

HALO TRIP 2009



East St. Louis

“The Forgotten City”

MEET HALO

- **Who are we?**
 - King Hall Students committed to providing legal aid to those in need.
- **What do we do?**
 - Provide volunteer opportunities throughout the year.
 - Fundraise to take an annual spring break trip.
- **How can you get involved?**
 - students.law.ucdavis.edu/halo
 - Sign up to be on our listserv
 - DONATE!
 - Start attending HALO meetings

THIS YEAR'S TRIP

- East St. Louis, Illinois
- Why did we choose it?
 - Leaving the Hurricane Zone
 - Finding the greatest unmet need



EAST ST. LOUIS STATS

- Total population (2006) = 29,448
(down more than 20% in 20 years)
- 97.7% black
- 66.3% of people over 25 are high school educated
- Per capita income = \$11,169
- Average family income = \$21,324
- Nearly 11% unemployment in 2008

ST. LOUISIS ≠ EAST ST. LOUIS

- What's the difference?
- Two sides of the Mississippi – stark differences



MISSOURI



ILLINOIS

ST. LOUIS ≠ EAST ST. LOUIS

- **Excellent schools**, public parks and museums.
- Major **sports teams** and stadiums for MLB, NHL and NFL.
- Conventions centers, hotels, **law firms**, accounting firms, Anheuser Busch.



- Skyrocketing **homelessness** and **crime**.
- A rarely used racing track.
- Strip clubs, chemical companies and **crumbling infrastructure**.

EAST ST. LOUIS HISTORY

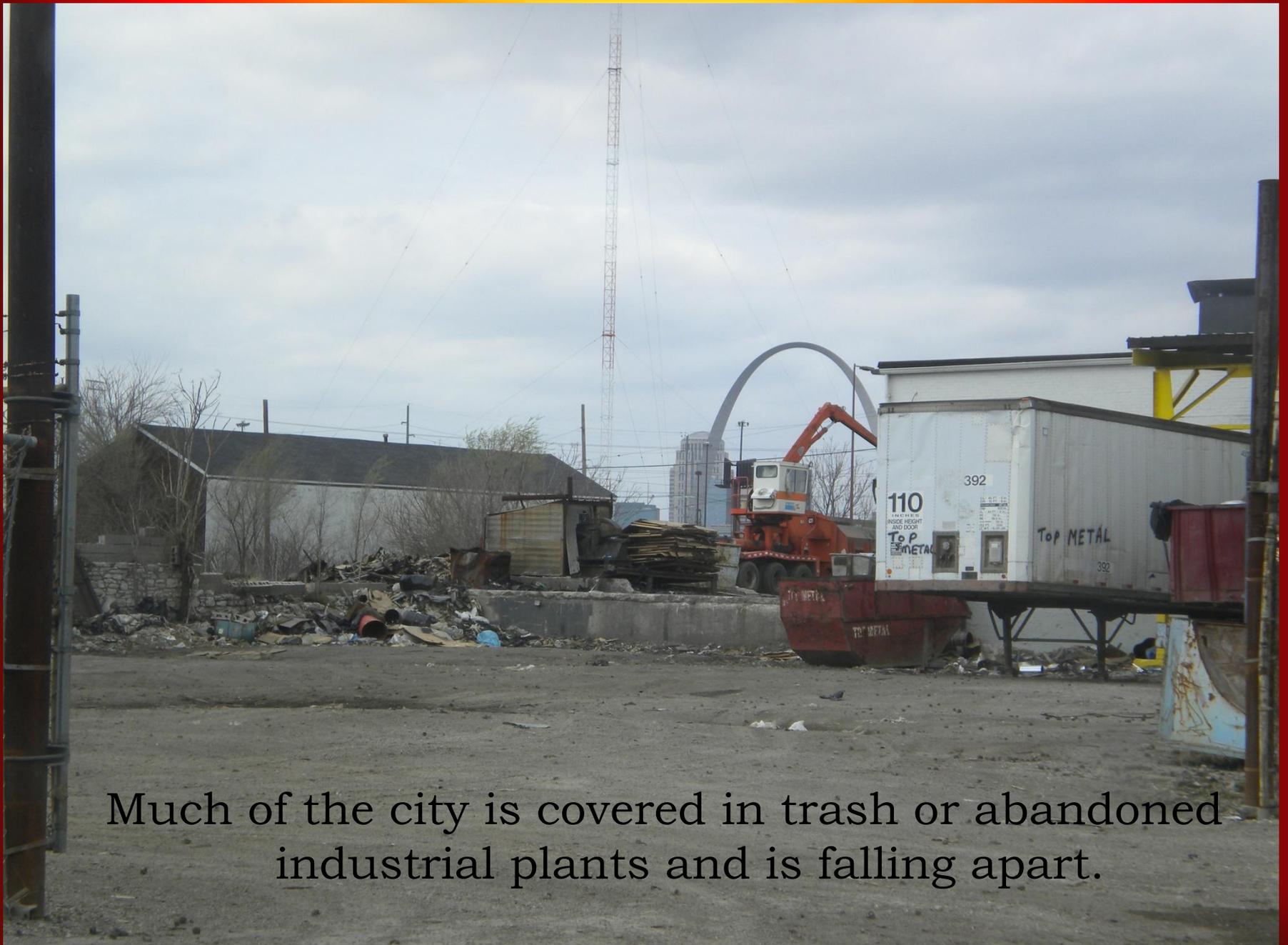
- East St. Louis was once the country's hub for both the **railroad** and **meatpacking** industries.
- **Race Riots of 1917**
- Around the late 1960s, the city fell to corruption and has declined steadily since.



Former meat packing plant still standing vacant and decomposing after being closed nearly half a century.

CURRENT CONDITIONS IN EAST ST. LOUIS

- The city is truly in a state of disrepair.
 - The roads are barely navigable
 - Everything is covered in garbage.
 - Most of the traffic lights aren't in working order.
 - Most of the houses are falling apart and condemned.
 - Many large abandoned, asbestos ridden buildings remain standing.



Much of the city is covered in trash or abandoned industrial plants and is falling apart.

A photograph of a dilapidated concrete building with a skeletal frame, surrounded by overgrown vegetation and debris. A large white tarp is in the foreground.

Though many of
the buildings
are
condemned,
they are still
heavily
inhabited.

Garbage EVERYWHERE.



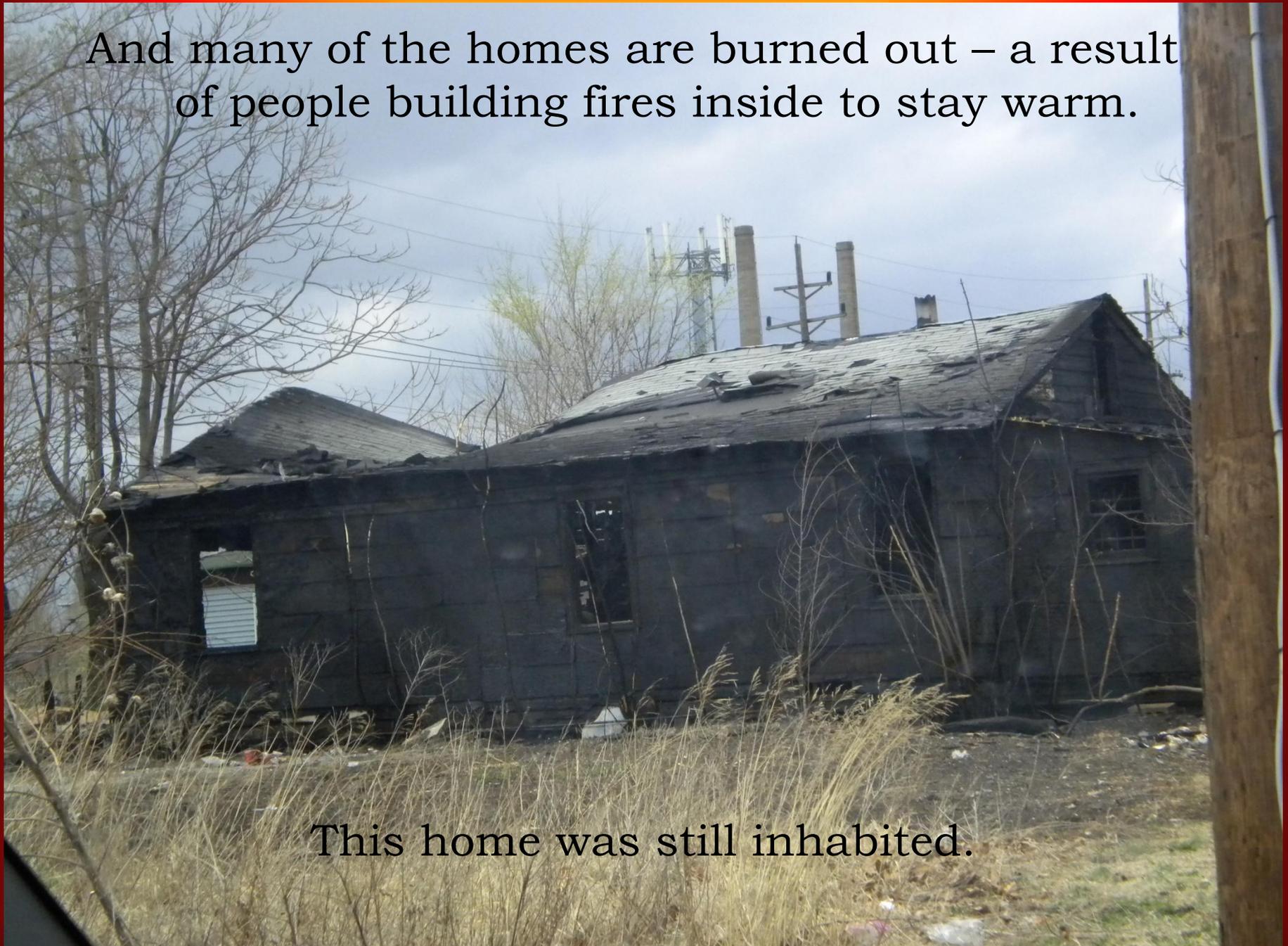




It seems that more houses than not are condemned and falling apart.

And many of the homes are burned out – a result of people building fires inside to stay warm.

This home was still inhabited.





The only thriving businesses in downtown are
these “night clubs.”
They are hotbeds for illegal activity.



The once thriving business district is now abandoned.



“The Stroll.” Prostitution is rampant throughout the city.

This picture was taken in the early afternoon.

LEGAL ISSUES FACING EAST ST. LOUIS

- **Political Corruption**
 - Swampdog Bones
 - Beautiful homes rising out of the rubble
- **HUD Take Over**
 - Housing fraud and unfair lending
 - Lake of Sewage
- **School District Takeover**
 - Only 10% of students meet state standards
 - District #189 – expensive cars and underperformance
- **HUGE individual legal need and lack of legal services**
 - Only 20% of the city's legal needs are met.
 - Even we had trouble finding legal service providers to volunteer for.

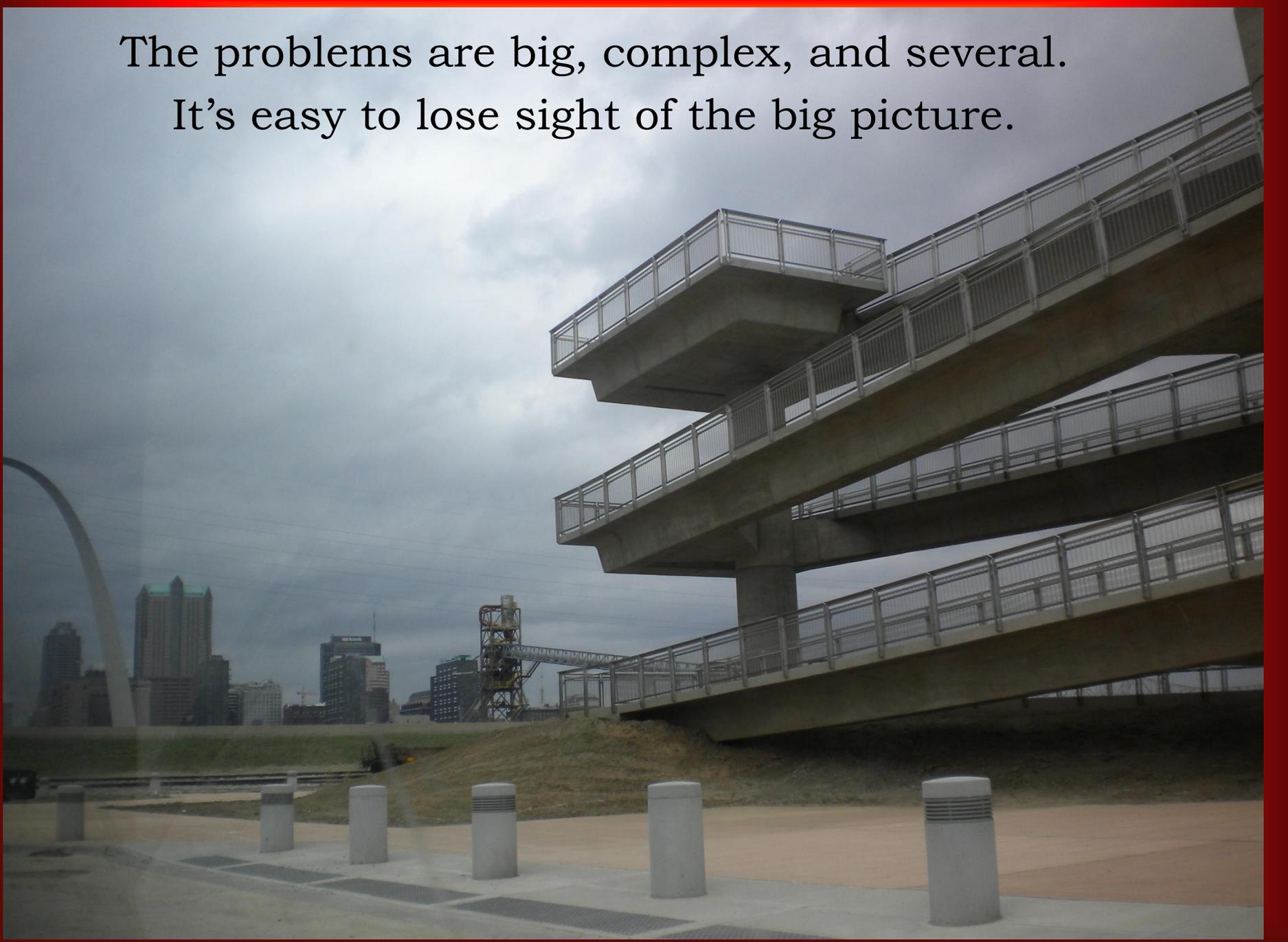
SCHOOLS IN TROUBLE



THE FORGOTTEN CITY

- The #1 reason helping or even learning about East St. Louis is **important** is because *nobody else is*.
- Why has East St. Louis fallen into the shadow of surrounding cities and become forgotten?
 - Different side of the river, different state
 - No good part of town
 - It is dangerous.
 - Things have gotten so bad, it seems beyond help.

The problems are big, complex, and several.
It's easy to lose sight of the big picture.



LAND OF LINCOLN LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

Do you have a legal
problem?

Need legal assistance?

Call Land of Lincoln
Legal Assistance Foundation

Legal Advice & Referral Center
Attorney Sheila Burton
398-0958 x 216

LAND OF LINCOLN LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

- is a Non-profit Corporation serving 65 counties in central and southern Illinois.
- Provides *free civil legal services* to low-income people and senior citizens.
- **LOL's Mission:** to pursue civil justice for low-income people through representation and education.
- **LOL's Goals:**
 - to promote economic security, adequate shelter and health care;
 - to alleviate domestic violence and improve family stability; and
 - to advance the interests of vulnerable populations.

HALO AT LOL

- - 4 Halo members volunteered at the East St. Louis LOL office, Monday through Thursday.
- Supervising attorneys
- Tour of East St. Louis
- Projects included
 - Offsets
 - Educational Advocacy
 - Punitive Damages
 - Foreclosure Brochure

PROJECT 1 – OFFSETS

- An offset is when the government withholds someone's tax refund, benefits, or public salary to collect a debt that person owes the government.
- Offsets are coordinated by the national Treasury Offset Program (TOP) and by state programs, such as the Illinois Comptroller's Offset System.

OFFSETS AND EAST ST. LOUIS

- Many ESL residents depend on their tax refunds, benefits, or public salaries to get by. If these are cut or withheld, they can have trouble supporting themselves.
- As the state and federal governments' own debts increase, they are getting more aggressive in collecting debts to them. An increasing number of people have come to LoL for help fighting offsets.
- Offsetting is different from other types of debt collection LoL is more used to. They asked me to prepare a fact sheet on the programs for them.

PROJECT 2 – EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY

- Advocate for the educational rights of children
- Empower parents and teachers
- Help children reach their highest social and academic potential
- Serve children in East St. Louis School District #189

MORE ON EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY

- In Practice
 - Each registered child is assigned an advocate
 - **Child Advocates**
 - **monitor** academic and social **progress**
 - **maintain** contact and facilitate positive **relationships with children, parents, and teachers**
 - Child Advocates **make sure children's educational needs are addressed** and they receive the support they not only deserve, but are **guaranteed by law**
 - **Parents also receive support, assistance, and referrals** towards supporting their child's academic achievement

MORE ON EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY

- Important Federal Educational Statutes (especially related to Special Education)
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 - No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)
 - Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
 - Pupil Privacy Rights Amendment (PPRA)
 - Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- My Experience
 - Special Education-- IEPs

PROJECT 3 – PUNITIVE DAMAGES

- Researched punitive damages in IL
- The Story:
 - Landlord rented out property which was "condemned for occupancy" to our client, an elderly man, with 3rd grade education and surviving on welfare.
 - He made repairs on his own with his own salary.
 - Ultimately, damages would have had an insignificant impact on landlord so we wanted to sue landlord for punitive damages to prevent him from future misconduct.



PROJECT 4 – FORECLOSURE BROCHURES

- Foreclosure is obviously a big problem nationwide with the current economic crisis.
- I created brochures to be distributed so people know their rights and understand the procedure.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL THRIFT STORE/SOUP KITCHEN

- Provides hot meals a few days per week and affordable clothing
- We served food, interacted with residents, and cleaned and organized for the thrift store.
- Here we met Jerry who taught us an important lesson about serving others
– Choose three words.



COMPASSION.



FORGIVENESS.



EMPATHY.

TEACHING STREET LAW

- Washington University in St. Louis runs a Race, Poverty, and Education Program.
- In it law students go into local schools to teach and mentor, and local students are shown that law school is a possibility.
- This is so important in a community where this is such a large unmet legal need.

TEACHING STREET LAW

- Teaching Intentional Torts and the basics of law school at Northwest Academy
- Teaching Domestic Violence at Soldan High School





MORE FUN WITH KIDS

- We volunteered at an afterschool program in an East St. Louis Housing Project.
- After playing with the kids, we listened in as they were addressed by some local police officers.
- The questions they asked and the topics that came up were enlightening.







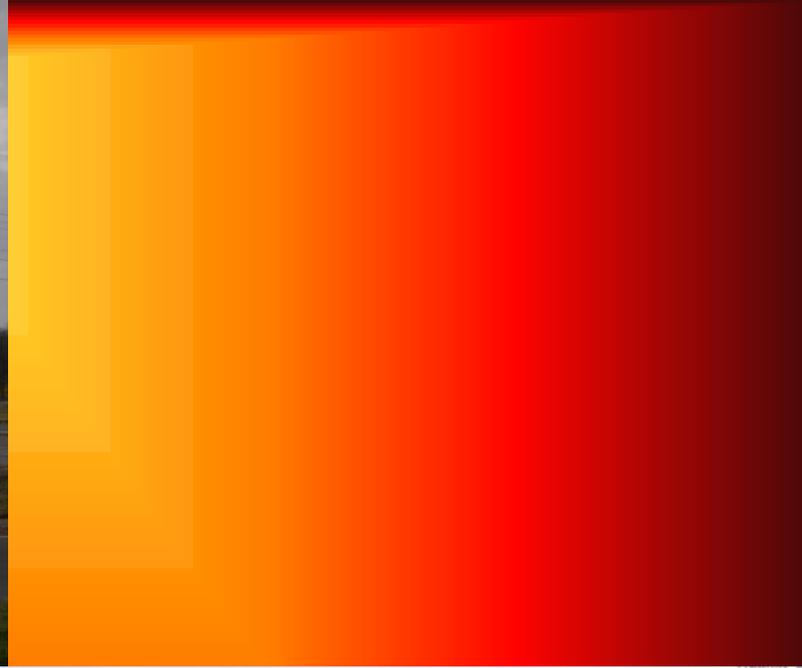
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL ST. LOUIS

- Through an attorney at this organization we had the opportunity to work on some more legal projects.
- Commercial Lease Project
- What to do with a home that has become unlivable?

CONTINUUM OF CARE — PAULYNHOUSE

- PaulynHouse provides a variety of services to the homeless in East St. Louis.
- We worked with Paulyn herself to make lunches and distribute them throughout the city.
- Paulyn's stories and the many people we met taught us a great deal about the condition of East St. Louis.





The view from Paulyn
House –
a liquor store and a row
of drug houses.





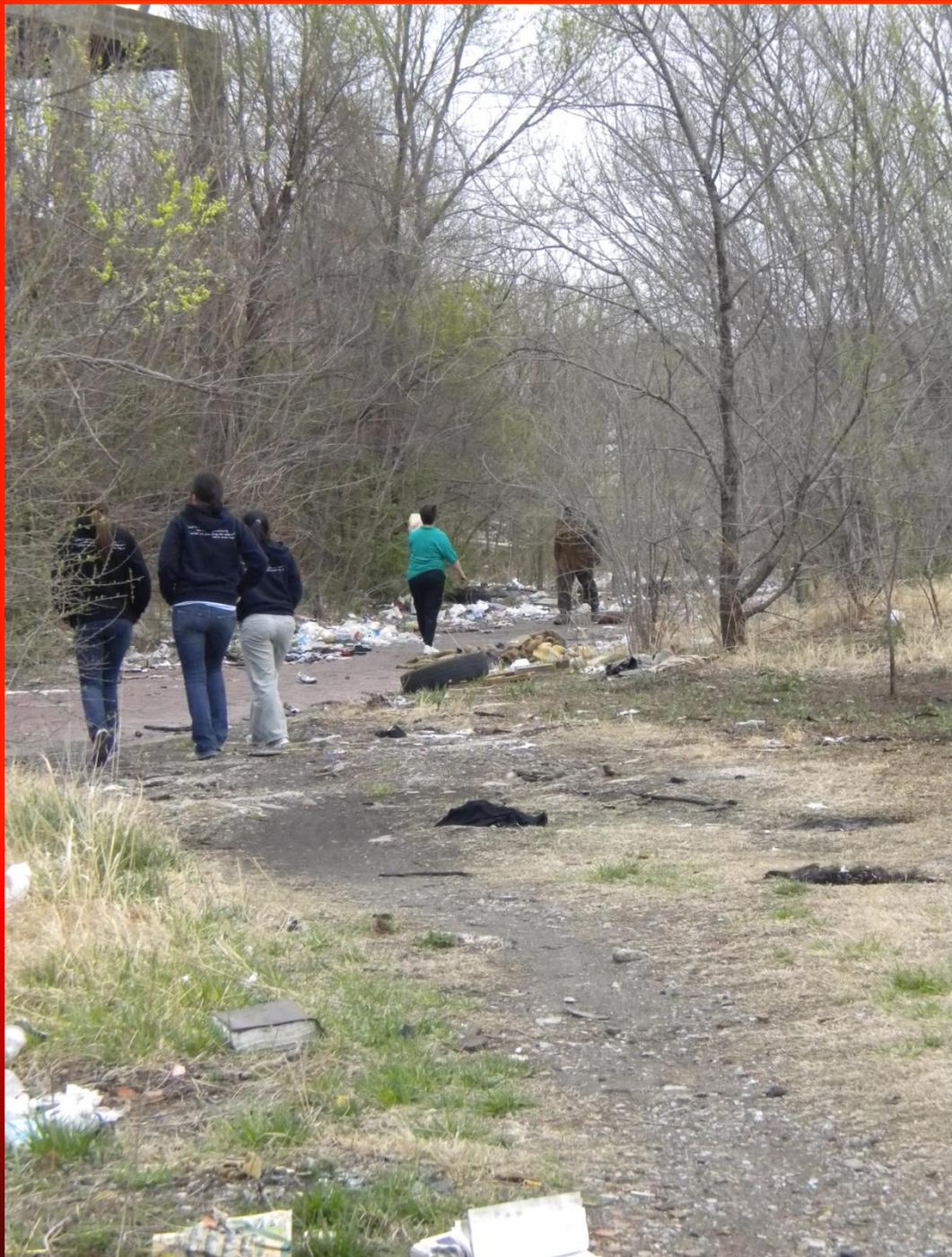
EAST SIL

Heineken

Colt 45

Colt 45

WIDER IS SMOOTHER
KOOL







THANK YOU

- Our trip wouldn't be possible without the generous support of our many donors.

Dean's Office, UC Davis School of Law

**King Hall Law Student Association, UC Davis School
of Law**

King Hall Annual Fund

Grace and Peace Winter Shelter, St. Louis, MO

THANK YOU

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QUESTIONS??