

20 years of fighting for the homeless in NYC

written by Lallan Schoenstein
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SLL photo: Lallan Schoenstein

New York — Picture the Homeless celebrated the 20th anniversary of their organization in the Harlem State Office Building on Nov. 25. Leaders of PTH called for a renewed commitment to their work of fighting for the homeless at a time when housing opportunities in the major cities are rapidly deteriorating.

Talks by members of the PTH board recounted personal experiences among a diverse group of all ages, many of whom had gone without housing. They recounted the solidarity of a couple of homeless founders who had recognized the desperate need to organize. Other members told stories of how the support they received enabled them to become active in building PTH. They chose the name “Picture the Homeless” because mainstream culture attempts to drive people who are struggling to survive into oblivion. They want to be seen and heard demanding: “Housing is a human right!”

An exhibit at one side of the crowded hall not only recounted PTH’s history but also explained their strategy on a variety of issues such as police abuse and the large number of vacant properties in New York City that the city could allow people to rehabilitate and live in.

PTH wages a battle for the homeless to speak in their own name and to be able to play a role in determining a solution to the myriad problems they suffer. Echoing the grim experience of being undermined by the administrators of social services, who are supposed to serve them, they repeated, “If you are not at the table, you’ll be on the menu.”

Picture the Homeless asks for help in strengthening the voices of those without housing.

