

Secure Waiting Space: Men in transition

Written by Julie Desmond • Plan Your Career
Friday, 02 April 2010 13:38



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This morning, people all over America woke up in a bed, hit the snooze on the alarm, and eventually dragged themselves through a shower routine and out the door. They might have thought, “this is going to be a great day,” or they might have thought, “I hope I don’t get fired today.” The challenges of getting a job and keeping it are daunting enough. For the homeless, reporting to work or school every day is a challenge that must seem insurmountable. Add, I hope I can find a place to shower, to the morning thoughts list, and having a great day takes on a completely different meaning. Fortunately, for homeless men in the Twin Cities, a place called Secure Waiting Space makes the morning routine possible.

In a two story building just outside the shadow of the new Twins Stadium, 125 men wake up every morning on mats on the main floor of Secure Waiting. They were served an evening meal, will be given something for breakfast and have the opportunity to shower before going on their way in the morning.

Upstairs, another 125 men wake up in bunks which they rent for \$6 per night. They store their belongings in lockers and head out to work or school. The \$6 investment adds up quickly and goes further than that bunk and that locker, though. The fabulous leadership team at Secure Waiting keeps the money on account. When someone is ready to move on to more permanent housing, the total amount he invested is available to use toward a damage deposit and other housing expenses.

Secure Waiting serves men who have little or no resources. And it’s not a small group. According to Robert Elfstrand, Senior Leadership Giving Officer for Catholic Charities, which operates this program, Secure Waiting served 3,500 different men last year alone. These men had a place to call home, a place to sleep and a place to dress and shave in the morning.

Although Secure Waiting does not have a family shelter, hundreds of families do use the food shelf in the basement, operated in partnership with the Basilica of St. Mary. Thanks to Secure Waiting, 1000 Currie Avenue North, men who never expected to be homeless can get back on their feet and into housing of their own without interrupting job interviews, school and work.

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