



SWOPE HEALTH SERVICESSM

Member Swope Community Enterprises

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Kansas City's Biggest Indoor Jazz & Blues Show **Benefits KC Homeless Program** **Show Moves to Midland and Features Special Guest Ronnie Laws**

Kansas City, MO--The biggest indoor jazz and blues show in Kansas City, **Jazz Outreach**, celebrates its 12th anniversary at a new location, **The Midland Theater, 1228 Main Street, March 22, 3-9 pm.**

Proceeds for this year's event will benefit Swope Health Services' **Healthcare for the Homeless** Outreach program, providing health and dental, substance abuse services, social services and mental health services to the city's homeless population, estimated to be approximately 15,000. "Our staff travels to shelters, drop in centers and treatment centers, taking aggressive and innovative steps to find those who need us," said Doilnella Williams, program manager. "Through this program, unique to the city and rare even nationally, we bring hope to the people most in need, our street outreach worker engages with individuals living on the streets and gives them a chance to re-enter society's mainstream," she added. **(homeless client Deborah Washington's story and photo appended)**

For Jazz Outreach 2009 tickets and information call (816) 922-7606 or visit www.swopehealth.org.

More than 40 of Kansas City's finest jazz performers will donate their time and talent in support of Swope Health Services' Healthcare for the Homeless Program. This year's line-up features Everette DeVan, Millie Edwards, Tim Whitmer, Max Groove, Bobby Watson's UMKC Quartet, Momma Ray, Horace Washington, The Wild Women, Joe Cartwright, Gerald Dunn, Lori Tucker and Tom "Trashmouth" Baker, to name but a few.

This year's event features a guest appearance by **Ronnie Laws**, whose body of work includes *Friends and Strangers*, *In the Groove*, and his first release, *Pressure Sensitive*, which became an instant jazz-funk classic. Throughout his three-decade long career in the music industry, Ronnie has worked with a variety of celebrated artists including Earth, Wind & Fire, Kenny Rogers and Ramsey Lewis.

Admission is \$60 for a VIP ticket, which includes a buffet and preferred seating. General admission tickets are \$30 per person.

Jazz Outreach is made possible in part from a grant by the Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund, City of Kansas City, Missouri. Partners: The Midland by AMC and the Power and Light District.

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Swope Health Services seeks to help develop self-empowered, healthy people in healthy communities by providing primary health care, outreach and behavioral health services throughout the Kansas City area. Annually, more than 40,000 patients are served through eight clinic and residential treatment locations. More than 90 percent of patients live below the poverty level.

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Deborah Washington

Former Homeless Client

I grew up here in Kansas City with five other brothers and sisters. I went to grade school at Horace Mann and I was in my freshman year of high school when all the lights went out of my life.

One night that year, I was raped by my uncle, and from that abuse I became pregnant with twins. My mother wouldn't believe me. She wouldn't believe that her brother was the father. The babies died 5 months after they were born.

After that, I drifted to the streets and soon I dedicated my life to getting high. Because in that state, I felt no pain; at least not until the next day, when I would do whatever it took to get high again.

Along the way, I had two more children, but I was never able to care for them and gave them up to family members.

I drifted this way for years, until by the grace of God I was guided to Swope. The counselors knew what I was feeling...or not feeling. They understood what I'd been through. And I could talk to any of them. They were all in my corner.

Through their strength, knowledge and support, they helped me to face what I had become and begin the process of overcoming my addictions. But my counselors made it clear all along that my recovery would not be handed to me on a silver platter. I would have to do the footwork, attend my group and individual therapies, participate and work hard.

With their help, I've learned that I can do anything that I put my mind to. They've given me the tools to calm myself, be in the moment and stop destructive behaviors before they take root in me.

I have now been clean for a year and I have a place of my own since last February. I'm taking care of myself and I'm building relationships with my children and grandchildren. The reality is that I am now 50 years old with little education, but I'm pursuing the jobs that I can do – warehouse and assembly work.

And I take the time to give back, volunteering as a big sister and guiding young girls away from the wasted life that had claimed me for so long. They call me "Big Mama" and when I told them I would be speaking to you tonight, they said, "Oh, Mama, we are so proud of you! You see! Your time has come to shine!"

For as long as I live, I will be grateful to the Outreach counselors at Swope.