

CHOM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 9, 2009

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HOMELESS ARE PROVIDED WITH LITERARY ESCAPE

Friends of the Houston Public Library, in cooperation with the Houston Public Library Foundation, partner with CHOM and donate books to benefit the homeless served by The Beacon



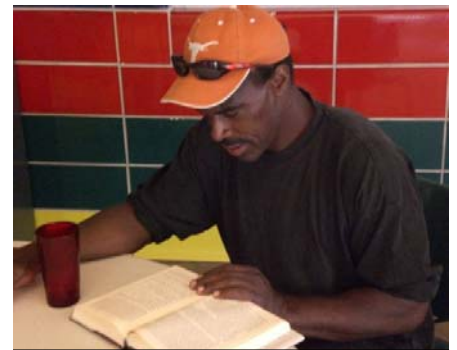
A homeless client visits The Beacon Bookshelf to pick out a book to read.

Houston, TX – The Beacon Bookshelf, for the first time since The Beacon opened in January 2007, is overflowing with books for the homeless of Houston to read. Thanks to the Friends of the Houston Public Library and the Houston Public Library Foundation, the homeless clients served by The Beacon are being provided a generous supply of reading materials from many different literary genres. The Beacon will receive on a monthly basis anywhere from 300, 500, or even 1,000 books, depending on availability, and received its first delivery in June. While many homeless individuals enjoy reading, they are not able to access libraries without an address for a library card. This makes it very important for agencies serving the homeless population to provide them access to reading materials.

The Beacon is a program of Cathedral Health & Outreach Ministries (CHOM), which provides day shelter, hot meals, clothing, laundry services, private showers and lavatory facilities, and case management to the homeless of Houston and Harris County. The Beacon serves approximately 525 clients daily and some days, surpasses 600, 700, or even 800 clients. Its days of operation include both Saturdays and Sundays, days that most other homeless service providers are closed.

“We are thrilled to be entering into this new partnership with Friends of the Houston Public Library and the Houston Public Library Foundation,” says Tracy L. Burnett, LCSW, Executive Director for CHOM. “As we all know, when you read a book you escape from reality and you enter another world. Our homeless clients, who are dealing with stressors many of us can only imagine, so greatly benefit from this form of entertainment that books afford. In the past, The Beacon Bookshelf has been relatively barren as we were reliant on book donations from individuals. Now our bookshelf is overflowing and our clients have so many options from the classics to contemporary fiction and nonfiction.”

The Friends of the Houston Public Library is part of the Houston Public Library Foundation, a 501 (c)(3), which is dedicated to increasing visibility and financial support for all 42 Houston Public Libraries. The Friends are best known for their annual Bargain Book Sale and Children's Book Sale, proceeds of which benefit Houston Public Libraries. The books sold come from individual book donations and library books that have not been checked out over a period of time. Whenever possible, the Friends and the Foundation partner with other non-profit organizations, such as The Beacon, to donate books leftover from the sales. The date for the next Children's Book Sale will be September 11-13 at the Doris Miller Center, 5216 Feagan. The next Bargain Book Sale will be in the spring of 2010.



A Beacon client enjoys one of the books donated by the Friends of the Houston Public Library.

CHOM is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing social and health services to poor and homeless men, women, children, and youth living in the Houston area. The mission of CHOM is to respect the human dignity of the poor and improve their lives. CHOM is serving the poor and homeless through four distinct programs: The Beacon, a day center providing essential services (food, clothing, laundry services, and shower facilities) and case management to help individuals address the root causes of their homelessness, and also includes the Homeless Youth Street Outreach Project, an off-site component that provides case management and licensed mental health counseling services to homeless youth; Brigid's Hope, a transitional residence serving homeless women who have left the Texas prison and jail system; Cathedral Justice Project, a legal aid program providing pro-bono legal services to the homeless; and Cathedral Clinic, a health clinic providing medical and mental health services to poor and homeless men, women, children, and youth.

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