



THE GREENSBORO VOICE

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 11

PRINTING NEWS THAT DOESN'T FIT

HOLIDAY ISSUE

Buy a tree, save a life at Delancey Street

By Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater



“I’ve come here for as many years as I can remember,” one customer said. “These trees are the freshest in town and they help the residents of Delancey Street.”

If the traffic in the gravel lot on Church Street near Cornwalis is any indication, many Greensboro residents agree that this is the place to purchase your tree, wreath, miniature live evergreen or even a wooden reindeer made from the discarded trunks of the Christmas trees. Tree prices range from \$30 to \$125 and are always cut and placed on the top of your car to transport home.

Trees that remain by Dec. 24 and 25 are donated but until then, this is a busy place where you know exactly what happens to

your money. Delancey Street is a self-sustaining recovery program for substance abusers, ex-convicts and people experiencing homelessness. The organization is recognized nationwide and there is much fellowship among the workers who are part of the Delancey Street tree lot since they live together like a large family with no staff and no outside funding. The Delancey Street moving company and Christmas tree sales help support the residents who learn from one another. Their motto is: honesty, integrity and trust. The tree you buy there will do more than serve as a holiday decoration, it will help sustain broken lives.

For more information on the Christmas tree program, call Delancey Street at 336-379-8477.

Life working the streets: A lady’s work is never done

By Raven Hilferty and Crystal Sutton

Russian roulette can be a dangerous game to play. I have never played it with a gun, but I have played it with my life. When I was working the street, every night was like playing Russian roulette. Some clients are empty chambers that are harmless, while another can be the bullet that kills you. I witnessed the aftermath of two friends, Saige and Pepper, who were killed by clients. I do not know the details of what happened, but I know they are dead, forgotten and discarded like trash. Working the streets is an occupational hazard. There is no protection and clients can beat, rape or rob a person working the street. We are afraid to call the police because we will be arrested. So, we remain silent and continue working even though we are aware of the dangers. Some might ask, “Why do we work the streets? Doesn’t everyone have options?”

Not everyone has options. The money is good, the money is easy and the money is tax free. The majority of us working the streets do not have the job skills or education to finance the basic necessities of life. That is our main reason for working the streets. We feel that we do not have many options. Who will help us? Our profession is so taboo that many people are unaware that men and women work the streets. However, this is a reality that not many people want to acknowledge and that is why I want to share my story.

My name is Red and this is my story of how I became a prostitute. It started with a boy. I was 17 years old, new to Greensboro and a runaway from Reno, Nev. I went to a party one night and met D, who was then 20 years old. I was lonely and nobody made me feel the way he made me feel. For the first time in my life, I felt secure and I felt safe.

I moved in with D. We started having money problems and D became violent. One night, D told me, “If you love me, you’ll put this red dress on and put these red shoes on and you’ll go make some money so we can live the way you want to live and get the things you want to get.” His meaning was clear: I should become a prostitute for him. This idea did not sound good to me, but he made it seem that this would show him that I really liked him.

My first night of on-the-job training, I was sent out with another woman named Lauren, who worked for D’s father. D’s father was also a pimp and taught D everything he knew about the business. After finding a customer in a concert parking lot, Lauren came home with \$150 and got in the bathtub.

“I just sat there,” she said. “You feel really nasty and disgusted with yourself.” Lauren cured her emptiness with marijuana.

D explained the rules to me. Rule #1: I would work every night except Sunday and Wednesday. Rule #2: He gave me a quota of \$500 per night, one way or another. When I came home with money, he was affectionate. If not, he was violent. Sometimes when I could not take any more of his abuse, I said that I wanted to leave. He always replied, “You think you’re going to leave?” and he threatened to take my life with a gun. At that point, he put his gun to my head. I continued to work and the abuse remained. I did not have anywhere to go so I stayed. I worked the most profitable streets and the downtown Greensboro strip.

For two years, I endured abuse by D’s hand and was working the streets. I had witnessed the aftermath of violence with the deaths of Saige and Pepper. I did not see a way out. Soon after, we were stopped by police and I shoved a quarter pound of D’s marijuana into my purse to protect him. I was sent to detention for 30 days. That year I spent Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s locked up. When I was released in January, I went back to D and soon I was pregnant with his child. By April, we needed money for the baby and I was sent back out to work the streets. Shortly after my return to work, I was arrested. Once I got caught, I knew it was time to quit the life that I was accustomed to for three years. I was tired of continuously lying. I had a baby to take care of and I walked away from D and my life working the streets.

My story is only one of the many of women working the streets. I want people to know that working the streets is a reality to some people. This is one truth facing homeless men and women in our community.

Rodney Marshall overcomes addiction to become a chef

By Majik Pennix



Marshall and daughter Chelsea

In 1999 Rodney Marshall moved from High Point, N.C., to northern New Jersey to live with his grandparents. While he was there, he met a woman and spent Thanksgiving dinner with her. Soon after, the two deepened their relationship and moved in together. The woman accused him of being intimate with someone else and decided to put him out on the street where Rodney became homeless. He called the police for transportation, not knowing what else to do. The police gave him a ride to Atlantic City's Salvation Army homeless shelter where he stayed for about three weeks. Rodney became a Christmas bellringer.

Then he met another woman who later became the mother of his children. She was addicted to heroin. This woman and Rodney slept in casino parking lots and ate at food kitchens. While at a rest area they met a mutual friend and were able to stay at her apartment. This friend also sold heroin and Rodney became a victim of bad habits in order to supply himself with his drug of choice. This situation eventually left him homeless again but not free of his drug habit. Rodney helped a friend sell furniture and other valuable items to accommodate his addiction and to afford a place to sleep. Rodney then panicked until he secured a stable job in 2000.

Rodney became a deacon in a church where the pastor gave him a place to live and the start of a new life. After four months, Rodney left the pastor's home because his girlfriend and the pastor had an affair. This shocked him and once again Rodney had to find shelter. He was back on the streets and he returned to drugs. Again he somehow found a place to stay and discovered that a former girlfriend was pregnant. The mother of the unborn child came to live with Rodney. However, the couple's apartment caught

on fire after a drug binge and they both became homeless. Rodney became more and more addicted to crack cocaine and the mother of his future child left him because of his drug use.

Rodney was determined to stop using drugs in order to support his child. When the baby was born, he traveled back and forth between Atlantic City and Brooklyn to see his child. Then he took his family to High Point to live with Rodney's parents. The baby was soon ordered by the state to live with Rodney's parents due to abuse from the child's mother. Since Rodney was still not prepared to take care of his child, he left High Point for Greensboro where he checked into Weaver House for 30 days. Rodney knew in his heart that he had to change in order to become a better father to his child as well as to become closer to the Lord.

In 2007 Rodney sought treatment for his addiction. He did research on drug addiction and finally let go of the drugs and homelessness as he became closer to God. He was the single father of two other children from previous relationships. A family housing agency in Greensboro sheltered both Rodney and his children until an apartment became available.

Rodney married a nurse and became a member of the local church. He is the proud executive chef and owner of Rodney's Catering and was a special guest with Mike and Mona Woods on the Black Television Network. He catered a show called, "Whatcha Cooking?" His catering business is successful and is gaining attention. He thanks God for rescuing him from the rollercoaster of his horrible addiction and homelessness. Those interested in his cooking skills can contact him via e-mail at r_marshallrjc@yahoo.com.

I Can't

By Joy Schultz

I can't hold on, I can't help myself.
I can't stop this pain or take away this fear.
I can't live this way anymore. I need to feel God's love in my life.
I can't get past this point. I need your help Lord.
I can't get joy out of living this way.
Please show me some kindness Lord.
I can't love what I have become
Trust me when I say help me Lord.
I can't get peace unless I have you in my life.
I can't desire the world and You Lord so I can't stand the pain.
I need you to help me get past this pain.
I need you to work a miracle so that I can praise your name and be at peace with my life.
I need God. I can't offer anything else but a persecuted body.
I call on the Lord to save me because
I can't.

I Can

By Joy Schultz

I can help, I can help you!
Please let me in I can help heal you.
I can ease this pain: I can take away all that fear.
I can show my abundant grace,
I can show you my love.
I can show how giving I am.
I can give you joy and show you kindness.
I can love, and hope you trust me.
I can give you all the peace you need.
I can give you a new desire to serve Me.
I can't stand to see you in any pain.
Just ask and I will help you get past this pain.
I can show you a mirage so you can praise My name and be at peace with this pain.
I Can!

Mission Statement

Our newspaper aims to serve as a vehicle for elevating voices and public discussion on issues that are not frequently covered in mainstream media outlets. These issues include homelessness, facing potential homelessness and the resources available to help those in need. This newspaper is for everyone: people experiencing homelessness, students, parents and anyone else who wants to have his or her voice heard. We hope the awareness gained from our newspaper will encourage the community to have a discussion about issues and people who are normally ignored.

Join Our Team

Members of Greensboro's community who want to end poverty and homelessness publish The Greensboro Voice. We welcome you to our team! Meetings are held at the Interactive Resource Center on Fridays from 1:00–3:00 p.m. The Interactive Resource Center is located at 407 E. Washington Street. Everyone is welcome at our meetings!

This edition was produced by:

Terry Barlow, Reporter
Gaylor Callahan, Copy editor
Tosca Chiseri, Reporter
Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater, Editor
Anita Gilmore, Reporter
Timothy Griffin, Reporter
Raven Hilferty, Reporter
Bob Norfleet, Reporter
Majik Pennix, Reporter

Joseph Smith, Reporter
Barry Strulson, Reporter
Clarette Sutton, Reporter
Crystal Sutton, Reporter
Ryan Swinney, Reporter
Steve Terrill, Art Director
Stephanie Thomas, Art Editor
Mary Yost, Reporter & Editor

A young girl's thoughts on homelessness in Greensboro

By Majik Pennix



Photo: Rhonda Scott

Imagine that you lost your house, your utilities were shut off and you must still provide for your children or other loved ones that live with you. You feel so helpless and embarrassed that you cannot think straight. In some instances, people without housing refuse to go to shelters or talk to agencies, schools or city officials to get the help that they need. This puts a heavy emotional and mental weight on children, who feel helpless and wish their parents could bring them back to their original home.

I recently interviewed Lacorya Lynn to learn how she feels about homelessness and what she would do if her family were in that situation. This young girl lives with her mother, father, sisters and brothers. Below are her responses to my questions, presented in a question-and-answer format.

Q: Why do you want to help people experiencing homelessness?

A: Because everybody needs a home to live in. People that are homeless don't have many things like we do and they can't afford to buy a lot of things.

Q: What types of things would you do to help people experiencing homelessness?

A: I would help them get the food they need and would buy them toothbrushes, toothpaste and pajamas.

Q: What if you had a friend at school that was homeless. How would that make you feel?

A: I would talk to them. I would feel sad but I would give them and buy them certain things for school so they can have them for class.

Q: Have you ever seen a person experiencing homelessness?

A: My uncle is homeless and I wish he would stay with us. It's hard for my uncle to talk about it to me or my family.

Q: How would you feel if you and your family became homeless?

A: I would feel sad but at least we would be alive. It's better to be alive and homeless than not to be alive at all.

Q: What would you do to help your family if they became homeless?

A: If we lived in the woods, I would help cook the food by the fire. I would also help make a tent and put sleeping bags in the tents, but I would be scared of insects and animals in the woods. I would also be scared of people that walk in the woods because they might hurt us. I would pray that my mommy and daddy would find us another house to live in.

The Bus

By Jessica Bennett

When I was a kid
I used to dread riding the school bus
Never realizing that one day
it would be the cool bus.
As a child, all I ever wanted
was to stay up late
As an adult, I go to bed and get up early
and anticipate the sun rise.
I am a victim of all my lies.

Beep-beep, my mom yells, great ready
to get out the door!
Beep-beep, now the guard yells as
he unlocks the door.
As a kid, when I got on the bus,
I was taken to an institution.
Now, as an adult, I realize
my problem and my resolution
That was the power--
sitting in class, watching the hour.
As an adult, I get on the bus.
I get to be free.
As a child, I got to be me.
When I was a child, I used to ride
with the windows down.
As an adult, I look out the window
and act like a clown.
As a child, I would get excited to leave.
Now, when it's time, I dis-cleave.

What I Received

By CJ Weaver IV

I lost grip and I need hope
Although I'm strong as an ox
I'm weak as a hole in a boat.
I never learned to swim
But for some odd reason
against soft waves I seem to win.

- It's confusing -

I hear something strange
so my doctor gives me my meds.
I stop taking them because my brain
gets weak.
I might just want to her something strange.

- It's confusing -

I start to hear something
so I start to listen.
Remember the waves and your perplexations
I killed the ox and then rebuilt the boat.



Tiffany Dumas reflects on how the IRC changed her life

By Tosca Chiseri and Ryan Swinney

Rarely do you ever meet somebody as passionate about their work as Tiffany Dumas. We met with Tiffany in her office at the Interactive Resource Center (IRC) on a busy Thursday morning and we were excited to be able to conduct this interview given her extremely hectic schedule. Tiffany is not just an employee at the IRC but was once a client and her relationship with the IRC dates back to the nonprofit's infancy.

Tiffany was referred to the IRC when her home life became complicated by alcohol abuse in January 2009. For the sake of herself and her daughter, she looked to the IRC for support and volunteer opportunities to ground her life. What she found was a lifeline.

"I came in broken, had open wounds and wanted my daughter to see me in a different light," Tiffany said. "I grew up in the IRC because they helped me face my demons and gave me a second chance."

She told us about how she lost her car and served jail time for driving while intoxicated. After six months of volunteering for the IRC, she was presented with an employment opportunity as the volunteer coordinator at the organization.

We talked to Tiffany and observed what a typical day at the IRC looks like for her. Her day begins at 7:45 a.m. when she opens the facility and then prepares to direct the morning meeting, which begins at 8:00 a.m. At that meeting she discusses the services available to the clients (laundry, showers, haircuts, job skills, computer training, etc.). She then moves into coordinating up to 200 volunteers per day from various groups in the community.

Tiffany said she is the "nucleus of the IRC" and that she "keeps everyone happy and the IRC running like a well-oiled ma-

chine." She also spends a great deal of time promoting the IRC at speaking engagements at churches, schools and other venues. These events focus on deconstructing the misconceptions and myths surrounding the homeless community. She finds that people still firmly believe that people who are homeless are all lazy or are substance abusers. She hopes her presentation and her discussion about Greensboro's 10-year plan to end homelessness changes the community's perspective of Greensboro's homeless population.

"I love meeting new people and am surprised by people's willingness to help," Tiffany said. "I am humbled to be here and see my volunteers beating the odds despite the confines of their own lives."

Tiffany stresses the words "support, transformation, unconditional love, humility, leadership and trust," which are terms that formed and guided her through her life at the IRC. She also talked about how she knows every client's name and that "this is real here at the IRC." Her greatest wish is that more people in the community would come spend a day or two at the IRC as she feels that people really need to know what goes on there.

We asked Tiffany to describe her vision for the IRC and she responded that she would love to have a database of volunteers for more help, as well as expanded services for the clients. She would also like to host more guest speakers and form additional partnerships within the community.

"It's not what I say, it's what I do that makes a best impression," she said.

Tiffany wants the readers of this article to know that the IRC saved her life by helping her get clean and sober. She now has her friends and family every day at the IRC.

THE GREENSBORO VOICE

SPEAKER'S BUREAU

The Greensboro Voice is organizing a Speaker's Bureau where our team members will give presentations about the newspaper to your group. For more information, contact us via e-mail at greensborovoice@gmail.com.

Community meal reveals the true meaning of Thanksgiving

Photos and Story by Tosca Chiseri and Ryan Swinney

We overlooked the small house with metal bars on the front door during our first attempt at finding the Elk's Lodge where a free Thanksgiving dinner was being served. Our GPS voice told us to "turn around" and we are so glad that we did. As we slid into the parking lot we saw the blow-up turkey that announced the dinner as well as children playing with a puppy named King. For the past five years, Delores McKoy and her daughters have sponsored a free turkey dinner for family, neighbors and the homeless.

Delores and Sandra greeted us at the door and told us the story of feeding more than 100 people with food donations. The room was set up with small round tables decorated with pumpkins and gourds. Two tables with large pans of food dominated the room where football games played quietly on a television in one corner. The usual turkey, stuffing, ham and rice were on one table that also included a tray of pig's feet, a favorite according to the servers. Another table held the sides of rolls, cornbread, macaroni and cheese, green bean casserole, sweet potatoes and greens with hog

jowls. Carla, one of the servers, said that her family went to Florida but she chose not to join them.

"It's a good feeling to give," she said. "I want God to use me in any way He can."

Terry Barlow, a writer for The Greensboro Voice and whose family started the dinner, joined us while we were having dessert and shared that she drives around looking for those who might be alone on this holiday and brings them back to the Elk's Lodge. She also told us that they delivered meals to those in the area unable to leave their apartments or homes.

Jermaine, another writer for The Greens-



Carla and Terry

boro Voice, said that while there are many dinners for displaced persons on Thanksgiving, he liked the intimate setting and the feeling that he is eating homemade food cooked with love.

We all agreed and we dropped off a pile of our newspapers near the door where folks signed in. We noted as we left that at 2 p.m., 38 people had eaten and several more flooded the doors that welcomed them to a home-cooked Thanksgiving dinner, free to all. As we drove back to our own meal, we wondered whose dinner really revealed the spirit of Thanksgiving.



Giving thanks to the IRC, family and God

By Terry Barlow

Terry Barlow has lovingly collected stories from the Interactive Resource Center's (IRC) guests and others expressing thanks for their lives during this holiday season. We were able to publish only some of the submissions that were chosen at random because so many guests expressed their gratitude. We appreciate the submissions we received and we thank everyone for sharing their stories of difficulties and recovery.

Reggie

I've been homeless about six months and am trying to find my way out of this mess I am in. I came to Weaver House and signed up to receive disability assistance two years ago and it has finally come in—I am getting ready to collect claims for two years. I am finally going to get on my feet and I know this is God's gift to me. Thank you.

Kristin Rebecca Schumacher

I am thankful for God, for my freedom, for my husband who doesn't hit or abuse me and who respects me, and for all that I am and all that I do. I am thankful to have friends and family, to have food in my belly, clothes on my back, and a roof over my head. Through God, my husband, Greensboro Urban Ministry, the IRC, and United Youth Services and Adult Care, I

have gained freedom, an everlasting and unbreakable love, a home of my own, and a family that loves and respects me. I owe God and the wonderful people at these organizations more than I can ever repay. Thank you all and God bless.

Darryl Bowers

I'm thankful for being able to see another day in this lifetime and that God has blessed me so much.

Tammy Davis

I am thankful for waking up and seeing another day. I am thankful for my family and friends and for God being first in my life every day. I thank God for a good mind, a healthy body and a strong soul. I am thankful for the love and joy I can give to others and I am thankful for life. Amen.

Christopher J. Reid

I am thankful for my health and strength and for my family. I am most thankful for Jesus dying on the cross for my sins because there are many.

Sky Richmonds

I am thankful for my grandmom, mom, Aunt Tammy, Uncle Frank, Mary and for my whole family. I thank God for waking me up every day.

Jessie Watkins

I am thankful for being alive and breathing. I thank the Lord every day of my life. I can protect people on my job and I thank the Lord that I am very helpful to others.

Tim Bason

I give thanks to God for His powerful and wonderful love and for His grace. I am also thankful for my family, the Weaver Center and all of its pastors for their support of us and the staff.

Ronnie Maness

I am thankful for the good staff and food at the Weaver House, as well as the good

people that they help! Love God always as He will help you—I know!

Eric Champion

I am thankful for meeting Ms. Terry and Pastor Winfield. These people have been a positive influence in my life since my arrival in Greensboro. I truly love and appreciate them. I am thankful that God allows me to work in an environment where I can truly practice ministry by helping people in need of shelter, food, clothing and that I can listen to people talk about their life situations.

Anita Gilmore

I am thankful for what God has done for me. God has been my provider, lawyer, friend, advocate, doctor and my all. In spite of all my trials, I can overcome and keep my joy and love. I have been shown so much grace and favor.

Terry Barlow

I am very thankful that I have my life, health, strength and breath. If I wrote down everything that I was thankful for, I would write all day. I thank God, my family and everyone who surrounds me. God bless everyone.

I am honored to know Liz Seymour, my hero

By Barry Strulson



Photo: Steve Terrill

The American College Dictionary defines a hero as a “person of distinguished valor or performance, admired for his/her noble qualities.” Who do you know who displays these attributes? Can we ever say that we truly know a hero? Do we know someone who has overcome impressive odds to accomplish a really meaningful goal and succeeded?

I can now say that I have the pleasure of knowing a hero. Liz Seymour, executive director of the Interactive Resource Center (IRC), is truly a hero. When I was asked last year to help Ivan Cutler present a Pass-over Seder at the IRC, I at first said no. I told him I was not familiar with the organization so he arranged for me to meet with the executive director for a tour. I came at the appointed time and met a person who quickly became my role model and a hero to hundreds of people experiencing homelessness in Greensboro.

Liz was born in Fresno, Calif., and spent the first five years of her life in Chapel Hill while her father attended graduate school. She grew up in Hanover, N.H., where her father was a dean at Dartmouth College. Liz stayed in New England and graduated from Smith College and afterward became a freelance writer.

Her then husband, Bill Moore, brought her to Greensboro after taking a teaching position at Greensboro Day School. Together they had two daughters and Liz later adopted a son. She was divorced in 2000. Liz worked for Pace Communications writing for “Attaché,” the magazine of United Airlines. She also began freelance writing for various furniture design magazines.

Liz became involved with “Food Not Bombs,” an organization that feeds people

in need in Greensboro. Through various discussions among themselves and those they were serving, the idea of a day center for the homeless was planted. Working with a dedicated group of volunteers and those who were homeless, the IRC was created. The goal was to be open in 2008 to help people in need find a way to get off the streets. Through the generosity of the Strasser family, the current IRC building was donated so the center could have a permanent home. Moving from their meager beginning at Bessemer United Methodist Church, Liz was employed as the executive director and an ongoing program was established.

Under Liz’s guidance, the IRC has grown to serve more than 200 people every day. More than 350 people have found jobs and the center is responsible for finding housing for many who would otherwise be on the streets.

Having observed the workings of the IRC and its dedicated staff and dozens of volunteers, there is inspiration to be gleaned and lessons to be learned from all who enter its doors. With the grit determination and passion that it takes to succeed, Liz has built an organization that can serve as a model for all cities dealing with the problems of people experiencing homelessness.

Thank you, Liz, for the vision to provide a safe haven for those who truly wish to become contributing members of our Greensboro community. With your guidance, dozens of volunteers are able to give of themselves so that people in need may enter the flow of directed living in the greatest city in North Carolina. After my introduction to the IRC, I volunteered to help with Seder.

Do you have suggestions for The Greensboro Voice or want to join our newspaper team?

The Greensboro Voice’s team welcomes feedback from the community about how we can improve our newspaper. We also always welcome new team members to our group. For more information, visit our website at www.greensborovoice.org or e-mail us at greensborovoice@gmail.com.



Clarette's Corner: Wilmington's homeless resources

By Clarette Sutton

I was on a mission to find shelters in Wilmington, N.C., that provided the best services for people in need. This past September, I visited that city as part of a job assignment to help five students enroll in skills training classes at Cape Fear Community College. The students took classes there from September to November and needed temporary housing in the area. The students and I visited different shelters because it was not cost effective to travel daily from Greensboro to Wilmington. The three places we found in Wilmington were Mercy House Homeless Shelter, The Good Shepherd Center, and The Salvation Army of Wilmington.

Mercy House accepted guests daily after 6 p.m. if beds were available. The Good Shepherd Center accepted people in need during the night but they had no storage for clients' belongings. Upon entering this shelter, guests' bags were stacked in a corner and had to be taken with them daily or stored at the building. Beds were not available at the Good Shepherd Cen-

ter in September, but the soup kitchen was available for lunches. Every day the group of students attended lunch with the organization and the choices of food were plentiful. We tasted the love in the food and the service was reminiscent of eating with family. Finally, The Salvation Army of Wilmington was convenient and adjacent to the vocational building at Cape Fear Community College.

Each homeless shelter had strengths and weaknesses. The Good Shepherd Center has a delicious soup kitchen, while The Salvation Army has a strong social services program. There, I set goals and met with a social worker during my short stay and two of the students received clothing. Those that needed food stamps were able to apply and the students had to seek two jobs per day to earn a week free or else the fee at the shelter was \$56 per week.

Homelessness is a problem from east to west and it is important to be aware of the resources available to people experiencing homelessness in a variety of regions.

Remembering Phillip and Sharon, an invisible couple

By Stephanie Thomas

The headline read: "Husband, Wife Killed in Greensboro Hit and Run." Their names were Phillip David Sayer, 51, and Sharon Sayer, 56, and both were hit by a car while crossing the street in Greensboro. The article continued to say no one knew where they were headed but it made a point to mention they were not using the crosswalk.

Phillip and Sharon were staying in a nearby hotel but what the reporter did not say or did not know was that the couple was in and out of homelessness and was living at the hotel. The rest of the story was about the man who hit them and how the police tracked him down. The response to the article on the Internet was solely about the man who hit them—no one seemed interested in Phillip and Sharon.

So often people who are homeless are invisible to us in life and even more so in death. If this had happened in a wealthier part of town or to people who had more money, we would have known everything there was to know about them by the end of the news day.

Phillip was born in New Mexico on Aug. 17, 1960. His wife, Sharon, was born on

May 29, 1956. I found a photo online of their grave marker. Above her name were the words, "Daughter, Sister and Mother." At the bottom it said, "They left his world together."

Phillip was the son of John and Martha (Pat) Sayer. His father was a Vietnam veteran and he died in 1999. Martha re-married Hugh Briley and passed away in 2007. John and Martha had three sons and two daughters. Two months before Phillip was killed, his brother Mark died and in 2011, their sister Brenda passed away.

Phillip and Sharon become estranged from their family and ended up homeless. Many of the agencies in Greensboro did what they could to help the couple get back on their feet, but people in these situations often need more help than is available or affordable. With limited resources, what is the solution?

When you see a person who is without a home, remember they are people with families and loved ones, with hopes and dreams and that they deserve to be seen in life and remembered when they are gone.



Fred Gant, a largely self-taught artist, used watercolor paints and crayons donated to the Interactive Resource Center (IRC) by a local Sunday school class to create an image of a fellow guest of the IRC. "When I see that picture I see myself too," Gant says. "You wonder 'Are those bags heavy?'"

Gant's painting and story are featured on this year's IRC honor card. Honor cards are available for a minimum donation of \$5.00 and are sold at the Sacred Garden Bookstore, at many local churches and at the IRC. In addition, honor cards and other work by IRC guests, including original artwork by Fred Gant, will be on sale at the Artifacts Holiday Sale on Dec. 15 from 3:00 to 6:00 at the IRC. Proceeds from the honor cards will go to the IRC's Guest Assistance Fund, a fund that offers direct financial assistance to homeless and near-homeless clients of the IRC. To order honor cards email gwen@gsodaycenter.org or call (336)554-5422.

Wayward Wind: A young man's journey to recovery

By Joseph Smith



Divorce

Thirty years ago while working as an instructor for an electrical utility company near San Clemente, Calif., I divorced my wife. The court ruled that Mat and his older brother would stay with me and his younger sister would stay with their mother. Shortly after that, Mat's grades suffered. His school evaluated him for learning disabilities and found that he did not have any. He and his friend rode dirt bikes illegally and used alcohol and cocaine. He kept this secret from me until the police came knocking on our door.

Later I took a job in New Hampshire and hoped the relocation would help Mat get on the right track. However, he did not do well in high school and was placed in a vocational school. He got a job at Pizza Hut but was fired for allegedly stealing someone's coat. One evening he crashed a friend's car. Luckily he did not get hurt or caught. I tried talking to him about it but he told me I could not control him.

Beginning of Jail Time

I saw where this was going. I took him to the local jail, put him in a cell, slammed the door and left him there for a while. It did not have any effect and I initiated a CHINS (Child In Need of Services) Petition. I sent Mat to a psychologist and when I asked him how it was going, he said with a strained laugh, "The psychologist says it is all your fault." When Mat learned about the CHINS Petition he went to stay with his mother in Florida. "Her rules aren't as strict as yours," he said in his 19-year-old voice.

Schizophrenia

Later reports from Florida said Mat was acting in a strange and frightening manner. He was violent and took crazy risks like

climbing high voltage power poles to show off. He sometimes wore a hat made of aluminum foil to keep the "voices" away. I tried to get him to talk about it but he denied he had a problem. Mat then got arrested for a DUI and was sentenced to two years in the state prison in Tallahassee, Fla.

In 1990 I remarried and found a permanent job in North Carolina. I learned from the prison that Mat had been diagnosed with schizophrenia. Mat denied it. I was actually glad he was in prison because they kept him from hurting himself.

I got permission to transfer his parole to North Carolina and moved him into my home. I scheduled a visit with a psychologist for tests and Mat agreed to try the prescribed medications. He soon stopped taking them because they dulled him and made him feel strange and dizzy.

He got a job as a cook and rented a place of his own. He got involved in drugs again, drove under the influence and was chased by the law. He tried to escape by diving into the mudflats along the Intercostal Waterway. It took the Coast Guard, sheriff and police dogs four hours to find him in the mud and he went to jail.

Mat's North Carolina parole officer told him he had to give witness against the group or stay in jail. He was released temporarily to get more information on the drug gang.

Meanwhile I had taken a temporary job in Illinois. I came back to check on Mat and the house and found missing checks and stolen televisions. I found out about Mat being asked to "squeal" on the drug gang. I did not care what the system would do—it was better he was alive and in trouble than the alternative. I took him to Illinois.

Mat got job at a foundry where they recognized he had a serious problem. They kept him at the business and had their insurance company pay to put him through a Narcanon program.

My son Mathew (Mat) survived his parents' divorce, was jailed in four states, suffered from schizophrenia, has been homeless and has experienced a miracle.

Shortly before completing pull-up number eight, Mat had run two miles in less than 18 minutes and done 60 sit-ups in two minutes. The Black River Boot Camp is notorious for weeding out the weak. Its objective is to rehabilitate inmates so they can make it on the outside.

Homeless

Mat stayed with me in Illinois but spent most of his money getting drunk. I came up with a plan. Mat gave me his paycheck which went into a bank account and he received a weekly "allowance" to buy things. This lasted two weeks.

Mat came home with a friend while I was at work. He demanded that his step-mom give him all the money in his account. She was alone and they were drunk, angry and threatening. She got enough money to get them to leave and I realized he could not stay with us anymore.

I got him an inexpensive hotel room nearby and paid one month's rent. A week later he got kicked out for stealing the television in his room. Mat was now homeless and living on the streets.

Later he secured a cheap room. I found out where he was staying and bought him groceries to help out. One day he told me not to buy any more groceries because he said druggies made him take back the groceries and trade them for cash.

Mat again drove under the influence, was sent to jail and lost his job. He was released on probation and The Salvation Army took him in. They helped him find a job and managed his money for him. Within one year he got kicked out of the shelter for breaking curfew and he became homeless again.

I got a long-term job in Wisconsin. Mat called and I arranged for his probation to be transferred so he could live with me. He got a job and sometimes after work I was able to pick him up and bring him home.

Mat was lonely and wanted a family. One night he asked if a girl could ride along and within months they were married. She already had four children and soon my first grandson was born. Mat secured a better job and bought the duplex they were renting so they could have more space. His wife's sister was a drug addict

and Mat got involved, even though his wife was against all drugs.

She was afraid for him and depressed because she thought he might get hurt or killed when he got high. She tried to hide the keys but it didn't work. One night after a fight she called the police. He got caught driving under the influence and went to jail again.

Mat's Miracle

During this time Mat's schizophrenia went away completely and his life dramatically changed. I had been praying about this for a long time and I asked a friend to also have his church pray. Mat was 36 years old and, according to the APA publication psychologist's use to diagnose mental disorders (The DSM-III), schizophrenia is known to go into remission for some people in their late 30's. Miracle or medical fact – you decide. I believe it was prayer and God's intervention.

Mat was chosen for the Black River Prison Boot Camp Program. This allowed him to get an early release (with a long-term probationary period). While in prison he lost the house and his wife got pregnant by another man.

Mat accepted what happened and after his release, he secured another good job. He reunited with his wife and supported her before, during and after the new baby's delivery. He told me he loves his wife and they now have six children. His new company is sending him to school. Mat plans to buy a house in rural Wisconsin so the children can have room to play (and ride dirt bikes).

Mat is thankful for his new life. I am thankful God helped my son, his family and me through all of this. I pray Mat stays on track and believe he will.

After reading this story Mat told me, "It is startling to see the recount of my life through someone else's view instead of my own. I hope it inspires someone."

What’s in that sack?
The untold backpack story

By Bob Norfleet

I asked several people the question, “What’s in that sack?” Most refused an interview, but two men agreed to my request as long as I promised not to use their last name in this article. Due to their similar answers, I am going to share “Mike’s” story.

Mike is a 50-year-old white male with dark brown hair who is almost 6 feet tall. On his head sat a heavily worn blue and white Colts cap. On the day of our interview, he needed a haircut and a shave. He was understandably uncomfortable with my request for an interview for The Greensboro Voice, but he was friendly. Mike told me that he is homeless and the streets of Greensboro are his day home.

Mike’s large, black backpack has a medium-sized brown pack attached to the bottom, as well as an even smaller plastic grocery bag tied to the side. He pulled off his burden and sat down on the curb next to me. He briefly looked off in the distance as he pondered his next words.

“It only took me a short time to figure out exactly what I really needed in this pack to just survive on the street,” he said. “When the street is your home, you’d better learn to pack light and walk in good shoes. I used to have a good job and a lot more cash in my wallet. Long story, but you don’t want to hear that one!” he laughed uncomfortably and continued his story.

“This sack holds what’s left of a crazy life I left behind some years back. Every time I lift this thing, it reminds me of all the mess I went through when I was younger and a hell-of-a-lot dumber. Now I got more up here (*he tapped his head*) and not so much down here (*he patted his back pants pocket*). This sack carries all I own, except my cell phone and a worn-out wallet that only has about \$7, a bus pass and a lot of nothing paper. I used to have a lot more stuff but like I said, it all got lost, sold or repossessed a few years back.”

The brown bag

Mike bent over and unzipped the medium-sized brown bag. He pulled out a light blue, well-worn polo shirt.

“I got that at the Urban Ministry late last year before they shut down the free clothing shop,” he explained.

Without further comment, he showed me a neatly rolled up pair of very used Wrangler blue jeans, two equally worn T-shirts, two pairs of undershorts, four pairs of socks, one set of long underwear and a small American flag. All these were tightly rolled up in that brown bag with the flag on top. Mike looked up at me and gave me a quick salute with his right hand. He rolled everything up and

neatly tucked his belongings back into the brown sack. He set it aside with a pat of his hand as if to say, “You stay put.”

The black backpack

Before opening the larger black sack, Mike glanced around, perhaps to make sure no one else was watching. Satisfied that we are not being watched, he removed his blue cap and placed it between his feet at the curb. He unzipped the top of the well-worn sack.

First out was a half a roll of toilet paper in a plastic bag that he put by his side. Next came a well-used Bible (in another plastic bag) that he kissed and waved in the air above his head before he placed it reverently in the Colt’s cap still between his legs. Out then came a head-set but no radio or iPod.

I noticed he had several other items in either a zip-plastic bag or loose plastic bags with rubber bands around them. Mike said he really loves the zip-plastic bags when he can get them because they “keep things real dry.” He did not remove the items from the bags because we could easily see everything inside. He had an oral care kit that included a small tube of toothpaste, three toothbrushes, a container of dental floss and a bottle of his high blood pressure pills. Another bag held his shaving kit but he had no shaving cream. A third plastic bag held a soap bar and two neatly rolled up hand towels and a hairbrush. On a side pocket, Mike pulled out a package of pipe tobacco, a pipe, a green eyeglasses case, and a St. Christopher’s medal and chain that he said his mother gave him when he was a boy.

Midway down the sack Mike removed a pair of slightly used orange running shoes and a pair of thick socks. At the bottom of the bag was a sleeping bag and a small, thick black plastic tarp, both rolled up tightly with straps. Mike looked up at me to make sure I did not have any comments, then he quickly returned every-

thing into his sack in exactly the same order the items were removed. He kissed his Bible once again before he returned it to its rightful place.

Mike then asked if I would like to see what he had in the small grocery bag. I nodded my head as he untied a couple of bread ties and a slip knot to disclose several snack items: two unopened food bars, a pack of half-eaten cheese crackers (which he offered me), several napkins, a book with a gothic title, and an unknown object wrapped in white paper and a rubber band which he did not bother to open.

Conclusion

He glanced up and said, “How’s that?” I made a few final notes and after my thanks, Mike re-attached the bag to his larger sack in the same spot as before. He pulled out a plastic water bottle from a side pocket of the large sack, took a short drink, and placed it back in its pocket.

Before I left, I asked Mike about his cell phone that rang during our interview. He said before he received that phone, he felt more alone than he ever had in his life. When he lost everything, he also lost his cell phone service and the old phone “drowned in a water fountain.” Mike said the free cell phone keeps him in touch with his friends as well as his sister who lives in Albany, Ga., and a close cousin in Wilson. It also helps him when he is searching for work because he can leave a phone number after a job interview.

Mike said his sack and his cell phone are his life now. Without either, he would go crazy.

In conclusion, I want to share a hopeful bit of news: Mike said he recently received a call from his last job interview and they want to meet with him again. As I spoke with Mike about this, he hunched his shoulders, looked up the street and said, “Maybe.” He looked back at me with a wink and a smile, lifted his sack and walked north on Church Street.

Untitled

By Anton Bell

Would have believed I met
an angel just as fine as you.

Not to mention my intention
to mention why I met you.

Seem like a number, but
as bad as I need to.

La La La La

LOV

LOV

E too.

Faith

By Pastor Charry Curtis

Learn about faith
Study faith
Act faith
Mediate faith
This will create living by faith.

Faith

By Kristen Schumacher

When you feel lost and lonely
Think of our Father, the one, the only.
He knows your secrets, He knows your fears
When life gets more than we can bear
He hugs us, letting us know that He is there.
When our hearts break, He wipes away the tears
And as long as you believe, He will be
There throughout the years
So give it to God, He takes it.
And know in your heart that
You’re going to make it

A Shattered Merry Christmas

By David Pigue

I dream of a magical Christmas with logs on the fire, eggnog chilling in the fridge. My mom and I watch a Christmas movie together. We sit in our chairs, enjoying supper And when we are stuffed, we close our eyes and fall asleep. Then the nightmare begins. A dark shadow sweeps across the room and everything grows cold. There is no more singing, no more laughing, no more joy like we used to have. All of that has disappeared. All that is left is me. Completely alone. The creature chased away my happiness and the only person I could share a sad but joyful Christmas with. She who dwells in High Point now yearns to return to me. I constantly return to that Christmas of long ago and yearn for it once more. Now we have no choice but to wait for the day when we can go back to a Christmas that once was shattered but can and will be mended again.

Community Resources

SHELTER

Trailways Housing
407 E. Washington Street
336-332-0824

Christian Counseling and Wellness Center
(Temporary housing & counseling services)
1118 Grecale Street
336-273-8305

Greensboro Urban Ministry Weaver House
(Housing, food and clothing assistance)
305 W. Lee Street
336-553-2665

Greensboro Urban Ministry Pathways Housing
(for families with children)
3517 N. Church Street
336-271-5988

Mary’s House
(for single mothers recovering from substance abuse issues)
520 Guilford Avenue
336-275-0820

Room at the Inn of the Triad
(Temporary housing for homeless, pregnant women)
734 Park Avenue
336-275-0206

Salvation Army Center of Hope
1311 S. Eugene Street
336-273-5572

Act Together Crisis Care
(Youth ages 11-17)
1601 Huffine Mill Road
336-375-1332

Joseph’s House
(Youth ages 18-21)
2703 E. Bessemer Avenue
336-389-9880
Hotline: 336-558-1695

FOOD

Breakfast

7:00 – 8:15 a.m. at Beloved Community Center Hospitality House
437 Arlington Street
336-230-0001
Serves on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

7:30 – 9:00 a.m. at St. Paul Baptist Church
1309 Larkin Street
336-275-4680
Serves on Monday, Wednesday & Friday

8:00 a.m. at Grace United Methodist
438 W. Friendly Avenue
336-272-2171
Serves on Tuesday

Breakfast (continued)

7:00 a.m. at Potter’s House
305 W. Lee Street
336-271-5959
Serves on Wednesday

8:30 a.m. at Nu-Life Church
209 W. Florida Street
336-275-3243
Serves on Saturday

Serves Lunch Every Day

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at Potter’s House Community Kitchen
305 W. Lee Street
336-271-5959

Dinner

5:00 p.m. Worship Service & Meal New Creation Community Presbyterian Church
617 N. Elm Street
336-478-4775
Serves on Sunday

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. at Greensboro Central Library
407 E. Washington Street
Serves on Monday

6:00 – 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church’s Mul-lin Life Center (arrive by 6:30 p.m.)
617 N. Elm Street
336-373-0445
Serves on Tuesday & Thursday

6:00 p.m. at Grace Community Church
643 W. Lee Street
336-379-1936
Serves on Wednesday

5:30 p.m. at New Birth Sounds of Thunder
2300 S. Elm-Eugene Street
336-324-7902
Serves on Friday

4:30 p.m. at YWCA
1 YWCA Place
Meal served by REAL OutreachServes on Saturday

RESOURCE CENTERS

Family Service of the Piedmont
315 E. Washington Street
336-387-6161

The Servant Center Grocery Assistance Program
1312 Lexington Avenue
336-275-8585

Beloved Community Center
437 Arlington Street
336-370-4330

RESOURCE CENTERS (continued)

Joseph’s House Resource Center
2703 E. Bessemer Avenue
336-389-9880
Open Monday, Wednesday & Friday
from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Interactive Resource Center
407 E. Washington Street
336-332-0824
Open Monday through Friday
from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Women’s Resource Center
628 Summit Avenue
336-275-6090

Sherri Denese Jackson Foundation for Domestic Violence Prevention
2025 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (Suite C)
336-510-9292

Malachi House II
3603 Burlington Road
336-375-0900

OTHER RESOURCES

HealthServe
1002 S. Eugene Street
336-271-5999

HealthServe
1439 E. Cone Boulevard
336-375-6104

Joblink Career Center
303 N. Raleigh Street
336-373-5922

Word of Life Food Pantry
Call 336-517-7755
Monday-Thursday from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Focused Sistas Outreach
P.O. Box 3941
336-501-6570 or 336-254-4233
Open Monday through Friday from
8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Goodwill Industries
1235 S. Eugene Street
336-275-9801

Shiloh Baptist Church
1210 South Eugene Street
336-272-1166
Food Pantry open Monday through Friday
from 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Utility assistance may be available

RESOURCE CENTERS (continued)

St. Phillip AME Zion Church

1330 Ashe Street

336-272-1301

Clothing and Food Bank open every Wednesday from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Prince of Peace Lutheran

1100 Curtis Street

336-378-9738

Farmers Market every other Thursday

St. Paul Missionary Baptist

1309 Larkin Street

336-275-4680

Food bank open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Utility assistance Tuesdays from

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Rabbit Quarter Ministries

2904 Esco Place

High Point, NC 27260

336-307-0119

ACCESS 24 CALL CENTERS

The Guilford Center Information Services

1-800-853-5163

Domestic Violence Line

336-273-7273

NAMI Hotline (Mental Health Services)

336-370-4264

United Way 211

1-888-892-1162

Do you know a resource we should add to this page?

If so, please e-mail our team at greensborovoice@gmail.com and we will include your information on our Community Resources page!

The Community Writing Center and The Greensboro Voice meet at the Interactive Resource Center on Fridays from 1:00-3:00 p.m. They are available to help with any writing project at any stage of the process—from brainstorming to polishing final drafts. We love to work with writers, so come by and share your work with us!

The Greensboro Voice's staff thanks the Community Writing Center for its support of our newspaper reporters. The writing consultants have been very helpful with brainstorming and editing our articles.

All I Knew

By Tony Hodges

The life I have before me is all I knew
Brought into this world without permission
Crying when I was hurt by a cut or anything
Seeing, touching, smelling, tasting, hearing is all I knew
Went from crawling to walking then running
From short to tall, from little to big
Breathing, eating, sleeping
Reading, writing, speaking is all I knew
The mind I have started developing
Common sense, my choices I made
A mother no father
Also having sisters and brothers is all I knew
You can see me but I can't see me unless looking in a mirror
Different faces, colors, people, ages, genders
No words, descriptions just photographic memories
Mama, dada, sissy—no enunciation or pronunciation
Forming words, phrases, then sentences is all I knew
A lifetime filled with ups and downs
Myself as a misrepresentation to others and their opinions
Having barriers and problems, now knowing the difference
The world revolving around everyone and not just me is all I knew
Today I live another day I live to breathe
Some day when it comes no air to breathe
So live life for your own causes but know this
At the end happiness or sadness of loneliness is all I kneww

Untitled Poem

By Anonymous

She is not in tune with the world around her
Her vanity is not the cause of her social height.
She is neither calm nor modest,
Yet she notices her own daughter
Gets prettier and prettier
As she begins to wither with age.
The thought of consuming her heart
Hasn't escaped her mind,
Yet beneath all this she longs
To love another
A prince to be exact.

Don't You Wish

By Tony Hodges

Don't you wish you could take it all back
But it's too late to stop and turn around
To prevent what you said and what you did
Well you're not alone feeling this way
There have been many times I too felt the same
Wish I can turn back the hands of time
And undo what I did
Don't you wish for one moment
You can undo all your wrongdoings
By you and to you
Which made you who you are
Or what you are today
Don't you wish you could take it all back
It's a shame when it's all over and done with
We stand back in regret
Sometimes sooner than others
Sometimes later as life goes on
We stand there and apologize
Making it seem so sympathetic and remorseful
If it is truly
Why do we do it over and over again
It's just a cycle repeating itself
Aren't you tired of hurting others
Or being hurt yourself
You never will feel any sympathy or care for another
Toward yourself or toward anyone else
Because who you are is an irrelevant question
What you are is the correct answer
Don't you wish you can change who you are
Not physically
But emotionally of who you became to be
All you can ever do is
Just wish
Wishing isn't fun doing
Making a difference early
Could really prevent later on regrets
Let this be a message to the present
And a new era for the future
In the future, reflection on the past sends you back
Back for a moment
For which this moment
Is to wish
Wish away many things you regret
But remember the present is like no other
Don't you wish

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C/O The Interactive Resource Center
407 E. Washington Street
Greensboro, NC 27401

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Short takes with Anita: A collection of stories

By Anita Gilmore

Anita Gilmore is a guest at the Interactive Resource Center (IRC). Every month she talks to people experiencing homelessness and collects their stories. The following are Anita's "short takes" for the month of December and include stories from the IRC.

Darryl Bowers

I became homeless because of bad decisions that I made. I broke the law by selling drugs because I thought that fast money was a way of life for me. I started using drugs and that took my life to another level as I was trying to cover up and not deal with life experiences. I ended up in jail with a 30-year sentence. There, I learned that money meant nothing because I had nothing. I discovered that living an honest life is the way to go.

I am grateful to be alive and to see my life take a turn for the better as I become a productive member of society. What I want everyone to know is that the honest way of living is the only way. I had to go through the "system" because I made bad decisions. I was a professional boxer and I wasted my talent. That's the only thing that I regret today. I am thankful that God gave me another chance to change. I now live in the Weaver House shelter and I am grateful for Greensboro Urban Ministry. I am trying to return to school to obtain an architecture degree.

Reggie Johnson

I have been alone for the last six months and am wondering how I am going to make it. I am discovering how hard life is. Sometimes, I have good days and sometimes I have bad days. I remember when I was 27 years old and was working every day at Four Seasons Mall. I worked there long enough to become a supervisor. I loved my job until I was introduced to drugs, which became my downfall. I had to have drugs every day. For several years, my weaknesses were money and women. I tried to stop and I went to rehab and stayed clean for a while and then I returned to drugs. It became so bad that I could not pay my rent, my car loan or keep my job.

I began to manipulate people for their money. I was wearing the same clothes over and over again but I couldn't smell myself because I was trying to get high. I was stealing from my family and I hurt them so badly that they turned their backs on me. I didn't care.

My life changed when I learned about the IRC and the Weaver House. I was tired of sleeping under bridges, in cars and in abandoned houses. When the weather became cold, I went to the Weaver House where Randy took me in and told me

that I had 67 days to stay there. I slept in the shelter at night and went to the IRC during the day. Melissa Whitt is helping me get on my feet again. It's just a matter of time. I love staff at the IRC for all the things they have helped me with.

Michael Shelton

I am a homeless 25 year old. I recently became homeless when I arrived in Greensboro from Atlanta, Ga. I came here for a rehabilitation program but was turned down because I had no drugs in my system. I have been using drugs for 12 years and I weaned myself off the substances so that I wouldn't have to go through withdrawals. I refuse to go back on drugs so I went to the Weaver House shelter, not knowing anybody or anything about this town. I am adamant about getting into a 6-12 month rehabilitation program so that I can get myself together and obtain custody of my son. To do this I am using the resources provided by the IRC and the Greensboro Urban Ministry.

I know that I am not alone and was brought here for a reason: God placed me where I needed to be. I am young and have been on drugs half of my life, but God has given me another chance with hope, strength, faith and favor. I am grateful for that. There are a lot of things for me to learn and I am open to accepting these things. I have faced the truth and have seen myself for the first time.

I thank God for His guidance and the people He has placed here to help me. When I was sharing my story with Anita Gilmore, she told me that she was also at the IRC and the Weaver House and that she was homeless. Her life has shown me that if she can do it, then I can do it. I thank God that I am not under the bridge because it is cold outside. Just being able to tell my story has given me strength.

Lewis Shelton

I am grateful for the Weaver House where I reside and the wonderful staff there. I am also grateful for having the opportunity to give my story to Anita Gilmore who comes back to the IRC and who remembers, on a daily basis, what homelessness feels like. I am so grateful for being alive and for having the opportunity to be a client at the IRC where I see myself in all the other clients on a daily basis.

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