

# StreetSmarts

*A MAGAZINE EMPOWERING THE HARD-CORE UNEMPLOYED WITH  
IMMEDIATE INCOME AS THEY WORK TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY*

January 16, 1999

**Dear Writer, Photographer, Cartoonist, Artist,  
anyone who loves to create work that counts,**

Last April a conservative Miami-Dade census found approximately 7,000 homeless persons living in the county. Add Broward and Monroe and you have another 5,300 men, women and children on the streets or in temporary shelters.

Homelessness is a challenge to communities across the nation. In 50+ other North American cities, however, "street papers" are creating dignified employment for the homeless. These publications are founded on the principle that most people want to help people who are helping themselves and the fact that many of the homeless want to work, to enjoy employment that offers independence, dignity, flexibility and immediate payment.

Today, some homeless vendors in Chicago, for example, make \$600 or more each week selling street papers; the average vendor there, working when and where s/he wants, earns \$550 - \$600 a month. Moreover, everywhere these publications are sold panhandling sharply diminishes, crime decreases in the neighborhoods served, and at least 20 percent of the vendors use the paper as a step into full-time, gainful employment.

This idea to combine publishing, job training and meaningful employment to empower the homeless and hard-core unemployed has now come to South Florida.

**We need your help.**

Each 32- to 48-page issue includes articles, photos, illustrations, cartoons and ideas submitted by talented creative people like you. StreetSmarts offers you an excellent opportunity for publication in a South Florida-wide periodical. And since several pages will be in Spanish, it provides an additional opportunity to Spanish-speaking talent.

The foundation of our editorial policy is social service and awareness. We want to put a face on the homeless, explore links between unemployment, housing, discrimination, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness, poverty and homelessness.

But to reach our goal of 30,000 circulation (our first printing was 25,000) with 50 working vendors, we must feature a variety of appealing articles, illustrations, ideas and photographs. For our audience of both locals and tourists, we need pieces not just about our homeless — although that will be part of it — but about those subjects that interest South Floridians and visitors alike:

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- **Interviews of local celebrities spotlighting their ideas about South Florida's poor, homeless and dispossessed. Example: "Gloria Estefan explores her feelings about Miami's poor."**
- **Local humor. Dave Berry does it, why not you?**
- **Articles of general appeal ("Should South Florida parents be concerned about *fill in the blank?*"), but with a local angle.**
- **Any well-written relationship or self-help piece with a Florida axis ("How to make a South Florida Valentine Day last all year long" or "How to fly almost free as a courier out of MIA").**
- **Local investigative reporting into real wrong doings. ("Why is the county jail permanently housing 500 mentally ill?" or "The Poverty Industry: How check cashing operations rip off the poor.")**

Other story ideas include eclectic, quirky movie, music and art reviews; human-interest stories about locals falling in love, winning money, going rags to riches, even encountering aliens. Offbeat stories for tourists on what to do/where to go. Strange stuff for a column of the same name. An advice column, perhaps, or a crossword puzzle, weekly puzzler (answers in the next issue), or local photo contest. Interesting, humorous "personal diary" series, but with a social issues foundation.

You get the idea.

Articles must be well written. Writing must be tight, the average piece will be only 850 words. The writer must be doubly certain of the piece's details; we have no budget for fact checkers.

All articles get bylines; some will include a head shot of the author. We pay \$15 for articles accepted, upon publication. Soon, we hope it will be more. As of this writing we have no funding; all money for this project comes from the pockets of the editor and publisher.

**We desperately need great photography as well.** Format at least 4x6, black and white or color with good contrast. Subject matter: Just about anything that tells a story relating to South Florida. Photos of the homeless and dispossessed are encouraged. Spend a couple hours at Camillus House or other gathering of the homeless, shoot what moves you; if the photo is technically competent I almost guarantee it'll be published.

We'll need photos to illustrate our articles, e.g. celebrity interviews. Also needed: appealing South Florida "travel" photos for picture-caption stories on local attractions. As StreetSmarts is graphic, we'll publish any fine story-telling photo or series of photos that tell a story of social or economic (in)justice.

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**Speaking of graphic, let's not leave out illustrations and cartoons. We want them. We need them!**

As we said, we can't pay much. Not at first, anyway. But you'll get important exposure and a chance to grow both your craft and your hearts. (Fact is, no one so far has accepted payment from us. They simply want to help.)

Electronic submissions are encouraged, either e-mail (frank@kaisercom.com) or by floppy, DOS, Windows or Mac. (Ours is a Macintosh office.) We have a scanner for photographs, illustrations and cartoons.

We'd appreciate your passing the word around to your talented friends. We need all the help we can get.

Please call me if you have any questions or comments. Or stop by our Camillus House office at 708 NE First Avenue in downtown Miami. Call first, as we're working with homeless up in Broward about half the time.

Thanks.

*Frank Kaiser, editor*

P.S. It's always best to query me about any work you want to see in StreetSmarts.