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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:

Street Voice Council
772 Winchester Road
Lexington, KY
(859) 351-7200

STREET VOICE COUNCIL ANNOUNCED

The formation of Street Voice Council (SVC), an organization formed by the homeless for communication and advocacy issues, was announced today at their first official community event. Made up of individuals who are currently experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness, the Street Voice Council has been formed to give voice to a historically underrepresented segment of the community. The Council seeks to create awareness about issues faced by those experiencing homelessness in the Lexington community and to create connections based on shared concerns, goals, and values with members of our community who are currently homed.

“We felt that forming into an organization would help us communicate better with the community,” said the newly elected co-chair Binta Baraka. She and Erice Mundy meet each month at the Central Library with approximately 60 other members of the Street Voice Council to share news relevant to the homeless community, including information about job opportunities, health resources, and related services.

A leadership committee of six members has also been elected within the organization. They represent areas in Lexington where individuals experiencing homelessness congregate, solicit concerns from the community, and work with the co-chairs to shape the SVC’s agenda.

Organizing support for the Street Voice Council came from the Catholic Action Center, various faith based organizations, several social services professionals, and community activists.

“The SVC will provide a face and voice to this segment of our community. It will provide a centralized source and resource for these folks and our community who face inherent communication challenges,” said Ginny Ramsey, Director for the Catholic Action Center.

continued

In the months leading up to today's announcement the SVC has been involved in several projects. The group was named a Complete Count Committee (CCC) for the United States Census Bureau, which gives them a significant role in assisting with the 2010 U.S. Census. On January 28, 2010, over 150 homeless individuals—members of the SVC—participated in a day-long count for the U.S. Department of Housing Development Urban Development that resulted in an approximately 150% increase in the recorded homeless population for Lexington. The count found over 2,000 individuals experiencing homelessness in Lexington.

The SVC is also involved in providing facilitators for community conversations centered on the book *Same Kind of Different as Me* by Ron Hall and Denver Moore. Also planned for June 2010 is a community performance called *Please, Don't Call Me Homeless* based upon the experiences of those experiencing homelessness in Lexington. This event is coordinated through the Bridges outreach program with Actor's Guild of Lexington.

For more information, contact the Street Voice Council at (859) 351-7200.