**The Pursuit of Happyness**:

*Understanding Homelessness from the Mass Media Perspective*

1. What details about homelessness are similar to the homeless setting in your community or in various places you have been? What are those similarities and what are the differences?

2. Subconscious motives are often the most powerful causes of human behavior. How does Chris (main character) act on motives of which he is not aware? Describe any unconscious motives of Chris and explain how these motives affect his actions.

3. Stories can be persuasive. What particular values (important ideas) or principles does the movie attempt to persuade viewers to accept that the writers intended to promote about homelessness?

4. There is something not quite realistic about Chris’ experience with homelessness. What is it?

5. Mr. Gardner deserves praise for his decision to keep his son with him. However, the story told by the movie avoids dealing with the ethics of the decision to try to become wealthy as fast as he could even though it meant subjecting himself and his son to the very real risks involved in being homeless. Little Chris was definitely had a strong influence on his father's decision. What does his father's decision to become homeless look like from Little Chris' point of view?

7. One critic of this movie said that "The Pursuit of Happyness" and films like it " . . . soften the guilt of the privileged . . . and send the message that we who have 'made it' into the middle and upper classes are there simply because of our higher integrity and intelligence. It is far more flattering to attribute our wealth to superior character and abilities, . . . than to factor in inequitable tax codes, unequal access to health care, discriminatory education, slave-wages, international trade agreements and inheritance laws that protect privileged races and classes” (The Stories We Tell” by Jeremy V. Cruz, America, April 30, 2007).

Do you agree or disagree? Explain your reasons.