

# Exhibit depicts country's homeless

A dramatic exhibit documenting the pain, frustration and despair of homelessness begins Saturday in the South Carolina State Museum's Art Gallery.

"Homeless in America: A Photographic Project," a joint effort of the National Mental Health Association (NMHA) and Families for the Homeless, depicts homelessness in the 1980s, including mothers and children, whole families, veterans, runaways, evicted tenants, drug addicts and the mentally ill.

"This is a very important show," says Lise Swensson, curator of art for the museum. "Not only are the photographs by some of the country's best known documentary photographers, Mary Ellen Mark, Eli Reed, Eugene Richards, William Pierce and Stephen Shames, among others, but it is really the first time since the New Deal photographers of the Great Depression that the problem of major poverty in this country has been addressed in this way."

"About one-third of the homeless in America have serious mental illnesses," adds Carol Garvin, NMHA president and an Aiken resident.

"With more than 600 affiliates nationwide, the NMHA is working to empower these people through a number of self-help groups, centers and public education programs, among other projects."

Thirty-two noted photographers contributed to the 70 black and white photographic portraits which make up this candid, often troubling exhibition. It premiered to acclaim in March 1988 at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

The exhibit will include a 96-page book and a 12-minute video designed to sensitize the American public to the realities of homelessness, says Sandra Connelly of the Mental Health Association in S.C.

"And a sad reality is that families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population."

"Even though the photographers are not South Carolinians and the photographs were not taken in our state, this national show depicts an American tragedy that is taking place daily all over this country," adds Swensson.

"The same situations recorded in



**This photograph by Mark Ellen Mark is titled "Cathleen Hamm and son Michael." Taken in 1987 in Venice, Calif., it is one of many sobering images in a new exhibit at the State Museum, "Homeless in America: A Photographic Project."**

this exhibit can be seen anywhere in South Carolina. We hope this show will alert South Carolinians to this problem in our state and nation. The exhibit also offers an opportunity for viewing strikingly powerful images created by some of this country's finest photojournalists."

"Homeless in America" received the coveted Leica Medal of Excellence Award for photojournalists in early 1989 in recognition of its exceptional photographic achievement. The exhibit will remain at the State Museum through Oct. 20.

Local funding for this extraordinary exhibit is being provided by SCANA Corporation and the Junior League of Columbia in cooperation with the Mental Health Association

in South Carolina.

For this special show, the Junior League will provide the services of its members to act as special docents to help museum visitors better understand the problem of homelessness in South Carolina.

Principle funding was provided by Triangle Industries Inc. with additional grants from Eastman Kodak Company, the Public Welfare Foundation, and the Federal National Mortgage Association Foundation (Fannie Mae). The traveling exhibit was organized by Lisa Cremin & Associates of New York.

For additional information on "Homeless in America," contact the Mental Health Association