

# The Existentialist

Newsletter of the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta

470 Candler Park Drive, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307 • Founded in 1976 •

A Philosophically Based Spiritual Community

Dedicated to Human Liberation

and Founded on Existentialist and Feminist Principles •

## ***Curve & Texture...paintings by Karen Phillips***

***December 15, 2013 – January 15, 2014***



*"Seeking Unity," acrylic by Karen Phillips. Photo by Glen Lopez.*

**"Curve and Texture...paintings by Karen Phillips"** opens at First E on December 15 and will be on the walls of the Sanctuary through January 15, 2014.

Karen Phillips creates abstract paintings in acrylic and mixed media. She is inspired by nature and often contemplates what lies beneath the surface of things. Using acrylic paints and other materials, she conveys her ideas through use of texture and color. Karen finds that people want to touch her paintings to get a sense of what it is they are seeing.

Karen has shown work at the Atlanta Artists Center, Sycamore Place Gallery, Kudzu Art Zone Gallery and Art Center, and the Buckhead Library. She lives in Lake Claire with her husband, Wayne, and their two dogs.

First E's unique, sunlit Sanctuary space lends itself to art. Thanks to our Art Guild chair, Glen Lopez and the labors of Bill Laney and other volunteers who have installed new lighting, we have had art on the walls of the Sanctuary for many months.

For more information, contact Karen at 404-406-5728 or go to her website at [www.kphillipsart.com](http://www.kphillipsart.com). ~

**First Existentialist  
Congregation of  
Atlanta**

470 Candler Park Drive,  
NE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30307  
404-378-5570  
www.firstexistentialist.org

*All Are Welcome  
Join us in our  
Celebrations of Life on  
Sundays at 11:00 a.m.  
Children's Program  
during Sunday services*

*Fellowship Minister:  
Marsha Mitchiner,  
revm@bellsouth.net  
Office Administrator:  
Rick Westbrook,  
office@firstexistentialist.  
org*

*Board of Directors:  
Libby Ware, Chair  
Bill Read, Treasurer  
Charlene Ball,  
Recorder  
Elaine Gale  
Bill Laney  
Ted Pettus  
Stell Simonton  
Andy Weiskoff  
Cindy Lou Who  
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Charlene Ball,  
mcharleneball@yahoo.  
com*

*We are a philosophically based  
spiritual community  
dedicated to  
human liberation  
and founded on existentialist  
and feminist principles.*



## ***Notes From the Board***

*By Libby Ware, Board Chair*

**The Board met on November 4.** We discussed Eureka, the after-school program that we are trying to reinstate. Cheri Smithson has found that she needs to take classes in order to obtain Child Development Associate credentials from Bright From the Start, the state licensing agency. The classes take 3-4 months. Cheri is looking into taking on-line training, which could take less time. It appears that Eureka will not be able to operate full-time this school year. Cheri is providing a program for school breaks—one week for Thanksgiving, two weeks in December, and one week for Spring Break. Rick Westbrook pointed out that if First E provides the program and hires Cheri to run it, Cheri would not need to be certified by Bright From the Start. Rick and Elaine Gale will talk to Cheri about the option of her being our employee who would run the program.

Ted Pettus and Stell Simonton have volunteered to be on the Nominating Committee. They will recruit a third member. The Nominating Committee is responsible for finding candidates for the Board. The current Board's term runs out in May, 2014 with the election of the new Board in April 2014.

The cove, where the light panels are located, needs to be cleaned out. We are encouraging people to take anything in there that is not needed (such as candles) or it will be thrown away. We will be hiring an electrician to install the lighting we need; and, as it now stands, the panel cannot be accessed.

Marsha is encouraging artists and craftspeople to rent a table for Creation Corner, where they can sell their goods in December. The table rent will be \$10 per Sunday or \$25 for every Sunday in December. She also said that people need to bring food to the food barrel or the Food Bank will no longer provide the barrel. Andy suggested making a graph showing the level of donations. Marsha is going to coordinate holiday giving to a charity.

Charlene had the piano tuned. The tuner said that the piano should be tuned quarterly. The Board decided that it be tuned at least twice a year and before Founders Day. There is a music fund that people can contribute to in order to have the funds for piano tuning.

The next Board meeting will be December 2 at 7:00. ~

**Please consider a special donation  
to the Accessibility Fund  
(formerly Ramp/Lift Fund).**

**We have almost reached our fundraising goal!  
Many thank-you's to all the generous givers--  
the Chalice Lighters, CPNO,  
and First E Members and Friends  
for your support.**

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## ***Guild Reports***

### ***Program Guild*** *by Charlene Ball*

**The Program Guild** met on October 29 to plan the Celebrations of Life for January, February, and March 2014. In addition to our "regulars"-- Duncan Teague, Rev. Janna Nelson, Rev. Kate Hauk, and our Fellowship Minister Rev. Marsha Mitchiner -- we have confirmed a special guest speaker for February, Mike Glenn, formerly of the Atlanta Hawks, who will speak about Black history. Holidays we will observe are Martin Luther King, Jr., Day in January and Susan B. Anthony's Birthday in February. February is Black History Month, and March is Women's History Month, and we will have appropriate programs.

We also met on November 21 to discuss changes in procedures. Beginning in January, Patton will continue to secure musicians. When an accompanist cannot be present, other members of the Program Guild will follow up to find a substitute. Also beginning in January, Charlene will schedule facilitators.

If you'd like to facilitate or suggest a speaker or musician, please contact a PG member or come to a Program Guild meeting. Our contact information: Patton White: [patton@beacondance.org](mailto:patton@beacondance.org); Charlene Ball: [mcharleneball@yahoo.com](mailto:mcharleneball@yahoo.com); Linda Bell: [lbell@gsu.edu](mailto:lbell@gsu.edu); or Bill Laney: [bill3391a@yahoo.com](mailto:bill3391a@yahoo.com). ~

### ***Membership Guild*** *by Wilj Sturkey*

**The Membership Guild sponsored a kiddush** on Oct. 27. It was also Dia de los Muertos, and we had a good turnout and a fine feast. Thanks to all who participated.

The Membership Guild was spotlighted on Nov. 3 as part of Guild Month. We gave a report on what we are up to, and the main thing we want to emphasize is that we are adopting the UU position that asserts that the healthiest congregations are those in which all members step up and become ad hoc members of their

*Continued on page 6*

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## ***Community News & Activities***

--"**Curve & Texture...paintings by Karen Phillips**" opens at First E and runs through January 15, 2014. Opening reception is December 15 at 1:00 pm.

--"**Painting for Fun**," art by students of Ashlea Davis, closes December 8.

--**Thanksgiving** has a coordinator in Linda Bell. Rev. Marsha Mitchiner will provide paper plates, napkins, and other necessities. More help is needed, however. If you would like to help with this fun and satisfying day of food, gathering, and communion, contact Linda at [lbell@gsu.edu](mailto:lbell@gsu.edu); Marsha at [revm@bellsouth.net](mailto:revm@bellsouth.net), or Membership Guild folks Robert, Wilj, or Elaine.

--**First E Discussion Group** will hold its first meeting on December 15 after the COL to discuss the introduction and Part 1 of *Gather At the Table* by Sharon Leslie Morgan and Thomas Norman DeWolf.

--**Glen Lopez has calendars for sale**, \$5, featuring his photography in our neighborhood including members of First E and Little 5 Points. See Glen for a calendar.

*Continued on page 7*

# *November 2013 Finance Report*

*Remember:*

*Make Final 2013 Gifts and 2014 Pledges in December*

2013 Cash Flow	Operating	All Other
Total Income	50,255	29,742
Total Expenses	(55,077)	(20,823)
Net thru November 15	(4,822)	8,919

**Fund Types & Names      Account Balances on November 1**

< unaudited >

**General Operating Account** (2,558)

**Designated Operating Funds** 17,234

New "Use As Needed" Fund	1,184
Gay Dellinger Estate Gift	162
Sanctuary Accessibility	9,384
Lanier Clance Lighting	1,244
Leadership Development	215
Community Garden	(143)
Building & Grounds	111
Woodland Sanctuary	1,569
Minister's Discretionary	682
Original 1st E History	68
Labyrinth & Garden	256
Social Justice	981
Attic Insulation Fund	1,250
Children's Program	122
Music Fund	150

**Pat Hewatt Revolving Loan Fund (\$8K)** 5,065

**Special Use Permit Loan Fund (\$4.5K)** 44

**Total First E Funds** 19,785

**Old Stone Church History Project** 1,577

***Please 'like' us on Facebook!***  
***[https://www.facebook.com/  
groups/43340332955/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/43340332955/)***

*Third Friday Film Series  
presents  
**Harvest of Empire***

*Friday, December 20, 2013*

*Doors open 7:00 pm – film starts at 7:30 pm*

*Popcorn and refreshments available*

*Donations welcome - \$1 to \$10 sliding scale*

*No one turned away*

*Discussion facilitator and co-sponsor*

**TBA**

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***First Existentialist  
!!LIBERATION UKULELES!!***

***Second, Third, & Fourth***

***Wednesdays***

***7:30 p.m.***

***FREE!***

***Teacher once a month***

***Cost: \$15.00***

***All levels welcome!***

***Come join us!***

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***Geek Chorus on First Wednesdays***

Bring your favorite beverage to share, love offering to First E for allowing us to use the space, and musical instruments to pluck, bang or strum.

Next Geek Chorus meets on Wednesday, December 4

*New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common.  
~ John Locke, philosopher  
(1632-1704)*

# Social Justice Corner

## ***Occupy Our Homes Atlanta – Compassion in Action***

*by Lorraine Fontana of the Social Justice Guild*

Although the general “Occupy” movement in Atlanta lost its key visual present at Woodruff, (aka Troy Davis) Park when they were evicted in October of 2011 by Mayor Reed, some organizers have continued to meet and strategize, and some took up residence at the Peachtree-Pine homeless shelter (Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless). Some of them and others have formed a specific offshoot called Occupy Our Homes, as many such groups in other parts of the country decided to focus energies on the foreclosure crisis resulting from the housing bubble burst and financial collapse at the end of 2008.

A small, but persistent, group of activists have taken up the cause for a stream of metro Atlanta home-owners who have/are losing their homes due to various banks, mortgage holders and law enforcement authorities decisions that are, shall we say, totally lacking in compassion and, in the end, based on the wrong-doing and unfair practices of Wall Street and banking industries.

I’d gotten involved as an occasional protester as the group organized to help save homes, and have more recently been a regular at the candlelight vigils outside the home of Candy Lasher, a VP at the local Fannie Mae office here in Atlanta, in an attempt to get her and FM to restart negotiations and allow disabled Desert Storm veteran Mark Harris to get back into his home he bought in 1996. (See more history at <http://occupyourhomesatl.org/press/residents/mark-harris/>.)

There have been many victories, and some folks still needing support from the community at large. If you have some spare minutes in the next few weeks, please take a look at the links below for the success stories and the still active campaigns. If you want to join me at the weekly vigil (and other actions that might be planned) in behalf of Mark Harris, just drop me an email ([tana44@hotmail.com](mailto:tana44@hotmail.com)) or call me (678-595-6188).

OOHA successful campaigns: (selected links)

<http://occupyourhomesatl.org/victory-for-mildred-garrison-obi-and-occupy-our-homes-atlanta/>

<http://occupyourhomesatl.org/jacquelinevictory/>

Petitions for those still seeking justice: (Selected links)

<http://start2.occupyourhomes.org/petitions/justice-for-the-figaro-family>

<http://start2.occupyourhomes.org/petitions/disable-desert-storm-veteran-needs-help-to-save-his-home> ~



*Members of Occupy Our Homes Atlanta at vigil at home of Candy Lasher. Photo by Lorraine Fontana.*

## ***Guild Reports ~ continued from page 3***

Membership Guild. As such, all congregation members are asked to be proactive in welcoming visitors and new members. We welcomed five people after our Membership Guild presentation and gave out First E t-shirts to them. The new people are Otha, Joseph, Sky, Gabriel, and Aviva. We will schedule an orientation for these new people in the near future, at which time they will receive a set of First E by-laws and covenants. We will also ask them some probing questions as to how they would best like to connect with other members.

Each Sunday the person who opens the building and prepares the coffee, candles, chairs (if need be), etc. will be the person who keeps the key to the downstairs door with them during the service. We will ask the Sunday facilitator to announce from the lectern who the particular Opener for that Sunday is so that the door can be re-opened in a timely manner. Openers include Elaine, Wilj, Stell, and Andy. Marsha fills in if there is a fifth Sunday. ~

### ***Communications Guild***

*by Andy Weiskoff*

The Communications Guild prepared Storytelling event flyers and program, also photographed sanctuary, designed and printed 1,000 color trifold brochures for rental brochure. In addition, we created an 11x17 rental poster and purchased tripod for display at Rainbow Expo event. We have started to display First E informational brochures weekly on welcome table at rear along with the bright color cards, rental brochures, and the weekly bulletin/program. ~

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## ***Aid for Survivors of Typhoon Haiyan***

The Social Justice Guild is coordinating donations for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) in connection with their relief efforts in the Philippines to provide aid for survivors of Typhoon Haiyan. The UUSC is working directly with established partners in the Philippines and focusing their efforts on survivors most likely to fall through the cracks of traditional rescue and relief programs—communities already marginalized by ethnicity, religion, race, language, class, or gender.

If you would like to contribute, you can make out a check to UUSC or contribute cash and give it to Libby Ware or other members of the Social Justice Guild. Contributions are tax deductible. We will be collecting donations until December 15. ~

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existentialist and feminist principles.*

## ***Calling all Crafters/Artists!***

***During the first four Sundays in December, you will have an opportunity to sell your creations before/after the COL. You can set up a card table (or share a long table) along the back and part of one side of the sanctuary. You must complete your setup before service. You may sell before service (absolutely no sales from 11:00 to end of service) and after service until 1:15. You must pack up and be out of the building by 1:35. Since the buyer market will only be those at COL, the cost is just \$10 per Sunday or \$25 for all 4 Sundays. You must register before hand as space and tables are limited. If interested email me at [revm@bellsouth.net](mailto:revm@bellsouth.net).***

***I know this is a far cry from Outside the Lines but it offers a low cost opportunity for those with limited amounts of items or who otherwise want to "test the waters."***

***With anticipation of seeing your creations,  
Marsha ~***

## *Community News & Activities ~ continued from page 3*

--**Lift Your Holiday Spirit, 414 Holiday Party and Sing-Along**, at First E on Sunday, Dec. 8, 7-9:00 pm. Seasonal, sacred and secular Christmas, and Hanukkah songs, and even a few Unitarian and Bah-humbug songs.

--**Thanks to all who helped** make the Evening of Southern Storytellers a smashing success. We made \$1,100 for First E!

--**Cate Morrill of Shoulders Down is offering Movement Improvement classes** to members (existing or newly signed up) of SAGE for \$7/each for drop-ins at the Rush Center (by Radial Cafe). [cate@shouldersdown.com](mailto:cate@shouldersdown.com), 404-525-6466.

--**Bennett's Market** prepares meals to go, also sandwiches, prepared foods from local farmers and growers, and locally produced arts and crafts. Proprietor: Victoria Bennett-Trestrail.

--**RAP, a discussion group about race**, meets at the Little 5 Points Community Center on December 17 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

--**The Candler Park Geek Chorus** meets once a month at First E on Wednesdays at 6:30.

--**Quicksilver Country Dancers** will have their monthly English Country Dance 1:30-5:00, \$7.00, in Decatur. Info: [www.qcdancers.org](http://www.qcdancers.org).

--**Submissions and news for the December Newsletter** are due to Charlene by **December 15**. Board and Guild reports and member news items, opinion pieces, poems, meditations. The newsletter welcomes your submissions.

--**Contact Robert Stewart** with your news and activities: [rstewart@toyodausa.com](mailto:rstewart@toyodausa.com) . ~

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## ***Sarah Walton Speaking on December 8***

**Born in Maine** and having spent much of her life in Maine, Sarah Walton is a Quaker who practices a discipline of hope, love, thankfulness, and joy – “a repeated decision to be present to the goodness of reality regardless of all the reasons for despair” (*Waging Peace: Discipline and Practice* by Pamela Haines). Sarah meditates regularly upon the Quaker query “What does Love require of me?” and the following words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Power at its best is Love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is Love correcting everything that stands against Love.”

Sarah has lived in Georgia since September 2012 in response to a spiritual leading (Quaker-speak for what in some congregations is called “answering a call”) to be in Atlanta to work to eradicate the racial caste system created by the operation of what legal scholar and civil rights advocate Michelle Alexander calls “the New Jim Crow.”

Sarah met Miss Marilyn Winn at a three-day gathering in Savannah in September 2012, entitled “From Troy to Trayvon: Empowering Communities to Change Criminal Justice Policies.” Sarah was immediately struck by Miss Marilyn’s great leadership skills, knowledge, abilities, and personal strength. Sarah has treasured the mentoring and guidance that Miss Marilyn has provided to her since the September 2012 Savannah conference that fulfilled its promise of bringing together “more than 300 of the brightest organizers, advocates, attorneys and community members from across Georgia and the South to share skills, strategy and resources and lay out plans to strengthen our communities and transform criminal justice policies in Georgia and throughout our region.”

Through volunteer community work with Miss Marilyn Winn and others, Sarah has spent the past year gaining an increasing understanding of criminal justice policies and their effects in Georgia. In September 2013, she became licensed to practice law in Georgia. Sarah is a graduate of the New York University School of Law, a former prosecutor, co-author of a law enforcement officer’s manual, and for ten years was a professor of criminal justice and justice studies. **Sarah Walton will speak at First E on December 8 with Marilyn B. Winn.** ~

## **Marilynn B. Winn: A Voice for the Formerly Incarcerated**

*By Marilynn B. Winn*

**Born in Atlanta, Georgia**, in 1951, I still reside in Atlanta. Being born in the middle of the Civil Rights Movement, a couple of streets over from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., gave me firsthand insights on the poverty I was born into and the poverty I am still in, so to speak. I admire the courage of those willing to do the necessary internal work to attain self-actualization. The rest of my life will be spent servicing the formerly incarcerated and incarcerated, whose voices are sometimes silenced by omission, and championing ideas to ensure a better tomorrow.



*Marilynn B. Winn. Photographer unknown.*

In June of 2009 my journey of freedom began when I was allowed to be employed and say I am a formerly incarcerated person. I was employed through a temp service, First Step Staffing. I was given 1 to 2 days a week working at Manheim Car Auction. I built those days into 5 days a week. I was employed by First Step Staffing for 2 years. While working with First Step Staffing, I became involved with an organization called 9to5 National Association of Working Women. I volunteered on the minimum wage campaign. At this time I was a minimum wage worker. I transitioned from volunteer to member, to Board member, to Co-chair of the Board of Directors with 9to5. Volunteering gave me new ideas, also new transferable skills. I use those skills to search for a better position in employment. I was hired in June of 2011 at The Center for Working Families, Inc. as a Program Associate. I am currently working at 9to5 National Association of Working Women, Atlanta Chapter, as Chapter Organizer II.

I serve as a facilitator, providing motivational support, and I participate in speaking engagements locally and

## **Rev. Marti Keller on Dec. 1**

**Rev. Marti Keller is in her 15th year** as an ordained and professionally fellowshiped UU minister. She is in her seventh year as a minister at the UU congregation of Atlanta. A self-described Jewnitarian, she served as president of UUs for Jewish Awareness, has led Shabbat services at UU general assemblies, has contributed sermons and other resources to the UUJA website, to the *UU Christian Fellowship Quarterly*, and to the *Society for Humanistic Judaism Journal*. She recently co-edited *Jewish Voices in Unitarian Universalism* with Rev. Leah Hart-Landsberg, a book of essays on Jewish identity, Judaism as a source of living tradition, Tikkun Olam and justice work, and other topics. Rev. Keller's essay in the book is entitled "Leaven and Horseradish." The book will appear in early 2014. **Rev. Marti Keller will speak at First E on December 1.** ~

### **Marilynn B. Winn, continued**

nationally. I serve as an organizer, strategic planner, active advocator and activist, lobbyist and policy changer. I am an Employment Developer for formerly incarcerated and incarcerated women and the founder of Reverse The Cycle of Incarceration, L.L.C. I am on a mission to change policy in Georgia prisons for the better, also to educate formerly incarcerated and incarcerated women to become independent and at the same time self-sustainable. I am a formerly incarcerated person that has been able to rise above that vicious cycle of incarceration that once held me in bondage. This has given me a true passion, a driven spirit, the ability and the knowledge to help other incarcerated women thrive to the point of their fullest potential. Changing our laws here in Georgia, along with education, will ensure us the freedom we so desire and help us to become productive members of society, as we deserve, and not allow us to stay in bondage for our past nor allow us to be recycled back into the prison systems. **Marilynn B. Winn will speak at First E on December 8 with Sarah Walton.** ~

*Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. ~ Margaret Mead*



# **December 2013 Sunday Celebrations of Life**

- December 1**    *An American Hanukkah*  
*Speaker: Rev. Marti Keller*  
*Facilitator: D. Patton White*  
*Accompanist: TBA*  
*Native American Giveaway*
- December 8**    *Ban the Box to Enhance the Chance*  
*Speakers: Marilyn Winn and Sarah Walton*  
*Facilitator: Charlene Ball*  
*Accompanist: Alan Dynin*
- December 15**    *Nobody Knows How Famous We Are*  
*Speaker: Rev. Janna Nelson*  
*Facilitator: Rev. Marsha Mitchiner*  
*Accompanist: Scott Hooker*
- December 22**    *A Traditional Existential Christmas*  
*Facilitator: Karla Crawford*  
*Accompanist: William "Bill" Chelton*
- December 29**    *Sustaining Community through Cooperative Economics*  
*Speaker: Mona Reeves*  
*Facilitator: TBA*  
*Accompanist: Charli Vogt*

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*Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use.*  
*~ Emily Post*

# The Back Page

Members and Friends Speak Out

## Our Holiday Giving Project: Lost N Found Youth

By Rev. Marsha Mitchiner



**THANKS to everyone** for your reply emails. Lost-n-Found Youth will be the focus of our holiday giving. This organization assists homeless LGBT youth. Rick Westbrook, First E's office administrator, is one of the founders of L-n-F and the Executive Director. Their web site is [www.lost-n-found.org/](http://www.lost-n-found.org/).

Our goal is to put together "survival kits" and gather warm clothes. Kits usually include basic items such as chapstick, toothbrush/tooth paste, soap, wash cloth, shampoo, razor, antibiotic hand cream, band-aides, anti-biotic and/or anti-itch cream, comb/brush, etc. The Dollar Store carries both brand name and generic of many of these items in small/regular sizes. Drug and grocery stores have travel sizes. You can put together one (or more) kits on your own or buy a supply of several items that can be added to items provided by others to complete several kits. We are also collecting socks, gloves sweaters, other warm clothes (if used, they need to be clean and in good condition). We will collect all of the above beginning now until Dec.22. With everyone giving something, we'll have a wonderful gift for these young people in desperate need. Thanks for your caring and generosity, *Marsha*

### Lost-n-Found Youth, Inc.

Lost-n-Found Youth, Inc. is an Atlanta-based nonprofit (volunteer staffed) corporation whose mission is to take homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youths off the street and transition them into more permanent housing arrangements. We operate a 24/7 hotline at (678) 8-Lost-25 as well as a 6-bed housing facility in Atlanta, Georgia. We endeavor to challenge the area's significant homeless LGBT youth problem in many ways.

Some of our primary services include:

- Answer phone, texts, and emails from LGBT homeless youth 24/7
- Meet face-to-face and ensure these youths have a roof over their head, clothes on their backs, and food in their bodies
- Have the youths evaluated by a mental health professional
- Connect the youths to HIV/STD testing
- Refer to health and dental services, if necessary
- Help obtain lost or stolen birth certificates, driver's licenses or state ID cards
- Connect the youth to GED training/testing or other education resources
- Emergency and transitional housing
- Interview skills training ~

*The First E Newsletter is published monthly. Deadline for the January 2014 newsletter is December 15. Send your articles and announcements to [mcharleneball@yahoo.com](mailto:mcharleneball@yahoo.com). The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse any material submitted.*