

STUDENTS AND FACULTY FROM TOURO COLLEGE'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TAKE PART IN NYC HOMELESS OUTREACH POPULATION ESTIMATE (HOPE) FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

New York, N.Y., January 27, 2010 - For the second consecutive year, a group of students and professors from the Graduate School of Social Work at Touro College joined forces with nearly 3,000 volunteers to help count the number of people currently living unsheltered in the city.

The Touro volunteers were part of a group that recently ventured out after midnight to canvass parks, subways and other public spaces as part of the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE).

The information gathered by HOPE volunteers will be critical to the DHS's ongoing efforts to help homeless people leave the streets for a better life.

"Participating in the HOPE project fits in with the philosophy of both Touro College and the Graduate School of Social Work, one of "tikkun olam," or making the world a more just place," said professor Elhanan Marvit, MSW, LCSW, coordinator of the Brooklyn Division, Graduate School of Social Work at Touro College. Professor Marvit participated in the canvassing with his colleague, professor Allison Bobick, MSW, LCSW, director of student advancement. It is an important educational experience for our students in that it actualizes the values and work that we talk about in class."

In addition to professors Marvit and Bobick, students who participated were Gypsy Matos, Twanna Warren, Mia Artis, Natalia Shtompel, and Beverly Valentine.

The Touro College volunteers canvassed at a location in midtown Manhattan. Volunteers approached people they encountered to determine if they were experiencing unsheltered homelessness by asking a series of survey questions. People identified as homeless were then asked how many years they've been homeless, where they sleep, and where they take their meals. The volunteers also distributed outreach cards printed with important phone numbers for DHS, and offered transportation by van to various homeless shelters around the city.

To increase public accountability and continually evaluate and improve the programming designed to help street homeless New Yorkers, DHS began surveying parts of the city in 2003, and has conducted the count citywide every year since 2005.

"HOPE 2010 offers social work students a firsthand look at a critical social problem," professor Marvit said. "It gives a human face to homelessness, thereby taking away its stigma." Touro College's Graduate School of Social Work's Master of Social Work program is designed to train clinical social work practitioners to awaken and enliven the innate ability of individuals, families, groups and communities to learn to meet their own needs and sustain their own state of equilibrium, thereby enhancing human well-being. The program meets all academic requirements for both social work licenses: LMSW (Licensed Master Social Worker) and LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker).

Touro is a system of Jewish-sponsored non-profit institutions of higher and professional education. Touro College was established in 1971 primarily to enrich the Jewish heritage, and to serve the larger American community. Approximately 17,500 students are currently enrolled in its various schools and divisions. Touro College has branch campuses, locations and instructional sites in the New York area, as well as branch campuses and programs in Berlin, Jerusalem, Moscow, and Florida. Touro University California and its Nevada branch campus, as well as Touro College Los Angeles, are separately accredited institutions governed in common by the same Board of Trustees as Touro College. For further information on Touro College, please go to : <http://www.touro.edu/media/>.