Group studies OSU homeless

By Ruth Hanley
Dispatch OSU Reporter

Ohio State University is called "home" by many homeless, but a community group wants alternatives for the people who haunt campus buildings and grounds.

The Coordinating Council on Homelessness has set up a subcommittee to examine the problem of homeless people on the OSU campus.

Eleven representatives from the United Way, Friends of the Homeless, the Open Shelter, the Newman Center and other agencies attended an organizational meeting of the subcommittee yesterday at United Way offices.

An informal request by OSU trustees sparked the meeting.

Trustee Hamilton Teaford told the group that the extent of the problem is not known but has concerned administrators, faculty and students.

The campus is attractive to transients and the homeless because "there are so many nice places to hole up," Teaford said.

Campus buildings that stay open long hours to accommodate students and classes provide a shelter for those with no place to go. OSU officials have said that between 80,000 to 100,000 people, including students and faculty, are on campus daily.

Other features attractive to the homeless are access to rest-rooms in OSU buildings, the availability of fast-food restaurants along High St., anonymity in crowds and the ease of manipulating students, said Kent Beittel, director of the Open Shelter. Homeless people often forage through trash bins.

The campus also offers a "delusion that they are students," said Jonna Lord, an OSU graduate student who has worked with homeless people in Columbus. Many spend hours reading books in campus libraries, she said.

A profile of the homeless who hang out on campus does not exist, but group members suggested that most are single men and many are older than the students. Some may be mentally ill.

Representatives from OSU departments and from religious, neighborhood, business and other groups will be invited to the next meeting in February.
Community program for area homeless to be reviewed by committee delegates

By Tracy Arthur
Lantern staff writer

The homeless roaming Ohio State will be helped if representatives from campus and the campus area are successful in brainstorming for solutions.

Delegates from some campus area businesses, the Newman Center, the OSU faculty, the Open Shelter, and other organizations have formed a subcommittee of the Coordinating Council on Homelessness. The subcommittee will review the problem of the homeless at Ohio State.

An organizational meeting for the subcommittee was held last month at the United Way offices after an informal request by OSU trustees.

Jonra Lord, a graduate student from Columbus who has worked in the Project Liaison for the Homeless, said anonymity and access to warm buildings, restrooms and fast-food restaurants make the university desirable to homeless people.

Hamilton Teaford, an OSU Board of Trustees member, said restaurant owners on High Street are concerned about the presence of the homeless disturbing business.

"It's a community program, not just the university's. It may not be a problem to the university -- they may not be disruptive on campus, but it is a problem of society. The university has just hoped it would go away," Teaford said.

One possible solution may be to get a shelter in the campus area since many of the homeless are not making it downtown to the shelters, he said.

Greg Gnau, a subcommittee member from The Newman Center, said with the cooperation of businesses and churches, the subcommittee would like to alleviate the problem, and also to educate the public about the homeless.

"A lot of students and faculty think of them as lazy, skid-rowbums, but the typical profile of a homeless person is a white male, around 30 and a Vietnam vet," Lord said.

Alcohol and drug problems and medical health concerns, along with unemployment and the unavailability of low-income housing have contributed to homelessness, Lord said.

"The hope of the subcommittee is that there are humane students and faculty that want to get involved," Lord said.

Another meeting will be held at 9 a.m. Friday at the United Way offices, 360 S. 3rd St. Those interested are welcome to attend.
Drop-in center eyed for

By Ruth Hanley
Dispatch OSU Reporter

The homeless people who wander the campus and haunt the buildings of Ohio State University often cause students to feel uneasy, says a former security supervisor at an OSU residence hall.

Jim Ruech, an OSU graduate student who supervised the student security staff at Taylor Tower last year, said he believes students think “those folks are untouchable.” The students avoid contact with them, he said.

Ruech is one of about 20 representatives of OSU and community agencies who are attempting to change that attitude. The group, a subcommittee of the local Coordinating Council on Homelessness, has been meeting since January to examine the needs of homeless people on and near the campus.

Goals of the subcommittee include making the OSU community more aware of the needs of those who are homeless and developing a way to meet their needs.

Friday, the subcommittee will ask the council to endorse a proposal for a new drop-in center to provide up to 50 people with daytime shelter, companionship and referrals to social services.

If approved by the council, the proposal will be presented to Hamilton Teaford, the OSU trustee who attended the first subcommittee meeting to express the university’s concern for the problem.

The proposal asks OSU to provide a place for a drop-in center. The facility would be off campus but accessible to the homeless people who often forage through the dumpsters of High St. fast-food restaurants before settling in for the night in an empty OSU classroom building.

The subcommittee has no statistics or description of how the homeless people are or their number. However, observations from subcommittee members indicate most are single men and many are older than students. A goal of the drop-in center would be to develop a profile of those using it.

The center would not provide overnight accommodations. It would make referrals to overnight shelters, mental health counseling, employment placement and other services.

“This target population is very fragile and gets scared away from agencies quickly,” said subcommittee member Jonna Lord, who stressed the importance of letting the center’s users decide which services they would use.

Lord is an OSU graduate student and a member of the Coordinating Council on Homelessness.

The proposal calls for shelter staffing from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week. The staff would include a full- or part-time coordinator, who would be aided by three OSU graduate assistants from departments such as social work, psychology, human services and family relations.

OSU students and volunteers also would be involved in the center’s staffing. An advisory committee of representatives from OSU, the coordinating council, other Columbus shelters, community agencies and campus-area organizations would oversee the project.

Subcommittee members, who met yesterday to fine-tune the proposal, estimated a minimum annual budget at $44,520.

The group preferred not to include that figure with the proposal because so much of the center’s structure and financial requirements are dependent on reactions of the coordinating council and OSU.
Campus shelter for homeless needs Jennings' endorsement

By Garrett Keim
Lantern staff writer

A proposal for a drop-in center for the homeless in and around the campus area will be sent to President Edward H. Jennings for acceptance.

The plan, made by a subcommittee of the Coordinating Committee on the Homeless, proposes a daytime drop-in center for the homeless who often spend much of their time in campus libraries and dormitories.

The subcommittee has been since January, and is made up of OSU faculty, students and staff; members of the OSU religious community; and people from the North Central Health Center.

The OSU administration and Board of Trustees brought their concern for the homeless to the committee.

"(The university) was concerned with the homeless people on the campus itself," said Marilyn Sesler, a representative of the committee. "(The homeless) might not be causing trouble but they were a concern and we were asked to design a response."

No specific location has been chosen yet for the proposed daytime center, but it would be close to campus and easily accessible by bus.

"It would be a place where individuals who are homeless can come into a non-structured setting and where there could be some kind of minimal interaction," said Sesler.

The shelter would do more than just provide a haven for the homeless in the daytime, it would help give some insight into the homeless' needs.

"The drop-in center could also be used as a tool to provide in-depth information about the needs of homeless people in the university community," Sesler said.

The center will also try to get the homeless into agencies that provide shelter, health services and employment.

The center would be run by graduate students in psychology and social work at Ohio State.

The center will not be the only effort by the subcommittee to try and help the homeless.

"There will be a consciousness raising effort probably this fall with students, faculty, and staff and residents of the campus area about the nature of homelessness itself," Sesler said.

It is still unknown where the funds to build the center will come from.
Poll gauges OSU feelings about homeless people

By Ruth Hanley
Dispatch OSU Reporter

For many Ohio State University students, questions about homeless people in the campus area conjure images of Skid Row derelicts and bag ladies who deserve sympathy and services.

Teaford attended the first sub-committee meeting to express the university’s concerns about the homeless people who seek shelter in OSU buildings and sometimes provide problems for faculty and staff members and students.

In correspondence with Sesler, Teaford said the proposal lacked information about how many homeless people are in the campus area and who they are. He asked for more information about what would be needed if OSU decided to establish a drop-in center.

A survey of 400 OSU students, conducted by the School of Journalism during the spring quarter, indicated that 54 percent view homeless people as bums and bag ladies. The next most-common description, from 18 percent of the respondents, was a person with a mental disorder.

PLURALITY of respondents, 46 percent, said they felt sorry for the homeless, and 12 percent said they wished they could help. Twenty-two percent said the homeless “do not bother me one way or another.”

The Rev. Rick Bradley, president of the Campus Ministry Association, reported the results at a meeting yesterday of a local Coordinating Council on Homelessness subcommittee. The group has been meeting since January to examine the needs of homeless people on and near the campus.

The subcommittee, composed of about 20 representatives of OSU and community agencies, has recommended establishment of a drop-in center in the campus area to provide up to 50 people with daytime shelter, companionship and referrals to social services.

Marilyn Sesler, the United Way’s government relations coordinator who is heading the subcommittee, said the proposal has been reviewed by OSU Trustee Hamilton Teaford.

Teaford said the proposal lacked information about how many homeless people are in the campus area and who they are. He asked for more information about what would be needed if OSU decided to establish a drop-in center.

A goal of the drop-in center was to develop a profile of those expected to use it. Subcommittee members agreed to attempt to come up with more information to answer Teaford’s questions before he discusses the proposal with the other trustees.

The OSU Poll found that 41 percent of respondents believe that homeless people are attracted to the campus area because “students leave things around which they can use.”

Other students said the homeless are attracted by the shelter of OSU buildings (24 percent), the parklike atmosphere of the campus (6 percent) and the lack of trouble from students (8 percent).

Seventy-six percent of the students said they saw a homeless person in the campus area at least once or twice a week.

Seventy percent of the students believed employment, counseling, referral and other services for the homeless were needed in the OSU area. Fifty percent said OSU should provide a drop-in center.
Drop-in Center to shelter area homeless

By Keith McCallum
Lantern staff writer

As an alternative to city-run shelters for homeless people, the university is now considering a Drop-in Center.

"A Drop-in Center is where (homeless) people drop in to use a phone, get help with transportation, drink coffee, and wouldn't have to talk to staff," said Jonna Lord, a graduate student from Columbus and a member of the OSU Subcommittee on Homelessness, which is sponsored by city council.

"There's a feeling that the reason the OSU homeless people aren't making it down to the city shelters is because they might be resistant to signing in, filling out forms," Lord said. "They're too private, too proud. There's a real us-them kind of thing."

A Drop-in Center would be located preferably in a store front so "it would be like stopping in White Castle's for a cup of coffee," Lord said.

According to Lord's proposal, the Drop-in Center would be funded by the university and staffed by graduate students wanting research opportunities for social work or psychology degrees.

The Drop-in Center will have a large, common room with furniture arranged so homeless people could either be alone or talk with each other.

"The hope was that having it on their terms, they might be able to trust more than before," Lord said. "There's a lot of unemployment, a lot of families that had been evicted or ran out of money... victims of domestic abuse," Lord said. "I didn't meet one person on the street who wanted to be there."

Although it should be located along bus lines, the exact location of the Drop-in Center has not been determined, Lord said.

"We've been very careful not to specify where... nobody really wants the homeless," Lord said. Most neighborhoods fear homeless people will migrate to their area if the Drop-in Center is located nearby, she said.

But fears that a Drop-in Center would attract homeless people from other parts of the city would only call attention to the need for more Drop-in Centers elsewhere, Lord said.

"If the Drop-in Center was more attractive than other places, it wouldn't be a long-term difficulty," Lord said. "The city will respond to the need."

Further constraints on a migration of homeless people to the area would be a maximum capacity of 50 for the center.

Students have a positive attitude towards the homeless problem on campus. In a recent survey of 400 OSU students by the School of Journalism, 70 percent felt a service for the homeless was needed in the campus area, and 80 percent felt the university should provide a shelter.

OSU Trustee Board member Hamilton Teaford first contacted Lord about the possibility of a facility for homeless people.

"I started all this because people said to me there's a problem there," Teaford said. "If it's a problem in Ohio State's neighborhood then I think the campus ought to be concerned about it."

But Teaford rejected Lord's first proposal because he wanted figures of how many homeless people are in the campus area.

"Until you have some idea of the size of the problem you can't figure out what kind of facility you need," he said. "What I got was a proposal based on what people saw, but I didn't get any evidence."

Lord is currently researching the number of homeless people and taking the proposal to various university community organizations.

In July, the University Area Commission tentatively approved the plan. It will be proposed to the University District Organization in September.

"When we present it to those agencies and they approve it, it strengthens the proposal in the university's eyes," Lord said.

President Jennings has received information on the plan from University Area Commissioner William Whal, and "at this point, they are considering it... they're interested," he said.
Forum to focus on OSU-area homeless

By Ruth Hanley
Dispatch OSU Reporter

Imagine a cold winter night. You are alone in an alley between two tall, dark buildings. The wind is whipping snow into your face as you huddle before a ventilator shaft to keep warm.

You have no place else to go. How do you feel? Where will you sleep? What will you do?

Jonna Lord will lead participants on this fantasy journey at a community forum on homelessness at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Newman Center, 64 W. Lane Ave.

Lord is among about 20 representatives of Ohio State University and community agencies who have been meeting since January to examine the needs of homeless people on and near the campus.

Their group, a subcommittee of the local Coordinating Council on Homelessness, will sponsor the free forum for residents, church personnel, business people and others in the OSU area.

Lord said at a subcommittee planning session yesterday that she has used the "fantasy journey" in other presentations to help people identify with the problems of the homeless.

"The idea is for them to use their imaginations and picture how it would be," she said. "The goal is to raise consciousness and to break myths."

Other subcommittee members will present local and national data about homelessness with particular emphasis on the needs of the homeless in the OSU area.

In an informal survey conducted by subcommittee members, representatives of two businesses, two churches, six restaurants, the Ohio Union and the OSU main library described 27 homeless individuals who are seen frequently in the OSU area.

Although no one knows how many homeless are in the campus area, some estimates indicate there are as many as 50.

Survey participants said they observed homeless people sleeping outdoors, asking others for money, loitering in restaurants and stealing food from salad bars or leftovers from food trays.

The survey was conducted to gain information about who would benefit from a proposed drop-in center in the OSU area. The survey results are included in a subcommittee recommendation to establish such a center to provide up to 50 people with daytime shelter and services.

Subcommittee chairman Marilyn Sesler planned to submit the proposal to OSU Trustee Hamilton J. Teaford this week. Teaford attended the group's first meeting to express OSU's concerns about the homeless people who frequent the campus.

The proposal asks OSU to provide about 1,600 square feet for the center, on or near campus and N. High St. Estimated annual operating cost would be $57,000 to $74,000, depending on the number of staff members.
OSU rejects center for homeless

By Ruth Hanley
Dispatch OSU Reporter

Ohio State University will not open a drop-in center for the homeless people who frequent the campus area, according to trustee Hamilton J. Teaford.

A subcommittee of the local Coordinating Council on Homelessness had asked OSU to establish a drop-in center to provide up to 50 people with daytime shelter, companionship and referrals to social services.

OSU was asked to provide a facility with about 1,600 square feet, on or near the main campus and N. High St. Operating costs were estimated at $57,000 to $74,000 a year, depending on the number of staff members.

In a memo dated Tuesday and reviewed by the subcommittee at a meeting yesterday, Teaford commended the group for its work but said OSU would not be “the appropriate provider of the facility.”

“Since no one is certain how receptive the homeless in the area will be to a drop-in center, which would be unique in Franklin County, I think it would be far better if a small center were established in an area church,” the memo said.

OSU has no facility that would meet the subcommittee’s criteria “without the expenditure of very significant sums of money,” Teaford wrote. He estimated the cost to OSU to build or renovate a facility at $250,000.

Many area churches are underutilized and would not require major renovations such as would be required by city code to build such a facility,” the memo said.

IF OSU were to open the center, “it would engender significant community opposition (some of which I have already heard) as an Ohio State-imposed blight on the business community and neighborhood,” the memo said.

“A grassroots project not managed by OSU is, in my opinion, far more acceptable.”

Teaford suggested the project be started on a low-budget, experimental basis to determine if the homeless would use it.

“I believe this approach will, in the long run, result in a project which is far more likely to serve the homeless and the community,” he wrote.

Teaford could not be reached for further comment yesterday.

The subcommittee was formed in January after an informal request by OSU trustees. Up to 20 representatives of OSU and community agencies have attended meetings since then. Seven people attended yesterday’s session.

Teaford attended the first meeting to express OSU’s concerns about the homeless people who seek shelter in campus buildings and sometimes provide problems for faculty and staff members and students.

NOBODY KNOWS how many homeless people are in the campus area. The subcommittee’s informal survey of community members produced descriptions of 27 homeless people who are seen frequently in the area; others estimate as many as 50.

The subcommittee agreed yesterday to continue its efforts to get help for homeless people by asking for support from churches and community organizations.

A proposal for a drop-in center will be given to the Coordinating Council on Homelessness for possible funding, the group said.

The proposal will be revised so that the center could, but would not have to be, in the OSU area.
OSU polls faculty on homeless issue

By Sharon Kinley
Lantern staff writer

Two hundred Ohio State faculty and administration members are being polled about the homeless on campus by OSU Poll.

The telephone survey is being conducted for the Rev. Rick Bradley of the University Lutheran Chapel and Student Center to determine whether faculty believe the university should get involved with the problem of campus-area homelessness.

Bradley, a member of the campus subcommittee of the local Coordinating Council on Homelessness, said the poll will help determine if educational programs about the homeless could be set up at the university and what services would most benefit homeless people.

The subcommittee is concerned about the homeless people who walk around campus and sometimes sleep in university buildings.

OSU Poll, located in the Behavioral Sciences Lab, conducts two polls every quarter, said Jenny Whipple, a graduate student in industrial psychology who heads the polling program.

The poll is similar to one that questioned 400 students last spring, Bradley said. In that poll 70 percent of the students believed employment, counseling, referral and other services for the homeless were needed in the OSU area. Fifty percent said Ohio State should provide a drop-in center.

The poll asks, among other questions, “Do you feel that the university should get involved by providing an educational presentation for dorm residents on the scope of the problem and how students can help?”

Another question asks, “Do you feel that the university should get involved by providing an educational presentation for faculty and/or staff on the scope of the problem and how they can help?”

The survey was planned before the university turned down a recent proposal to fund a daytime shelter on campus, he said.

The proposal, submitted by the subcommittee, was rejected by OSU Board of Trustees member Hamilton J. Teaford, appointed by President Edward H. Jennings to represent the university’s concern for the homeless, said Greg Gnaau, chairman of the subcommittee.

The subcommittee had proposed that Ohio State establish a daytime shelter and refer homeless people to available social service agencies.

The proposal suggested a facility with approximately 1,600 square-feet of living space be constructed on main campus.

Teaford estimated construction of such a center would cost the university approximately $250,000. An additional $57,000 to $74,000 would be needed each year to maintain the facility, he said.

The proposal suggested that the center’s staff consist of students from the College of Social Work, Gnaau said.

In a memo to the subcommittee, Teaford commended them on their efforts on behalf of the homeless, but said the university would not be “the appropriate provider for the center.”

“Since no one is certain how receptive the homeless in the area...
will be to a drop-in center, which would be unique in Franklin County. I think it would be far better if a small center were established in an area church," the Teaford's memo stated.

Gnau said the subcommittee is reviewing its proposal and will turn to churches and the business community for suggestions.

"Our main concern is to educate people about who the homeless are and why they need our help," Gnau said. The subcommittee will meet again this month to try to find a solution for the homeless before the weather gets colder.

The results of the poll will be released at the end of this month, Bradley said.
Grant would aid OSU homeless

By Ruth Hanley
Dispatch OSU Reporter

Service rather than shelter has become the focus of a committee to aid the homeless in the Ohio State University area.

The group has applied for $7,500 from Hands Across America to hire a part-time coordinator to identify and work with homeless people near the OSU campus.

If the money is not received, the group will try to find a volunteer to do the work and then will seek other sources of money, said Greg Gnaau, building manager at the Newman Center.

GNAU is chairman of the OSU Area Committee on Homelessness, a group of about 10 representatives from OSU, area churches and community agencies.

The group is a successor to a subcommittee formed in January 1986 after an informal request by OSU trustees to study the problems of the homeless who frequent the campus area.

The subcommittee had proposed that OSU open a drop-in center to provide up to 50 homeless people with daytime shelter, companionship and referrals to social services.

The subcommittee disbanded after OSU rejected that proposal in October, but interested members and others continued to meet.

Support for the drop-in center was low partly because not enough information could be gathered about whom such a facility would benefit, Gnaau said yesterday.

Even the number of homeless in the OSU area could not be determined. Estimates range from 20 to 50.

The part-time coordinator would meet the homeless in the places where they tend to congregate and would identify their needs. The committee then would try to meet those needs or ask churches and other agencies for help, Gnaau said.

The coordinator would try to build a relationship with the homeless in the area and refer them to community resources, he said.

Other duties would be to help clients obtain benefits for which they are eligible, assist them in finding permanent shelter and provide transportation to job interviews or to agencies.

"My feeling is that until we have some kind of program going, our ability to attract funds is limited," Gnaau said.

Neighborhood Services joined forces with the homelessness committee to apply for the Hands Across America money. Lavenia Moses, the agency's director, is a committee member.

WORKING OUT of Summit United Methodist Church at 82 E. 16th Ave., Neighborhood Services provides food and other assistance to more than 100 needy families in the OSU area.

Hands Across America was the "human chain" that stretched across the country in May to raise money for the hungry and homeless. Disbursement of about $606,000 for Ohio projects will be announced this month.

If the committee's request is approved, the coordinator probably will start work in May, Gnaau said.

The proposal included agreement by Neighborhood Services to provide office space and support services for the coordinator. The majority of the $7,500 request would be used to pay the coordinator's part-time salary.

The pilot project would run for 12 months, then be evaluated, Gnaau said.
Plan proposed

By Nick Kellis
Lantern staff writer

A proposed program to aid the university-area homeless could receive a portion of the funds raised by Hands Across America.

The proposal calls for the establishment of a full-time worker who would deal with area homeless on an individual basis. The proposal seeks $7,500 from the Ohio share of the nationwide Hands Across America project.

The plan is a scaled-down version of one brought before the Ohio State University Board of Trustees last October. There was no action taken on the original plan. That plan asked for $225,000, university space for a drop-in shelter, student workers, and help from faculty.

Liavenia Moses, a member of the university-area committee on homelessness which made the original proposal to the university, said the Board of Trustees never acted on the original proposal because there was confusion as to what part the committee would play in the plan's execution.

"After the OSU thing didn't pan out, we met for several months and went upon the idea of the proposal (to Hands Across America)," she said.

A panel, made up of representatives from organizations concerned about the state's hungry and homeless, will determine how to divide the $606,000 Ohio is to receive.

"The panel members are people who work in actual direct service agencies, statewide organizations that lobby for the needs of the hungry and homeless in Ohio," said David Mayweber, an employee of the Ohio Hunger Task Force who appointed members of the panel.

Moses said the full-time worker, if approved, would draw on already available resources.

"We see the project as a pilot one, primarily using resources and services that already exist in the city, to feed and shelter and clothe the folks," Moses said.

Existing services include open shelters, meal sites, food pantries and community kitchens.

Moses said many people do not use the services because they cannot get to them and do not know how to apply for aid such as welfare. The full-time worker would help with that.

"A lot of the people are severely mentally disabled," she said. "The worker would be someone that can help them walk through the
to assist university homeless

"We see the project as a pilot one, primarily using resources and services that already exist in the city, to feed and shelter and clothe the folks."

— Liavenia Moses

system and give them a structure."

Greg Gnau, who served as the committee chairman and works as manager for the Newman Center, said the worker would try to establish a friendship with the homeless.

"Many of them have incomes, but a lot of them have lost their address and because of that have lost some of the benefits they might have with Social Security and general relief," he said.

"Our hope is to reconnect people with the resources that are available to them.

Gnau said estimating the number of homeless in the area isn't easy.

"It is difficult to gauge the number of university homeless because people without homes will often stay with friends," he said.

"At some point in time, though, a number of them use up all their friends and the welcome they had there. Then they're forced to be on the street all night," Gnau said.

Gnau said after talking with local business owners, church leaders and residents, the committee's best estimate was that there are between 18 and 30 people.

"They are attracted to the area because the manner in which students sometimes dress makes people who dress that way not as noticeable," he said. "Frequently, what we find the homeless in may be something like an army jacket or jeans that have holes — some of the things that are still popular with students, too."

Proposals for Hands Across America funding were to be submitted by January 30, Maywheer said. A panel began reviewing the proposals Friday, he said.

Maywheer said panelists represent all areas of the state.

"We made sure that we had representatives from rural as well as the urban organizations, because rural poverty is not any easier or harder than urban poverty — it's just different.

"There were more proposals than there was actual money," Maywheer said.

"The people who are on the panel, even if they are working for statewide organizations, have at some time in their lives had direct contact with those who are hungry and homeless. They know how important the work is that's being done out in the communities," he said.

"That makes the decision even tougher," he said.

Maywheer said the panel will meet next Friday to make final decisions. After that, recommendations will put into a proposal and submitted to Hands Across America in California.

Gnau said he realizes there is not a great deal of money for the entire state and that will make the university-area committee's quest for money difficult.

"It's a large state and in our hopes of getting a portion of that (money), we'll be competing with every agency in the state," he said.

Gnau said that he is optimistic his committee will get some portion of the Hands Across America funds, but will also look elsewhere for support.

"Our hope is that, once we have a program that is visible, it will be easier to attract additional funding," he said.

"People will be more willing to donate to something they can see is working, and if funding is not forthcoming, we'll try for other grants or private sources."

Maywheer said even though Ohio's share is not enough to address the complete problem, the state will benefit in other ways.

"What we were trying to do back in May when we were organizing the line, in addition to raising the money — and probably more important — was to raise an awareness about the need (to aid the homeless), and I think that happened," he said.
Homeless commission seeking funds

By Andrew Coffey
Lantern staff writer

The University Area Commission on Homelessness is exploring funding sources and realistic ways to develop a program that can evaluate and cater to the needs of the homeless in the campus area.

The commission is made up of area citizens, Columbus experts on homelessness and OSU students.

Greg Gnau, commission chairperson, said the current project before the commission is to locate funding.

"Our problem is that most sources of funding want to see something already in operation," Gnau said, "and they want to see some information."

Once funding is secured, the commission wants to hire a full-time director for the program.

"We need someone who can begin to investigate what the needs are for the homeless in this area," he said. "Then we can take the next step, which is to develop some sort of program that can serve them."

Gnau said the commission is not looking to solve the entire problem of homelessness in the area, but to assess the particular needs of individuals and treat the homeless as anyone else would want to be treated.

"One of the things we want to do is document all the reasons people are homeless," Alcoholicism and unemployment are not the only causes, he said.

"It's a complex situation that needs a great deal of information gathering and documentation."

"We want to begin to engage these people in conversation and find out what their reasons are for being homeless," Gnau said, "then try to re-connect individuals with resources that can serve them best and reverse the situation."

Gnau said many sources of comfort draw the homeless to the university area.

"There are buildings that are open, a number of sources of food and dumpsters all along High Street and by the dormitories where they can find a lot of aluminum cans for recycling."

Kent Beittel, the executive director for the Open Shelter downtown and a consultant for the commission, agreed that the university area is popular with the homeless.

"The dilemma is that those people usually decide to stay on campus," Beittel said. "They won't usually come back downtown to use the resources available, and as it stands now, there's no other resources for them in the campus area."

Gnau said the group would like to have students working in the program, not only because of the benefits for the homeless, but for the students as well.

"People need to see that their decisions and actions have an effect on other people, whom they don't always see," Gnau said.

Gnau said he also hopes to develop a volunteer corps that would be available to help the homeless to find such sources as medical care, social security checks and general relief benefits.

He said the civil servants who are assigned to help the homeless are often so bogged down with paperwork they are unable to provide the counseling and care the homeless need.

"Everyone needs to get the message 'You are special,'" he said. "We hope we can provide that for them."

Gnau said the commission has been meeting for a year. He said he sometimes feels frustrated because it hasn't accomplished much.

"Our goal is to make absolutely certain that we have some sort of viable program in place by next fall," Gnau said. "We're very concerned about having another winter come and not being able to direct people to a resource in this area."
Commission proposes aid to area homeless

By Andrew Coffey
Lantern staff writer

Homeless people on campus will have basic resources available to them by next winter if a plan by the University Area Commission on Homelessness is realized.

The commission held a meeting of area church leaders Wednesday night at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church to gain momentum for its plan to provide meals, showers, clothing and community contacts for the more than 20 homeless people in the campus area.

The plan temporarily precludes a previous project that sought funding to hire a full-time staff person to assess the needs of the campus homeless people and look into the possibility of opening a shelter in the campus area.

The Rev. Susan Beem of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church said, “Instead of trying to do something as big as a shelter, we need to develop a network of people and services to get us started.”

Once that network is developed, the commission plans to pursue funding more aggressively, she said. Most funding sources require some sort of program to be in operation before they agree to provide support.

Greg Gnau, chairperson for the commission, said, “We want to make sure another winter doesn’t come without having something to offer to homeless people in our area.”

One of the barriers the commission is facing, Gnau said, is that the problems of the 20 to 30 campus area homeless people are not considered significant by students and residents.

“As long as the homeless are barely visible and barely irritable,” Gnau said, “they will have to fend for themselves in the same way they have in the past few years.”

The group identified four areas of activity that will help the program become established.

First, the group plans to establish itself as an agency where social work students can gain field experience.

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Secondly, the group will contact the Ohio Hunger Task Force for help in developing a training program for volunteers and staff people on the process of getting public aid for homeless people.

Third, a list of job descriptions and resource needs is being drawn up so that, as people join the group or offer support, a clear picture of what is needed will be available.

Lastly, volunteers who are willing to “adopt” a homeless person or family will be recruited. The volunteer would act as a contact between the community and the homeless person and be a consistent friend.

Most importantly, the group repeatedly expressed the need for more people to get involved and for the campus area to recognize the need for action.
Campus homeless part of larger problem in city

By Kimberly Enis
Lantern staff writer

On good days Oswald Chant is able to doze on the sofas in the Ohio Union and avoid the outside elements for hours.

On bad days, the building manager calls the OSU police, who arrest him and send him back out on the street.

Chant, 35, was arrested most recently by OSU police Nov. 2. Police could have charged him with criminal trespass after he refused to leave the Ohio Union. Instead, they let him go with a warning.

This wasn’t the first time OSU police warned Chant about hanging around campus buildings without Ohio State identification.

And it probably won’t be the last time either, because police said Chant apparently has no place else to go.

OSU Deputy Police Chief Richard Harp said homelessness is not a major problem on campus.

“From time to time there are vagrants on campus,” Harp said. “We either arrest them or have them evaluated for mental health problems, if that is the case.”

Harp said he thinks making an arrest is the only approach police can currently take, unless the vagrant is mentally ill.

Although there may not be a big problem on campus with the homeless, the same cannot be said for the entire city of Columbus.

“Statistics tell us that the number of homeless in Columbus is rising 15 percent a year,” said Layne Dillon, volunteer program director for Friends of the Homeless, a shelter for vagrants.

She said there are about 10,000 homeless people in central Ohio.

“We have been full every night this year,” Dillon said. “Homelessness is a disgrace. It’s generally not the person’s fault, but the fault of their job, not economically supporting their family.”

The Friends of the Homeless shelter has 103 of the 500 beds available in the various shelters in Columbus, she said.

There doesn’t seem to be a certain geographical area where the homeless are coming to the shelter from, Dillon said.

“The American middle class is disappearing and we are seeing a lot of people coming from that,” Dillon said. The homeless come from varied backgrounds, she said.

The program is beginning to keep statistics on the backgrounds of people who stay in the shelter and expects better statistics to be available in the future, she said.

Dillon said the average person staying at the shelter has completed eleventh grade, and has a fifth or sixth grade reading level.

“The severely and mentally disabled that have an alcohol problem are duly diagnosed and are particularly difficult to treat.”

He said the mental health center offers several programs to help the homeless people who come to the center or who are referred there.

Among the programs available are an AIDS-awareness program, both short- and long-term outreach programs, an eight-bed treatment center and a new psychiatric team.

“The purpose of this team will be to go out and help homeless people who can’t feasibly make it to an appointment at the center.”

Lee said it is impossible to force someone to be treated, unless they are ruled incapable by the courts. Even then it is difficult to make someone accept treatment.

Acting Director of the Ohio Union David Mucci said the Union has been unusually active in the past couple of weeks in terms of arrests of homeless persons.

Mucci said repeated offenders know better than to come back, because they have been warned about the possibility of getting arrested.

“Once we get a complaint from a student about someone panhandling or bothering a student, we check it out immediately,” Mucci said.

Mucci said the Ohio Union is a little more aware of the homeless problem than other areas of campus, because of the Union’s environment.

“We are trying to maintain the privacy of the building for the students, faculty, staff and their guests,” Mucci said. “We are making sure that the people that don’t belong here do not stay.”

From time to time there are vagrants on campus. We either arrest them or have them evaluated for mental health problems, if that is the case.’

— Richard Harp
OPEN SHELTER FUND-RAISER

Couple to spend 30½ hours in Dumpster

By Felix Hoover
Dispatch Human Services Reporter

The Open Shelter will conduct its annual Dumpster Dollar Campaign to maintain daytime services for homeless people. Executive Director Kent Beittel said.

His agency also might need a capital campaign soon if a suitable, affordable site for expansion can be found, Beittel said.

For the fourth year, Beittel and his wife, Mary, are to spend 30½ consecutive hours in a trash Dumpster, beginning at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, on the Oval at The Ohio State University.

Some shelter board members and Columbus-area celebrities also will spend time in the Dumpster at Ohio State, and others will be in one at Broad and 3rd streets, Mr. Beittel said.

The Open Shelter receives money from the Community Shelter Board, allowing it to provide emergency shelter to an average of 200 men a night.

The shelter’s day programs help homeless people re-establish themselves in the community, he said.

The campaign goal is $15,000, which would be for day programs, including:

- Medical care at the shelter.
- A distribution center that ships new and used goods, such as furniture, to homeless agencies throughout the state.
- An employment counseling program.
- A banking and financial planning program.

Other fund-raising efforts are planned for this week, including the manning of trash bins at one Downtown and 14 campus locations from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday by members of the Columbus Bar Association.

The Open Shelter, now at 370 W. State St., is overcrowded and in need of additional space, Mr. Beittel said.

A site search committee has explored several options, but no commitment has been made on any location, he said.

Ideally, a site on a major bus line will be found in Franklinton or near Goodale Park, areas where large numbers of homeless people already are, Mr. Beittel said.

"Those are areas that are going to be most woefully underserved if we are not there."

In finding a suitable location, the agency must consider how its clients might be received in a neighborhood, Mr. Beittel said.

"We don't hide the fact that we're looking at buildings," he said.

Under consideration is a building that housed the Adria Laboratories pharmaceutical plant, at 582 Goodale St. It has 86,000 square feet, and the current shelter has 22,000 square feet, Mr. Beittel said.

Although the agency would have to raise money, he would prefer that it own a building rather than lease one as it now does, he said. The annual rent is about $50,000, he said.

The Open Shelter owns two four-unit apartment buildings which provide low-rent housing for people who are working and on their own, Mr. Beittel said, adding that other such housing is needed.

The Open Shelter was approached about buying the Economy Inn, a 71-room motel at 665 W. Broad St., but the price was too high, Mr. Beittel said.
Dumpster for dollars

Don't be surprised to see two people hanging out in a dumpster on the South Oval this week.

The Open Shelter is having its fifth annual Dumpster Dollars Campaign on Thursday and Friday to raise money for its homeless services and to increase awareness of the plight of the homeless.

Ken Beittel, director of the Open Shelter, and his wife Mary Beittel will be in a dumpster on the South Oval. Money is raised by passers-by throwing money into the dumpster.

There will also be a dumpster containing Open Shelter board members on the west side of the Statehouse lawn downtown.

The Open Shelter provides job placement, medical, legal and financial services to the homeless. The shelter also distributes donated supplies to other agencies throughout central and southern Ohio.

Beittel said he hopes the campaign will raise $15,000 for the shelter.

The Dumpster Dollar Campaign runs from 11:30 a.m. Thursday until 6 p.m. Friday.

—Chris Blackburn
Pair raising dumpster dollars for shelter

By Chris Blackburn
Lantern staff writer

Have you ever been down in the dumps? Kent and Mary Beittel are going to be in "the dumps," literally, for more than 30 hours.
The Beittels, who are taking part in the third annual Dumpster Dollars campaign, are living in a trash dumpster on the South Oval from 11:30 a.m. Thursday until 6 p.m. Friday to raise money for the Open Shelter.
The Open Shelter, 370 W. State St., provides food, shelter, job placement assistance, medical services and financial services for the homeless. It also operates a distribution center to get donated items to other shelters in Central and Southern Ohio.
The Dumpster Dollars campaign is also being held on the west side of the Statehouse lawn. While the Beittels are living on the Oval, trustees of the Open Shelter will take turns in the downtown dumpster.
Dumpster Dollars is not just a fund-raising drive. It is also a public awareness campaign.
"The people who go to this campus are the future leaders of this nation. If they can be reached, then we've made real progress," he said.
"Another thing is that so often people think that you've got to give a billion dollars to have any effect on any cause. That's not true. If every student on this campus threw a quarter in the bucket you could operate the shelter for a long time on quarters."
Dumpster Dollars does raise money for the Open Shelter, but Kent Beittel said the money raised is not a large proportion of its budget.
"People do other things as a result of the fact that we do Dumpster Dollars. So the cumulative effect is very large," he said.
Mary Beittel, head of the Office of Volunteers for the Open Shelter, said OSU's Project Community has been very helpful to them in publicizing the event and getting volunteers.

Student Director of Project Community Wes Byers, a junior majoring in sustainable resource management, said the group helped spread the word about Dumpster Dollars to the organization's more than 400 members. Project Community is also going to have a follow-up article about the fundraising campaign in the group's monthly newsletter.
"What Project Community is trying to do is get more students involved in community service, educate and empower students about how they can address different social issues," Byers said.
This is the first year that Project Community has been involved in Dumpster Dollars.
The Beittels, however, are spending their third year in a dumpster on campus.
Kent Beittel said being homeless is extremely exhausting. Even though working with the homeless is their job, the 30 hours he and his wife, Mary, spend in the dumpster helps remind them of what the homeless go through on a daily basis.

Jennifer Richter/ the Lantern
Kent and Mary Beittel from the Open Shelter inspect the dumpster where they will spend 30 hours. They are raising funds for the homeless shelter.
‘Arm the Homeless’ was hoax, OSU students admit

By Mark D. Somerson
Dispatch Staff Reporter

Three Ohio State University graduate students admitted yesterday they created a phony organization that said its aim was to provide guns for homeless people in Columbus.

After meeting with officials from the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless yesterday morning, OSU art students Paul Badger, Douglas Lloyd and Eric Zimmerman issued a statement admitting the hoax.

"The project was conceived to draw attention to the issues of guns and violence, homelessness and media manipulation in our society," the statement says. "From all signs, homeless individuals have sensibly rejected guns as a solution to personal safety."

Last week, the students sent out a news release under the name Jack Kilmer, director of Arm the Homeless Coalition. It said the group was established to "provide desperately needed protection for America's disadvantaged" and to "legitimately arm Columbus' abused and victimized homeless population."

When a Dispatch reporter tracked down Badger last week through the post office box number listed on the news release, the student said the organization was legitimate and that Kilmer was real.

Within a day of the news release, the city's homeless advocate denounced the coalition, and the city Charitable Solicitations Board informed the group that it could not raise money as a charitable organization.

A man dressed as Santa Claus who said he was representing the coalition was at Columbus City Center on Saturday but did not solicit donations.

Kent Beltel, executive director of the Open Shelter and a representative of the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless, met with the students and wrote a message for them to put on their answering machine admitting the hoax.

Beltel said the prank was hurtful to the homeless and to the efforts of organizations that raise money and provide shelter to the homeless.

"It was a dangerous notion," he said. "And it happened at the time that we are the most needy of the public's good will."

Lloyd, of 580 E. Town St., Apt. 211, said yesterday that he didn't want to talk about the hoax.

Badger, of 2636 Dering Ave., refused comment.

Zimmerman, 58 W. 3rd Ave., Apt. A, could not be reached.

OSU may discipline 3 students for hoax

By Alan D. Miller
Dispatch Higher Education Reporter

Three Ohio State University graduate students could face disciplinary action over a phony campaign to give guns to the homeless.

University officials are notifying Paul A. Badger, Douglas Lloyd and Eric Zimmerman to report within five days for questioning by the Office of Community Development and Judicial Affairs, said Larry Barnes-Wright, director of the office.

If the interviews show a possibility that the three broke OSU student conduct codes by staging the campaign, a judicial panel of faculty members and students will hear the matter in January, Barnes-Wright said. The panel then could impose sanctions ranging from a letter of reprimand to dismissal.

University judicial review is limited mostly to actions that take place on campus, she said, so officials will have to determine whether any activities related to the campaign occurred on campus.

A photograph delivered with a news release about the phony Arm the Homeless effort shows a man in a Santa suit taking up collections in front of what appears to be a university building.

All three, in addition to being students, are employees of the university. Graduate assistants work about 20 hours a week and are paid an average of about $1,000 a month.

According to university records:

- Badger, of 2636 Deming Ave., is a graduate administrative assistant in the College of Arts.
- Lloyd, of 580 E. Town St., Apt. 211, is a graduate teaching assistant in the College of Arts.
- Eric Zimmerman, whose home is in Bloomington, Ind., and who now lives at 58 W. 3rd Ave., Apt. A, is a graduate research assistant in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Badger and Lloyd could not be reached for comment. Zimmerman said he had not received official word about possible judicial action by the university.

"This is the first I've heard about it," he said when a reporter called.

The students admitted in an affidavit Monday that the scheme was their effort to "draw attention to the issues of guns and violence, homelessness and media manipulation in our society."

Yesterdav Zimmerman refused to say whether the hoax was part of a class project, or something the students did on their own.

Although last week they sought media attention, Zimmerman said the three now have decided to "minimize contact with the media."

The students connected the phony nonprofit company and a fictitious director, set up a post office box and telephone number, printed brochures and signs, and last week sent out news releases seeking donations.

Advocates for the homeless said it was a cruel hoax that set back legitimate efforts to help people in great need.

Barnes-Wright isn't sure yet what the university will say.

Even if it was a well-intentioned effort to educate people about social concerns, she said, "All of us make mistakes. Sometimes there are consequences."
Gun hoax may end in discipline

By Linda Clary
Lantern staff writer

Three OSU graduate art students who created a phony charitable organization to give guns to homeless people may face university disciplinary action for their prank.

The Arm the Homeless Coalition was created by Paul Badger, Douglas Lloyd and Eric Zimmerman.

The three said the idea behind the project was not to actually give guns to homeless people, but to focus attention on the issues of guns, violence, homelessness and media manipulation.

Badger called the hoax "unconventional political artwork." He noted each of the men responsible had different reasons for being involved.

Badger said that many people were forced to look at the fears they harbor because using the words guns and homeless in the same sentence terrifies most people.

However the "unconventional" nature of the hoax may land the students in hot water with Ohio State.

The three men are scheduled to meet with university officials on Friday and may be subject to disciplinary action.

They said they could not comment on what might happen to them because they have not met with university officials yet.

Lenora Barnes-Wright, director of the Office of Community Development and Student Judicial Affairs, said the matter is currently under investigation, but no charges have been filed. Barnes-Wright said standard punishment ranges from a letter of reprimand to dismissal from the university.

The students said they are being used as scapegoats to avoid the real issues at hand. Everyone is angry at them the media because they were so easily fooled, and various charitable organizations for damaging their reputations and fund raising efforts.

Zimmerman said the prank has been free publicity for those legitimate organizations that help the homeless. He felt they have provided a golden opportunity for these organizations to plead their cases.

Lloyd noted that one of the interesting aspects of the entire project is the illustration of how reality is constructed by the media. Stories written about the Coalition, though there were some who were skeptical, were generally accepted.

Lloyd said they have been trying to direct the responses to the appropriate organizations.

Because they are art students one of the big questions most people are asking is what was the meaning of the entire project. Lloyd said there was not a "meaning" as most people would like to think. The idea was to induce critical thinking and incite people to action.
Students await charge from school officials

By Linda Clary
Lantern staff writer

The fate of the three Ohio State graduate students who perpetrated the Arm-a-thon Homeless Coalition hoax is now in the hands of university officials.

Paul Badger, Douglas Lloyd and Eric Zimmerman created the phony charitable organization to draw attention to social issues such as homelessness and violence. As a result of the hoax, the students might now be subject to disciplinary action by the university.

The three met with university officials on Friday. They were represented in the meeting by Robert Krivooshay, Supervising Attorney of the Clinical Program at the Ohio State Law School.

Officials say the students might have violated a section of the Student Code of Conduct.

Krivooshay said the situation is under inquiry to see if a section of the student code was violated. He added that he thought the students were covered in their actions by the First Amendment, but that the university would have complete cooperation during the inquiry.

No charges have been filed as a result of the hoax, Lloyd said. The students are planning to submit written statements to the university on Wednesday.

The students said they did not know how long it would be before they would know if charges would be filed.

Lenora Barnes-Wright, director of the Office of Community Development and Student Judicial Affairs, said she could not comment further on what the students had said. She did confirm that the students are planning to submit statements and would then be notified regarding discipline.

Barnes-Wright restricted her comments on the case because of provisions made by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. FERPA protects the privacy of individual student educational records.

The students could receive punishments ranging from a letter of reprimand to expulsion.
'Arm the Homeless' campaign evaluated

By Damon Taylor
Lantern staff writer

Students and faculty were given a chance to comment on the efforts of the three students who proposed to arm the homeless.

Paul Badger, Doug Lloyd and Eric Zimmerman, all graduate students in art, held an open critique Thursday night at Hopkins Hall Gallery to get peer evaluations of the "Arm the Homeless Coalition" campaign.

The trio garnered media attention last December with their press releases and shopping-mall solicitations for donations to arm the homeless.

After they disclosed the actual, art-based nature of their campaign, they faced a possible reprimand from the university.

Badger said many of his friends, who are activists in other cities, appreciated the project, but homeless advocates in Columbus didn't understand, or didn't want to admit that they understood it even if they did.

"A fair amount of anger resulted because (homeless advocates) didn't realize there was this element of irony, of parody, going on," Badger said. Reflecting on this, he thought making populist art would be harder because one cannot assume that "just because people see an artwork, or are exposed to it... doesn't mean they are going to clue in on the same level you were trying to communicate."

Homeless shelter directors were angered mostly at the prospect of donation cycles being disrupted, and fears of violence being generated, Lloyd said.

Badger said this part of the debate was like a double-edged sword.

"Are we generating these ideas, or are they there already?" Badger asked.

"My intention wasn't to educate people, or raise consciousness, or make anyone better... The violence in this, the potential for violence, is what makes it interesting," Zimmerman said.

He said, however, that each of them had different interests and goals in the project.

One main concern from the audience was that two volatile issues were thrown together for the project to see what would happen. Many participants in the discussion didn't think homelessness was the issue at all, and the trio used the homeless to get to the media.

A particular point was made of the apparent distance between the artists and their subject. Badger said he had "real misgivings with the project on some levels," and he added that he couldn't see doing a similar project in the future without doing more research beforehand.

Zimmerman said Judicial Affairs is still considering whether or not the trio should have charges of academic misconduct leveled against them.