

Foot Notes

"Food on Foot turns tax burdens into tax payers."

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947 Consecutive Weeks

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PhD FINDS HERSELF HOMELESS

By Rachel Roberts, WFF Program Director



Cynthia A. — Gray shirt

For many of us, the idea that homelessness does not discriminate is true in theory but not in practice. It may be surprising for some of us to hear that Food on Foot's newest Gray Shirt has a PhD.

Cynthia A. is a rose among the thorns of the skid row jungle. She has a Bachelor's Degree in English as well as a PhD in English from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She taught English for four years at the Bachelor's level at Purdue University in Columbus, Indiana. Cynthia's story serves as a reminder to all of us that we are no less susceptible to the destruction of homelessness than anyone else.

Cynthia was born and raised in Chicago, IL as an only child. Her mother passed away in 2004 only two years after her father passed away. She reports that she was very close with both of them and that losing them so close together caused her a lot of grief. When her parents were diagnosed with cancer and passed away, she moved back to Chicago and ended her five year marriage. Attempting to find purpose and meaning after her parent's death, she completed a 15 month course in Massage Therapy. She worked full time as a Massage Therapist for almost 10 years before deciding to move to Los

Angeles in 2011 in an attempt to pursue massage therapy in California. With student loan debt drowning her, she has been unable to obtain the application fee for The California Board of Massage Therapy. Therefore, it is illegal for her to practice in her field without a license. For years, Cynthia had shelter in Los Angeles through her boyfriend; however, when she ended the abusive relationship, she found herself on the street. "It was December 15th when I put on two jackets, grabbed a shoulder bag of personal items and my laptop and slipped out the back door while my ex was fuming in the living room after a discussion that had turned physical."

From the beginning, Cynthia has expressed a determination to succeed in this program. Despite the struggles in her life, she remains abundant in compassion, humility, and drive. Upon receiving her Gray Shirt and staying in her own room for the first time in almost five months, she says, "Going from the Union Rescue Mission, where I had to climb up multiple bunk beds to find my mattress and share a dirty bathroom with other women, with the lights out at 10:00PM and the lights on at 5:00AM, this [motel] is like entering heaven, peace and tranquility. I now have my own room and a clean bathroom. I can stay up to read if I want to."

Cynthia came to Food on Foot with a humble and learning attitude. She started her full time job this week and loves the fast pace environment. Despite her education and work experience she says she is excited to start working for Napa Valley Grille in Westwood as a dishwasher. "I've even made a couple of friends," she says. We are all looking forward to her graduation day when Cynthia obtains another PHD (Passion, Hunger, Desire) from Food on Foot.

Please Volunteer!

**Welcome Aboard
to Our Newest
\$98 Club Members!**

APRIL (cont'd)

Katie Brauer
Kim Cavallo
Marlene & Jerry Dobkin
Jennifer Ilene Perry
Ensieh Tasdighi

MAY

Nannina Angioni
Anna Gralnik
Rya Kihlstedt
Abby Wolf

www.foodonfoot.org

**\$98 CLUB
MEMBERS ARE
INVITED TO
WITNESS THE
WFF PROGRAM**

\$98 Club members are encouraged to experience our unique "Work for Food" program any Sunday from 11:30am-1:00pm and see how we build the confidence levels of our program participants — the Green Shirts!

If you'd like to visit, please call us in advance at (310) 860-0022 as we limit the number of guests.

www.foodonfoot.org