

Long days, short pay for the working poor

March 30, 2012

SAN ANTONIO—Josie rises early to catch a 5:30 a.m. bus to the [San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind](#), where she has worked five days a week ever since she became visually impaired several years ago.

She returns home each evening about 6 p.m., spending the evening caring for her disabled husband.

Workers put together mechanical pencils and pens at the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind.

On weekends, she works at a part-time job at a fast-food chicken restaurant.

When Jeremy Everett, director of the Texas Hunger Initiative, thinks about the working poor, he visualizes Josie.

"She was our neighbor when we lived on the west side of San Antonio," Everett said. "She lived in extreme poverty, in the back side of a 1,000-square-foot house that had been divided into a duplex."

In spite of her meager lifestyle, she and her husband insisted on treating Everett and his family to a meal on holidays and other special occasions when they couldn't be with their own relatives who lived away.

"She reminds me of the story of the widow's mite," he said. "Just as generous as they come."

—*Ken Camp, managing editor*