

Posted on Wed, Jan. 24, 2007

Forum focuses on homelessness

Homeless groups, others meet to discuss issues

BY LILY GORDON
Staff Writer

Representatives from Open Door Community House Inc., Hands On Columbus and The Homeless Resource Network invited city leaders to the Columbus Public Library on Tuesday night for a discussion focusing on homelessness.

More than 50 people, made up of few city leaders but many shelter and church representatives, gathered about 6 p.m. in a library meeting room to touch on such topics as how people view the homeless and what can be done to assist the homeless and prevent homelessness. The group then watched a short film produced by Servant Leadership students from Columbus State University.

The film featured two homeless men who provided true-to-life, on film testimonials about survival on the streets in hopes their struggles would shed some light on the hardships of being without a permanent place to stay. Such hardships include health and weather-related issues, drug abuse, street violence, and food, clothing and job availability.

Judy Thomas, executive assistant to Columbus Mayor Jim Wetherington, and United Way President Guy Sims also were in attendance.

The forum came about a week after the Ledger-Enquirer reported the city's plan to build a 400-foot by 55-foot chain-link fence under the Second Avenue bridge, which will force many homeless from the space they call home. That plan has been delayed.

Contact Lily Gordon at 706-576-6284 or lgordon@ledger-enquirer.com