

PRESS ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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Skip just one splurge: Day of Homelessness Awareness, Nov. 16, 2010

Advocates ask people to forego lattes for a day, talk to religious leaders to get involved

On November 16, 2010, civic and religious leaders and congregations throughout Portland and Multnomah County will observe the first annual "[Day of Homelessness Awareness](#)." The Day of Homelessness Awareness is intended to make the challenge of homelessness in our community visible, and to engage more faith communities in the effort to end homelessness.

A "Walk of Awareness" begins at 7:00 a.m. on November 16 for members of local religious communities with their pastors or other religious leaders to see how a single church, synagogue or mosque can make a direct impact in the effort to end homelessness.

In concert with the event, organizers are asking the public to forego one day's "splurge" (e.g. a coffee drink or snack) and [donate](#) the proceeds to local shelters in advance of the coming winter, or to bring coats, blankets, non-perishable food and other needed items to the walk.

Event organizer: JOIN's New City Initiative (www.joinpdx.com)

Event Co-Sponsors:

- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Oregon Board of Rabbis
- Oregon Area Jewish Committee
- Muslim Educational Trust
- Downtown Chapel Roman Catholic Parish
- St Stephen's Episcopal Parish
- Street Roots
- United Way
- City of Portland
- Multnomah County

Event participants

- David Leslie, Executive Director of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Rabbi Michael Cahana, President of the Oregon Board of Rabbis
- City Commissioners Nick Fish and Amanda Fritz
- Multnomah County Commissioners Deborah Kafoury and Barbara Willer

Walkers will assemble at Downtown Chapel Roman Catholic Parish (6th and West Burnside, known as "the Red Doors") and walk from there to the new 13 Salmon Family Day Center at First Unitarian Church for a light reception.

Participants are invited to bring coats, blankets, non-perishable food and other needed items to the walk. Participants will also have the opportunity to make a financial contribution to support the Family Warming Center at Eastminster Presbyterian Church.

The Day of Homelessness Awareness will also provide opportunities for people to learn more about what faith communities are already doing about homelessness, and how they and their congregation can become involved.

According to the most recent One Night Street Count (2009) and One Night Shelter Count (2010), more than 2,500 people experience homelessness on any given night, 13% of whom are homeless families. Of this number, 1,509 people were actually sleeping on the street, while 950 were sleeping in shelters or other emergency accommodations. Although such figures are daunting, the good news is that there are over 500 congregations in Portland. If every congregation were to commit to building relationships with just 10 people, we could literally touch the life of every person without a home in our city.

For more information about the Day of Homelessness Awareness, contact J. Paul Davis, Minister of Outreach at St. Stephen's Episcopal Parish, at 503-449-4969, or jpauldavis@prodigy.net.