

THE GERDA AND KURT KLEIN IS PROUD TO RECOGNIZE AND HIGHLIGHT THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF CLARENCE HIGH SCHOOL IN NEW YORK. WE ASKED KEVIN STARR, STUDENT COUNCIL ADVISOR AND SOME OF HIS STUDENTS, TO ALLOW US TO SHARE THEIR STORY ON OUR WEB SITE:

WE INVITE YOU TO READ ABOUT THEIR SUCCESSES AND UTILIZE THE GUIDELINES BELOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN SLEEPOUT IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

- BACKGROUND (link to 1<sup>st</sup> 2 pages below - #1)
- SLEEPOUT 2008 (link to Highlights pages below- #2)
- IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS (link to those pages -#3)
- HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN SLEEPOUT (link to those pages below -#4)
- STUDENT REFLECTIONS (link to #5)

PLEASE SHARE YOUR COMMUNITY SERVICE IDEAS AND PROJECTS WITH THE KLEIN FOUNDATION. WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO HIGHLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL ON OUR WEBSITE! WE THANK THE STUDENTS AND FACULTY AT CLARENCE HIGH SCHOOL, AND ESPECIALLY KEVIN STARR, FOR YOUR CARING AND GENEROSITY.

**(#1) CLARENCE HIGH SCHOOL SLEEPOUT  
TO BENEFIT THE POOR AND HOMELESS**

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In the mid-1980's, a group of teachers at Kenmore West Senior High School (in a suburb of Buffalo, New York) formed a group called "ETC –

Educators Totally Committed.” ETC, led by Steve Ash and Jerry Starr (my father) decided to do something to raise money and increase awareness about the mostly hidden problems of hunger and homelessness in our community. The “Sleepout” was born. In its early years, it involved several teachers from the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda school district. Each year, it was held on the first Friday in February. These educators spent the night outside (yes, this is Buffalo we’re talking about) with only cardboard appliance boxes offering protection from the elements.

In 1991, in my position as Student Council advisor, I went to the man who was then the principal at Clarence High School, Terry Piper, and presented an idea: what if we held a Sleepout too, modeling our event after what the Kenmore teachers were doing, but added something new – student participation? We discussed issues such as student safety, supervision, and parent permission...and the Clarence High School Student Council Sleepout to Benefit the Poor and Homeless began. That first year, 46 students and several faculty and staff members spent the first Friday night in February outside, raising \$2600 for local charities.

Fast forward to 2007 – our 17<sup>th</sup> annual Sleepout, with nearly 200 students and faculty participating, raised over \$24,000, pushing our aggregate total to over **one quarter of a million dollars**. On February 1, 2008, we held our 18<sup>th</sup> annual event; donations are now coming in, and it looks as if we will top the \$20,000 mark again, as we have every year since 2000. Ten charities now share in the proceeds of our event, including The Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation. The Klein Foundation is the only one of our ten charities that is not local – but our connection to it certainly is.

Gerda and Kurt raised their family in Kenmore, New York – Vivian, Leslie, and Jim all graduated from Kenmore West High School – birthplace of the Sleepout. Furthermore, I am blessed to have been a close friend of Jim Klein for most of my life. And there’s an additional connection to our school. Since 1989, every freshman at Clarence High School has read All But My Life. Gerda and Kurt are heroes in our school. On three unforgettable occasions, Gerda has spoken to our students, the first two times with Kurt at her side.

This year, the Klein Foundation has honored us by requesting that we share what we do with a wider audience, in the hopes that other schools around the world will start projects of their own – maybe even Sleepouts – to benefit people who live in poverty. What follows is something which we have decided to call “The Sleepout Diaries.” Here’s what we’ve included:

- some information about our 2008 Sleepout
- some “to-do” lists that I use as the Student Council advisor
- some student perspectives on this year’s event. They were prepared by three of our seniors – all Sleepout veterans – Ellina Stein, Katie Gaskill, and Shannon King

We hope that what follows is of use to those who might like to start events like ours. Please feel free to contact me if you'd like more information. Most of all, thank you to Beth Reisboard and The Klein Foundation for giving us the opportunity to share what we do with all of you and for all that the Foundation does to improve our world.

## **(#2) HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2008 SLEEPOUT** **February 1-2**

The 2008 Sleepout, as with our Sleepouts in the past, was sponsored and coordinated by our Student Council. The only costs we absorb are: buying duct tape and utility knives to help with the construction of "homes" for our sleepers during the night; renting some sound equipment for a benefit concert presented by our Guitar Club

-Sears Warehouse donated 150 appliance boxes. These are hard to find, since most businesses do not save them. We called in November to be sure that they'd do it for us again this year. Our buildings and grounds department makes two separate pickups for us in the week or two prior to the Sleepout. They break down the boxes and leave them in the back of a truck for us. As the kids arrive, they get broken down boxes from the truck and start building their shelters. This keeps the kids busy during the early part of the night. We tell the kids that the only way to be absolutely certain that they'll have a box is to bring their own, and several of them do. We also allow tents, although, admittedly, it's tougher for us to monitor the kids during the night this way. So far so good.

-we always give the kids about six weeks to collect pledges and turn them in. There's no minimum amount required, but each sleeper agrees to turn in pledges. Any that fail to do so are banned from participating in future Sleepouts (generally, about 5-10 kids a year fall into this category). All students who turn in money within the stated time frame receive community service hours (our school requires a total of 32 hours from each student prior to graduation). Seniors receive four hours, and underclassmen receive two.

-our Parent/Teacher Organization solicits donations from local businesses for soup and snacks for the sleepers during the night. Parent volunteers staff the kitchen all night long and supervise the cafeteria, where our participants are permitted to warm up for short periods of time. Depending on the severity of the weather, we limit the amount of time that the kids can spend inside. We have had some years with bitter conditions and wind-chill factors well below zero; on those occasions, we have been more lenient in terms of the amount of time that the kids can spend inside. This year, the night started with sleet and

freezing rain, then the temperature dropped and the winds kicked up. We allowed the kids to stay inside for about 10 minutes at a time before we shoed them back out into the cold.

-a prerequisite for participating in the Sleepout is attendance at one of two meetings discussing cold-weather protection. Our "Wilderness Wise" (outdoor education) class prepares and presents information about what to wear and how to keep warm during the night. It's safety first, as far as we're concerned. Believe it or not, we've received public criticism over the years from some people who say that our kids really aren't getting the true "homeless experience." We try to explain the symbolic nature of the event, and we stress that our main goals are to raise awareness and money to address the problems of homelessness. We would never put our kids at risk.

-this year, more than ever, local businesses and school groups stepped forward to help raise money for us. Among the highlights were:

-a local pizzeria sold cards for \$1.00 each that were put up on their walls and signed by the people who bought them. Each card was then placed in a drawing for one of four \$50.00 gasoline cards. They also donated 10% of their sales from the day of the Sleepout. These promotions raised over \$700

-another local business donated two 7<sup>th</sup> row tickets to a Buffalo Sabres game. We raffled the tickets off and raised over \$500

-our Guitar Club and video production class presented a concert which brought in over \$1500

-our senior class sponsored a talent event known as "Mr. Clarence." Ticket sales totaling nearly \$1000 were donated to the Sleepout

-our National Honor Society co-sponsored a dance with several other schools. They donated their portion of the proceeds from the ticket sales (\$350) to the Sleepout

-our school's SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) group ran a "teacher lock-up," where volunteer faculty members were put behind bars in our cafeteria during lunches. The teachers were then bailed out, and the money went to our event

-our Middle School got involved in several activities, including a pajama day and a sale of Valentine hearts. All told, they raised over \$1000 for us

-over a dozen different school clubs and organization donated from their treasuries

All in all, the Sleepout has become a major event at our school and in our community. Every dollar raised goes to our charities.

### **(#3) INFORMATION GIVEN TO OUR PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

#### **History of the Sleepout**

1991 - \$ 2600 (46 students, faculty, and staff)  
1992 - \$ 4600  
1993 - \$ 5200  
1994 - \$ 6100  
1995 - \$ 8000  
1996 - \$ 9200  
1997 - \$10,000  
1998 - \$13,500  
1999 - \$15,046 (over 150 students, faculty, and staff)  
2000 - \$20,000 (over 200 participants)  
2001 - \$23,445  
2002 - \$20,369  
2003 - \$20,385  
2004 - \$21,092  
2005 - \$24,011  
2006 - \$25,069  
2007 - \$24, 113  
**2008 - Friday, February 1 - Saturday, February 2**

#### **Where does the money go?**

The Friends of Night People  
Community Action Information Center  
The Gospel Expansion Foundation  
Hearts for the Homeless  
Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Buffalo Gerard Place

The Gateway - Longview Foundation  
Habitat for Humanity  
Little Portion Friary  
Gerard House  
The Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation

### **What do the kids have to do?**

- Turn in a signed parent permission slip by January 4, 2008
- Attend a meeting (run by our Wilderness Wise/Outdoor Ed. class) on cold weather protection
- Stay for the entire night (and observe all school rules while there - i.e., no visitors allowed)
- Turn in all pledges collected by March 14, 2008 - those who do will receive community service credit (seniors - 4 hours; underclassmen - 2 hours)

### **What does Student Council do to prepare?**

- Prepare permission slips; write memo to faculty and staff asking for their participation; arrange for a faculty/staff dress down day on Fri. 12/21; write letters to businesses asking for donations; contact all CHS clubs/organizations/ contract Sheriff and State Police; alert Media (through public info. director); arrange for boxes; coordinate logistical arrangements with Buildings and Grounds staff; etc., etc., etc.

### **What do we need from the P.T.O.?**

- Arrange for donations of food (soup, etc.)
- Make a schedule of who will be working during the night (set up shifts)
- Write thank you letters to all donors after the sleepout (not including financial donations from businesses)
- Provide me with an accurate list of parents who worked during the night
- Keep an eye on the kids' sleeping bags, etc.

- Convince parents in the community that this is for real - actually supervised and totally legitimate
- Talk to everyone you know and encourage them to donate to the cause
- Anything else you can think of?????

## (#4) HOW TO DO YOUR OWN SLEEPOUT: GUIDELINES AND CHECKLIST

### I PRINT A COPY OF THIS INFO. EACH YEAR TO USE AS A CHECKLIST

**NOTE:** I have made this as general as possible, but there are several references to places and things that are specific to our school.

### THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

- Do bldg. permit (Cafe; kitchen; lavs; parking lot "alley" bet. lower west and cafe.) 7:30 PM – 6:30 AM
- Update/prep/order 1<sup>st</sup> set of copies (permiss. slips, etc.)
- Notes to district newsletter editor; teachers' association newsletter editor; High School newsletter editor
- Set up dress-down day for last day before winter break (order copies of memo) (and get approval from administration)
- Update winter vacation/post-vacation copies on computer
- Send info. to H.S. P.T.O. (if not speaking at their Jan. meeting)
- See stuff to do over winter vacation – set dates
- Prep. info. for calls re: appliance boxes (**to be done week after Thanksgiving**)
- Set two meeting dates with Outdoor Ed. Class re: cold weather protection for sleepers – ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST ATTEND (avoid Regents exam dates; try for approx. the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed. back after winter break and the Thurs. one wk. after that)
- Reserve aud or lecture hall for 1<sup>st</sup> meeting; reserve CAFETERIA for second meeting (detention moved that day) – **sign up in aud. bk. in ofc.; file bldg. permit for cafe**

## WINTER VACATION

- Set date to give letter to class/club advisors requesting donations (mid-Jan)
- Order other copies in file (letters; business addresses; etc.)
- Get stuff ready to mail to businesses (as per file)
- Set specific dates to give donation envelopes for schools AND letters for SC officers to leave at local businesses during Regents exam week (2<sup>nd</sup> week after winter vacation)
- Call Rob/Tony at Mazia's Pizza re: promotions during January

## IMMEDIATELY AFTER WINTER VACATION

- Letters to faculty/staff mailboxes
- Set date to meet with bldgs. and grounds re: logistics in parking lot; storing boxes, disposing of boxes at end of night, etc.
- Get kids at SC meeting to:
  - call radio/TV stations
  - address/mail letters to businesses
- contact PTO re: cafeteria "staffing"; donations, etc.
- confirm meeting dates with Outdoor Ed. class
  - 2 – 3 wks. ahead (and make-up meeting). DIST. NOTES TO KIDS WHO MISS 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING
  - PA announcement re: AM meeting in aud (Announce 1 wk. ahead; 1 day ahead)
  - Agenda/copies
  - **MAKE SIGN-IN SHEETS** (based on permission slips) – **Make 3 – 4 copies of list, for attendance at Sleepout; \$\$ turned in, etc.**
  - Confirm agenda for meeting on the AM of the sleepout (part of the SC meeting)

## TWO – THREE WKS. AHEAD

- Call PTO to confirm details; ask them to write thank-yous for items donated to them; give them list (from kids' permission slips) of parents willing to help
- Pledge sheets to fac/staff sleeping out
- Start my pledge sheet
- Arrange for info. on sign in front of school (2 weeks prior to sleepout)

## ONE WEEK AHEAD

- Mon. of sleepout week – letters to fac/staff mailboxes
- Letters to kids who missed both meetings (**copy mailed to parents!!**)
- Collect \$\$ at basketball game/swim meet/wrestling match if home on night of Sleepout
- Blades/duct tape (get purchase order for hardware store)

- Cold weather protection info. to faculty/staff participating
- Double check box situation
- Two large coffeepots, etc. for kitchen (confirm all details with café. staff; have PTO contact them to confirm everything)
- Notify school security
- PA ann. Re: kids not sleeping out must see me **with note from parents**
- Confirm with bldgs. and grounds: box pick-ups set? Boxes to blue dumpster in AM after Sleepout? Trucks parked to minimize traffic?
- Check with office re: acct. transfers so far; add to list of donations; **make note to send to advisors 1 wk. after sleepout** (check again with office first)

### **DURING WINTER VACATION**

1. letter to fac/staff (to be dist. Mon. of sleepout week)  
225 copies for 1<sup>st</sup> day back
  2. letter to class/club advisors (to mailboxes beg. Of 2<sup>nd</sup> week back)  
25 copies for 1<sup>st</sup> day back
  3. Final sleepout info. (dist. @ mtng. AM of sleepout)  
200 copies for 1<sup>st</sup> day back
  4. Note to kids who missed 1<sup>st</sup> meeting (dist. After 1<sup>st</sup> meeting)  
100 copies for 1<sup>st</sup> day back
  5. Note to kids who missed both meetings (dist. After 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting)  
20 copies for 1<sup>st</sup> day back
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6. Letters to Sheriff and State Police  
to school envelopes; mail 1<sup>st</sup> day back
  7. Letter to employee unions  
to interschool mail 1<sup>st</sup> day back
  8. "For immediate release"/media phone #'s/ info. sheets  
5 copies of each page  
Dist. @  
1<sup>st</sup> SC mtng.  
after Xmas  
vacation
  9. Business addresses (2 pages)  
8 copies of pg. 1; 4 copies of pg. 2  
extra copy for me to mark with last year's donors

10. Appliance box phone #'s, etc.

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11. Community Service letter – 150 copies for 1<sup>st</sup> day back

12. Thank you letter to clubs/classes – 15 copies for 1<sup>st</sup> day back

13. Letters to leave when visiting businesses – 50 copies for 1<sup>st</sup> day back to SC officers at 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting after Xmas vacation

**TO DO AT SCHOOL DURING WINTER VACATION (take sleepout files!!!!)**

- Leave copies to be run (as per other sheet)
- Get school envelopes (approx. 100)
- Divide letters to mail to businesses/lists of addresses
- Divide "for immed. release"/radio and TV phone #'s/info sheets
- Appliance box info. to Me
- HIGHLIGHT BUSINESS LISTS FOR EACH KID

dist. @ next  
SC meeting

## **(#5) REFLECTIONS FROM THE STUDENTS OF CLARENCE HIGH SCHOOL**

Ellina Stein, Class of 2008

- About two months before, you must get a permission slip signed or else no sleepout for you!
- For the next two months I ask friends and families for pledges to raise money.
- A couple weeks before there are two “cold weather” meetings to inform students on the proper way to dress for the cold Buffalo winter weather. There is one in the morning and another after school. I normally attend the after school meetings because of other club meetings in the morning and maybe I just want to sleep in a little longer :-D
- To get ready I always get out my normal snowboarding outfit to wear to the sleepout. Each year I wear my Dad’s “moon boots” to show off the good old vintage fashion. I always bring my sleeping bag also. Each year my friends and I come together and we each bring different supplies such as boom boxes, pillows, etc. The first two years we used boxes but for my junior and senior year we used tents.
- **Memories from past sleepouts-**
- Freshman year- although this year is harder for me to remember I do know I was nervous about what to expect. It ended up being a lot of fun; my sister was a senior so I knew a lot of upperclassmen and we were all out there playing football and hanging out.
- Sophomore year- now this is a year I definitely remember. There wasn’t too much snow so we were all out of our tents/boxes hanging out. We had a table of senior boys playing card games. We had our radios out and we were all dancing and singing. We were starting to run out of ideas so we took a couple boxes and made “robots”. Three of us started running around in these huge refrigerator boxes scaring peers and just messing around. We also had frisbees and footballs and some were trying to get the objects into the top of the refrigerator boxes. This was definitely the most exciting sleepout. I still crack up thinking about running around as a robot.
- Junior Year- We were a little more quiet this year, although we had our spurts of energy between our naptime in the tents. I do remember some goofy junior guys playing their boom box trying to rap to songs and wrestling...oh boys. At one point throughout the night, someone took a tarp and laid it down in the middle of the sleepout area. It was really cold and there was a lot of snow so we were able to use the tarp as a type of winter slip-n-slide!! It was so funny to watch people trying to run in huge snow pants and boots and sliding on the tarp. I definitely took part in the fun.
- Senior year- our final sleep out!! Although I can’t say we went out with a bang we definitely went out with some loud snores! We were finally able to place our tent on the top of the sleepout area where all the seniors have set up

in the past years. We did have a burst of energy the first thirty minutes, involving singing Hannah Montana, Backstreet Boys and even some Spice Girls, but it quickly ended with us all snuggling together in our sleeping bags trying to keep warm on the very, very windy night with a little snow/sleet. I stayed up by myself to watch "The Notebook" on a friend's DVD player but fell asleep as soon as it was over. We obviously made some stops in the kitchen to grab some hot cocoa and soup to warm up. It is always fun to step outside and see everyone else that is there. It is amazing how many students come to this chilly event for charity. You would think clean up would take forever at the end of the night, but each student is also so wonderful about cleaning up their area and helping others so it also ends pretty quickly.

- The sleepout is such a huge event at our school and will always be remembered. It has brought so many memories and to be able to be a part of it and to know that I was able to support a charity is very special to me. The sleepout spreads awareness of the wonderful effect of a community or school coming together and how much charity work is appreciated and can help others.
- I love the fact I can look back at high school and say I contributed to raising over a quarter of a million dollars for charity.

Clarence High School Annual Sleepout Journal  
By: Katie Gaskill, Class of 2008

Six Weeks Before:

~I picked up and turned in my permission slip signed by my parents and me, along with pledge sheets for money.

A Month Before:

~ I collected pledges for donations from my family and friends. I have also in the past asked teachers. Different clubs throughout the school also help by donating and running charity events that benefit the Sleepout. I helped to organize and attended them. Some examples are a guitar club concert and our annual "Mr. Clarence" beauty contest. Also, I attended a cold weather meeting to learn about protecting yourself from the cold.

The Week of:

~ I purchased any necessary items I needed to protect myself and keep warm. I located all of my cold weather things from past years and our tent and sleeping bags to stay in for the night. I made plans with my friends to share a tent with and where we were going to set up for the night. The night before, I bought lots of snacks and candy for the night.

The night of:

~ I arrived about a half hour before the sleepout actually started to ensure a good spot and set up my tent with the help of my friends. We created our little community of boxes and tents. This year it was raining and sleeting, so many people had tents because the boxes were getting ruined. We got settled in and set up all our sleeping stuff for the night. Some people got a football and started a game. In past years we've gotten sleds and had races across the parking lot area. But the weather unfortunately kept most of us inside our tents and boxes. But a peek outside would be filled with the chatter of everyone around and of course the sound of various types of music playing from inside the little communities set up. We decided to start playing cards, listened to our own music and talked. At eleven we all had our first check-in. At this time, everyone goes inside and finds Student Council officer with their name on a checklist and signs in with them. Periodically throughout the night we revisited the cafeteria inside filled with pizza, soup, cookies, snacks, drinks and WARMTH! But unfortunately, we are only allowed to stay inside for 5-10 minutes at a time. Eventually around 1-2 AM most everyone went to sleep. The colder the weather, the more appealing sleeping is. In past years when it's been warmer I don't think I slept at all, maybe for an hour. Around 2 AM, we also had our second check-in. This check-in is a surprise to ensure that everyone stays at the sleepout for the entire night. None of the participants know what time it will be. Around 4:15 AM, an announcement woke everyone up and the cleanup process began. We took down our tent and loaded our cars and returned to help pick up any remaining garbage. By around 4:45 AM, as our advisor always says, "the place looked like we'd never been there." Then I drove home and ran as fast as possible into my warm bed. In past years, I've slept in VERY late. But unfortunately this year I had to get up in the morning for a cheerleading competition, but

it was my senior year. I couldn't pass up this tradition; it wouldn't be a complete school year without it.

Afterwards:

~ The only thing left to do was collect my pledge donations and turn in my money to get my community service form.

Shannon King, Class of 2008

Ten minutes before leaving for the Sleepout, I go over my checklist for the night. Five hundred layers of clothes: check. Hat, gloves, socks, and plastic bags to keep my feet dry in my boots: check. Frisbee, munchies, pillow, sleeping bag, and positive outlook on the weather: almost check. My senior year sleepout seems to have the worst weather yet. The ground is covered in slush and the clouds keep changing their mind from rain to snow.

Once I arrive in the designated "sleepout cove," the alley behind the cafeteria, I search for my friends and a dry place to put my stuff. It's always important to get there early for the boxes that are supplied. Unlike my freshman and sophomore years, I was unable to find an appliance box from any local businesses before the Sleepout. Tons of people build cardboard castles and mansions with tarp roofs and duct tape for support. Some people even bring tents to sleep in for the night. It isn't rare to see a few people without anything either, but once the clock hits 1:00 AM, they'll be ready to find someone to bunk with.

The first couple hours of the Sleepout are the most exciting. Everyone is setting their areas up and more people arrive each minute. Once I get my box safely established, it's time to take a stroll through the crowded Sleepout village. I walk from box to box and tent to tent to find people I know and check out their space. It never amazes me what I can find, like a grill with hot dogs on it, or even boxes painted with doors and windows.

After the set-up is over, it's only natural to check out what food we can expect throughout the night. I enter the cafeteria discovering soups, pizza, punch, hot cocoa, and trail mix. It doesn't take long to find a crowd around the soups and spills around the hot chocolate.

Until around the 11 PM attendance check, the alley stays lively with footballs, frisbees, and other games. However, around one in the morning, everything seems to get a little quieter. People begin to get chilly or realize that their socks are wet. Tents and boxes are filled as most people try to get some sleep. But no matter how late it gets, there is always at least one group of people that never stop yelling in the night.

Everyone is awakened by surprise at some point in the night for another attendance check. As I saunter into the cafeteria and view all the tired, red faces, I wonder why I signed up for this. It's freezing, I'm wet, and I have a track meet in less than 4 hours. Of course, it doesn't take long for me to remember the point of the Sleepout. I spent time raising money through pledges to help out good charities, and so did all the other people standing in this cafeteria. We were told at the cold-weather meeting that it would get a little miserable in the middle of the night, but it is for such a good cause, why wouldn't I help out? After signing in for the last time of the night, I walk back out into the cold to find my box. With my attitude renewed, I'm ready to survive the last two hours.

After attempting to sleep through the final hours of my last sleepout, it's time for the cleanup. It would be easy to just leave my box and walk away, but like most of the people at the sleepout, I stay to help clean up the whole alley. Everyone helps tear down tents and boxes while picking up trash. The cleanup usually takes a half an hour and after that, it's time to go home and sleep in a nice warm bed.

I always have a great feeling after the Sleepout knowing I spent my Friday night helping raise money and awareness of the troubles some people face. I can only hope that by the end of the night everyone realizes they made a difference.