeless shelter to expedite benefits to homeless children. We believe this policy complements the policy included in our memorandum of April 6, 1992."

* **The full text of both the USDA Memo and the 1992 memo on Documentation of Free and Reduce Price Meal Eligibility for Homeless Children can be found on the Opening Doors web site at: <http://homelessed.net>**



Opening Doors

Statewide Access to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

ROE #26 Hancock/McDonough
130 S. Lafayette - Suite 200
Macomb, IL 61455
Phone: (309) 837-4821
Fax: (309) 837-2887
Email: mworthin@roe26.k12.il.us

We're On the Web! <http://homelessed.net>

OUR HOUSE was supported 100% through a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education funded by the United States Department of Education under the Stewart B. McKinney Education for the Homeless Children & Youth Program for an approximate cost of \$500.00.

Resources and Technical Assistance

Looking for an in-service topic or professional development materials? Need a presentation for a teacher's institute or a workshop? Just have a question on enrollment? The Opening Doors team is here to assist you. Any of the program partners (*listed on page 2 of this publication*) will be happy to assist you with questions, materials, or presentations.

Homeless Information Hotline

For assistance with legal, educational and enrollment issues call:

1 - 800 - 215 - 6379

Opening Doors Web

<http://homelessed.net>

Federal and state law, ISBE Policy, legal interpretations, Illinois McKinney Programs and contacts, resources and links, curriculum, in-service materials, calendar of events, and available publications.

Opening Doors Project

The ALRC can provide you with brochures, posters, written materials, and technical assistance.

Please contact::

**Adult Learning Resource Center
1855 Mt. Prospect Road
Des Plaines, IL 60018
Phone 847/803-3535
Fax 847/803-3231**

Opening Doors materials are currently undergoing a renovation. The new and updated materials will reflect the changes in the federal law. New materials will include an 8 1/2 x 11 "Transportation Provider" poster; a large poster to be directed at 'unaccompanied youth' will be distributed to all Illinois high schools and alternative schools; a flier targeting 'unaccompanied youth' is also being developed.

A complete listing of all available materials, and an order form, can be obtained by contacting the ALRC or by accessing the Opening Doors Web at <http://homelessed.net>

Open Your Doors To All Children

This 12 minute video will assist educators in conquering the obstacles that impede the academic progress of homeless children. Utilized as a professional development tool in working within the legal context of schooling homeless children and youth, the video provides strategies and practices that schools and communities can employ to increase the likelihood that homeless students will enjoy academic progress. Information packet included. To order this and other videos produced through Opening Doors, please contact::

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