

Homeless kid talks to city council

LOS ANGELES, CA — Segura Williams, 13, doesn't live in a house. He lives in a tent in a Los Angeles campground for homeless people. He lives there with his mother and nine brothers and sisters.

Segura was fed up with the campground and wanted to make people aware of the 600 people living there, which included 75 children. He decided to take his case to the Los Angeles City Council.

"We need so much help. The problem is not going to go away unless we do something about it," he told a reporter. "Us kids can make a difference. We want to help our families get out of here and into permanent houses."

After Segura spoke to the city council his fourth time, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley said he would visit the camp and talk with Segura and other kids living there.

Segura has organized a group of kids at the camp called "Kids Helping Each Other." They collect clothing, food and money. He and his friends have also organized a daily breakfast at the camp.

Fire fighters included kids from Oregon

When lightning bolts set off fires in several Western states, fire fighters rushed to the rescue. They included National Guard troops, soldiers, Forest Service rangers and ... a group of kids from Oregon.

The kids are members of Civil Air Patrol, a national branch of the U.S. Air Force open to girls and boys between 13 and 20 years of age. Members earn rank, wear Air Force-style uniforms and take part in a number of special activities.

The Civil Air Patrol has three main missions: emergency services, aerospace education and a cadet program to build leaders in aerospace.

During the forest fires, the cadets were excused from school and sent to a base camp in southern Oregon. They didn't actually fight the fires but helped out around the camp. Some took garbage detail. Others directed traffic or kept track of the time each fire fighter spent on the job.

How did the cadets feel about their work? "Other than being smoky and dirty, I thought it was kind of fun," said Richard Phaneuf, 14. "We got to deal with new people, spread the word about Civil Air Patrol and stay up at odd hours."

Steve Purdam, 14, had a somewhat different view. "There's not much excitement in trash," he admitted. "But the night shifts did keep us on our toes."

Members of the Aurora Squadron all agreed their experience was worthwhile. "I thought that it was very rewarding because it gave us hands-on practice," said Alex Schoening, 14.

"Maybe we'll get to help in more

emergencies in the future," added Austin Roberts, 13.

The Civil Air Patrol cadets meet once a week when they're not out on emergency

service missions. Most of the kids plan a career in the military, but some join just for fun. Said Chris Kellogg, 14, "I like to call it advanced Boy or Girl Scouts."



Austin Roberts helps set up his tent. Austin was one of several cadets working at a fire base camp in southern Oregon.

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Matthew Murphy proved how fast he can piece a puzzle together at the National Jigsaw Championships in Athens, Ohio.

ATHENS, OH — Newspaper and television reporters crowded around a table last summer watching Matthew Murphy, 12. But Matt's concentration never left the table. He placed puzzle pieces together at a rate of twelve per minute. Finally he completed the puzzle, stepped back and yelled "Jigsaw!"

That is how Matt from Union, Ohio, became the first-ever junior champion at the American Publishing National Jigsaw Puzzle Championships. He finished a 125-piece puzzle in 15 minutes and 10 seconds.

"I thought I'd win even before the tournament started," Matt said. One reason for his confidence was practice. Matt said he prepared for the contest by completing

about eighty 500-piece puzzles. Attending the last two puzzle championships didn't hurt, either. Matt's mother has competed in the adults' category. "She and I have been doing puzzles together in the doubles competition," he said.

Matt was one of over 50 kids aged 12 and younger who tried to win the \$100 top prize. He was quick to say what he'd do with the prize money when he got home. "I'm going to buy my own television set." Then, he says, he'll spend some time with his two other favorite activities — soccer and miniature golf.

The new junior category was very successful. Officials say they may make it even bigger next year, adding more prizes and events.

Volunteer reaches out

SOUTH HOLLAND, IL — Maggie Ponce, a high school senior, traveled to Central America last summer — not to vacation but to work.

"I went with an organization called Missions Outreach, Inc.," Maggie said. Missions Outreach sends teams of high school and college students to do volunteer work in different parts of the world during the summer.

Maggie said she went through a 10-day training session before leaving for Central America. During training she learned how to live without many every-

day things, such as home-cooked meals and washing machines. She also learned some basic building skills.

Once she arrived in Belize, Maggie's group worked on building an addition to a dormitory bathroom at the local high school.

This was Maggie's second trip to Central America. Last year she went to Guatemala where she helped build a meal hall. Why did she join Missions Outreach? "To help other people," she explained. "Besides, it's fun."

It's the law

Before kids in Maple Ridge, Michigan, can buy a soft drink or ice cream soda, they must have a written permission slip from their moms.

There's a law in Marion, South Carolina, that makes it illegal for kids to fall asleep in the barber's chair while getting a haircut.

Kids cannot walk down any public street in Beckley, West Virginia, with their shoe laces untied. It is against the law.