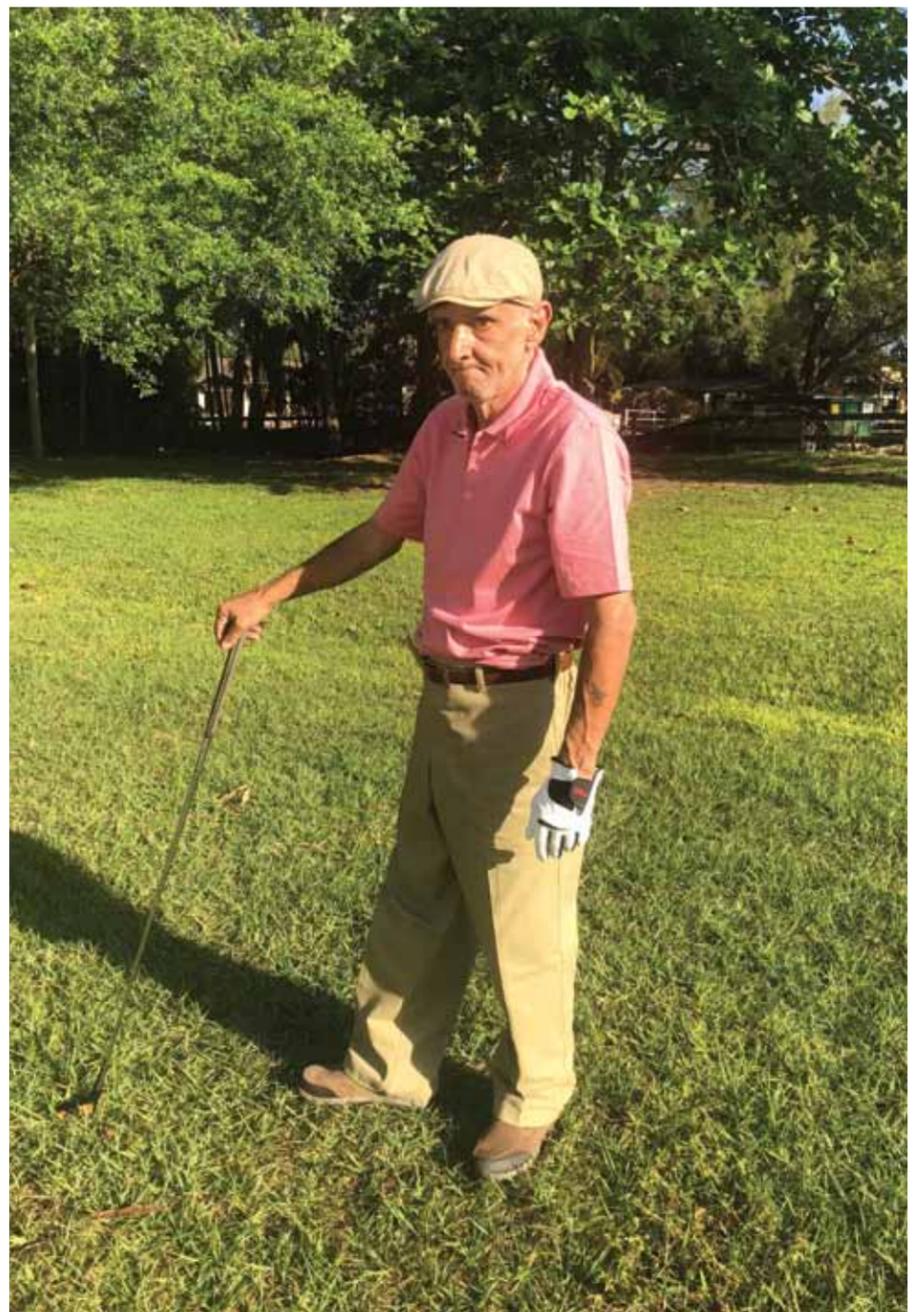


THE
**HOMELESS
 VOICE**
 FLORIDAS LARGEST STREET NEWSPAPER



COSAC Foundation | PO Box 292-577 Davie, FL 33329 | 954-924-3571

Repicturing the Homeless



If you would have met Richard yesterday, you may have passed him by, silently wishing that he would not try to speak to you. You might have walked by him trying to avoid eye contact at all cost. However, if you met Richard today, you might have a different first impression.

Richard's appearance was changed in a matter of hours. Imagine how we could impact a person's life if we took the time to understand more about them.

Today Richard was having a fun day in the sun practicing his golf swing at a friends house in Davie, Florida. Richard set his eyes on his target before he raised his club for the swing. The man looked like a seasoned pro. His tanned skin suggested he often played in the hours before sunset. Standing tall and lean, this

gentleman kept a pretty serious composure as he took a couple practice swings.

The scene before us however, was anything but traditional. Hours earlier Richard had had his long matted hair cut off by Homeless Voice founder Sean Cononie. He is part of a project called "Repicturing the Homeless". The project focuses on taking images of the homeless dressed as everyday people. From chefs to business persons to hospitality jobs, each individual pictured on their website was homeless at one point or another. Each person has their own unique story.

I challenge you to make a promise to yourself.

Help someone one day for no reason. Help someone one day because they are another human being just like us.

Imagine how we could impact a person's life if we took the time to understand more about them.

Our Purpose: To Help the Homeless Learn How to Help Themselves

~Monthly Angels~

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About the Homeless Voice

The Homeless Voice houses, feeds, and finds jobs for anyone who is homeless. We serve up to 500 homeless daily and serve over 45,000 meals each month.

The Homeless Voice distributes a street newspaper in all major cities throughout Florida including Tallahassee, Lake City, Jacksonville, Tampa, Orlando, Daytona, Ft. Lauderdale, and Miami.

The Homeless Voice Newspaper has three functions.

- 1-Educate the public on homelessness and poverty issues
- 2-Provide temporary employment to those without a job
- 3-Raise additional funds for the Florida based shelter

We have grown into a multifaceted agency that feeds, shelters, and arranges for each homeless person to receive the necessary access to social and noncompulsory religious services to enable a return to a self-reliant lifestyle.

For the small percentage of people incapable of living independent lives, we provide a caring and supportive environment for their long-term residency.



Homeless Voice Newspaper Staff

Publisher- Sean Cononie

Editor in Chief- Mark Targett **Executive Editor-** Sara Cunningham

www.HomelessVoice.org/contact

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- * Diane Karm
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Seattle OKs tax on companies like Amazon to help homeless

Phuong Le

Seattle's largest businesses such as Amazon and Starbucks will have to pay a new tax to help fund homeless services and affordable housing under a measure approved by city leaders.

The City Council unanimously passed a compromise plan Monday that taxes businesses making at least \$20 million in gross revenues about \$275 per full-time worker each year — lower than the \$500 per worker initially proposed. The so-called "head tax" would raise roughly \$48 million a year to build new affordable housing units and provide emergency homeless services.

The debate over who should pay to solve a housing crisis exacerbated by Seattle's rapid economic growth comes after weeks of tense exchanges, raucous meetings and a threat by Amazon, the city's largest employer, to stop construction planning on a 17-story building near its hometown headquarters.

Amazon, Starbucks and business groups sharply criticized the council's decision after Monday's vote. They called it a tax on jobs and questioned whether city officials were spending current resources effectively. One state Republican leader said he would seek legislation next year to make clear that a city tax on employees, wages or hours is illegal.

Seattle-based Starbucks had harsh words for its hometown leaders. It accused the city of spending without accountability while ignoring that hundreds of children sleep outside.

"If they cannot provide a warm meal and safe bed to a 5-year-old child, no one believes they will be able to make housing affordable or address opiate addiction," Starbucks' John Kelly said in a statement.

But worker and church groups and others cheered the tax as a step toward building badly needed affordable housing in an affluent city where the income gap continues to widen and lower-income workers are being priced out.

"People are dying on the doorsteps of prosperity. This is the richest city in the state and in a state that has the most regressive tax system in the country,"

said councilmember Teresa Mosqueda, who wanted a larger tax but called the compromise plan "a down payment" to build housing the city needs.

For Seattle's liberal City Council, the discussion Monday centered not so much on whether there should be a head tax but how big it should be. Four bill sponsors initially pitched a tax of \$500 per full-time employee a year but a compromise proposal emerged over weekend after they couldn't muster the six votes needed to override a potential veto by Mayor Jenny Durkan.

Councilmember Lisa Herbold, a bill sponsor, said the revenue isn't enough to fully address the problem given the city's dire needs and human suffering but it was "the strongest proposal" they could put forward given the veto threat.

Proponents of the tax say too many people are suffering on the streets, and while city-funded programs found homes for 3,400 people last year, the problem deepens. The Seattle region had the third-highest number of homeless people in the U.S. and saw 169 homeless deaths last year. The city spent \$68 million on homelessness last year and plans to spend even more this year. The tax will provide additional revenue.

"This legislation will help us address our homelessness crisis without jeopardizing critical jobs," Durkan said in a statement.

Other cities have implemented similar taxes, but critics say Seattle's tax could threaten the booming local economy and drive away jobs.

Nearly 600 large employers — roughly 3 percent — would pay the tax starting in 2019. Amazon, the city's largest employer with 45,000 workers, would take the biggest hit.

Amazon Vice President Drew Herdener said in a statement Monday that the company was disappointed.

While Amazon has resumed construction planning on the downtown building,

he said "we remain apprehensive about the future created by the council's hostile approach and rhetoric toward larger businesses, which forces us to question our growth here."

He noted that city revenues have grown dramatically and that the city "does not have a revenue problem — it has a spending efficiency problem."

Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez shot back that she was "equally disappointed" in Amazon's reaction to the council's vote and said she thinks "their tone in this message that is clearly hostile toward the city council is not what I expect from

Amazon says city does not have a revenue problem — it has a spending efficiency problem



a business who continues to tell us that they want to be a partner on these issues."

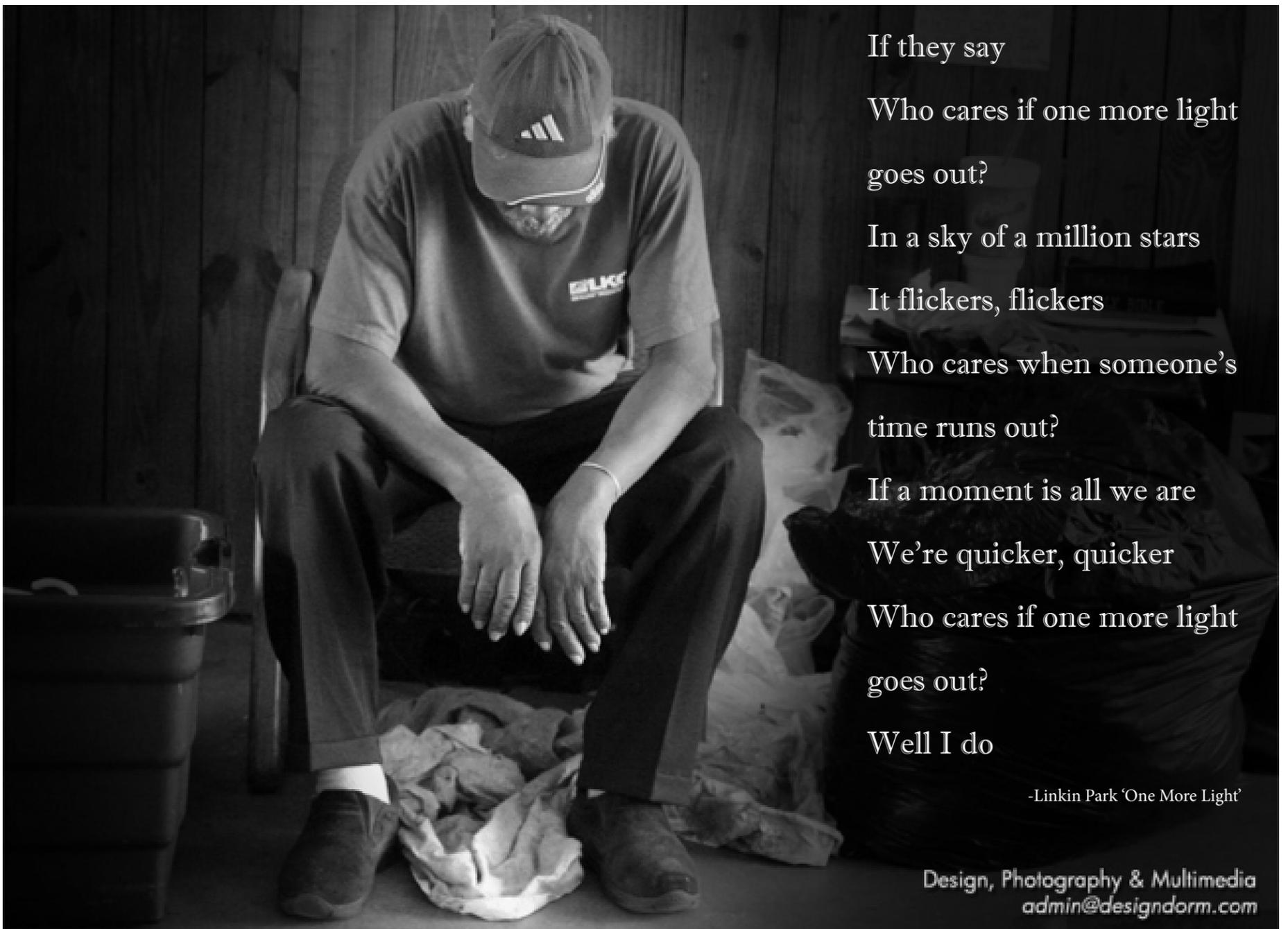
Before the vote, she said the city "has an obligation to take care of the people who are surviving and suffering on our city streets."

Shannon Brown, 55, who has been living in a tiny home at a south Seattle homeless encampment, said there's simply not enough housing for the city's poorest people.

"I live in a little shed, but it's better than living in a tent or in a sleeping bag on the street," she said. "There's no away I can afford to live in Seattle. I don't understand why businesses think it's wrong to help."

John Boufford with the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades said he didn't understand the rhetoric against Amazon, which he noted provides good jobs for thousands of people.

"They're driving this economic engine," he said. "I'm confused about why the city of Seattle is fostering an adversarial relationship with businesses in this city."



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 It flickers, flickers
 Who cares when someone's
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-Linkin Park 'One More Light'

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VETERANS INN

The Problem- 22 Veterans Commit Suicide Daily

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) plagues the majority of our soldiers and often leads to substance abuse and attempted suicide. A staggering 22 veterans commit suicide daily. This also contributes to the fact that 1 out of every 3 homeless men are Veterans.

Our Solution- Veterans Inn

Just 2 hours south of Jacksonville, lies Lake City. The City of Lake City hosts annual visitors from across the country for events ranging from Civil War re-enactments to Blueberry Festivals. Visitors also routinely flock to the area's beautiful spring fed rivers and lakes. This city is renowned for its place in American history with over 150 years of incorporation. It is a rapidly growing city and offers many dining and shopping opportunities, along with public transportation to access them.

It is here that we have established our latest project, Veteran's Inn.

What used to be a low budget motel has been worked on, updated and opened up to accommodate the large population of homeless Veterans in the community. Here we will offer rooms, meals, job placement assistance, and other helpful tools to our residents.

How YOU Can Help- www.homeless.vet

Our goal with this new endeavor is to try and aide these individuals in recovery and rehabilitation. With your support we can help our Veterans and change these statistics. Visit www.homeless.vet to make a donation, volunteer, and see the progress being made in your community.

NEW PROJECT!

We are so excited to announce that Veterans' Inn will be teaming up with Home Depot to make our veterans have an even better experience! Veterans Inn was awarded a grant that will allow Home Depot to renovate some of the rooms and common areas that are used most frequently at the Inn. The project will be underway during the Summer. Look for updates soon!



City approves homeless hospice

BY CYNTHIA HUBERT

The Sacramento City Council on Tuesday evening gave unanimous support to a project that would offer residential care for homeless people suffering from terminal illnesses.

Following an emotional public hearing, the council ultimately rejected a neighborhood association's appeal of the hospice. The care facility will be one of the first of its kind in the country.

Named Joshua's House, after the late grandson of founder Marlene von Friederichs-Fitzwater, the home at 1501 North C St. will offer comfort care to homeless people facing imminent death from cancer, heart conditions, AIDS and other illnesses. It will have 16 to 20 beds and feature private rooms, an indoor garden, skylights, a library, a chapel and a kitchen.

Von Friederichs-Fitzwater, a retired associate professor in the UC Davis College of Medicine, said Joshua's House is only the eighth such project in the nation and the first on the West Coast.

The Alkali and Mansion Flats neighborhood association filed an appeal of the \$3 million, privately funded project, citing a lack of public outreach and information. Group spokesman Sean Wright also argued that the area has an overabundance of homeless services, including the nearby Loaves & Fishes complex, that are a detriment to the quality of life of neighborhood residents.

Eighteen people spoke at Tuesday's public hearing, all but two in favor of the plan. Among the speakers was Jamie Murphy, who said he has terminal cancer and is on the verge of homelessness. "I'm scared," he told the council. "I don't want to go out like this."

At the meeting, Mayor Darrell Steinberg asked staff members to work on finding immediate housing for Murphy.

Councilman Jeff Harris, in giving his support to Joshua's House, pointed out that the bodies of at least three homeless people were discovered last year in the district where Joshua's House is to be located.

"When they perish in the bushes, that belongs to all of us," he said. Harris rejected the notion that Joshua's House might affect crime or property values in the area. "This will cause no harm to the River District," he said.

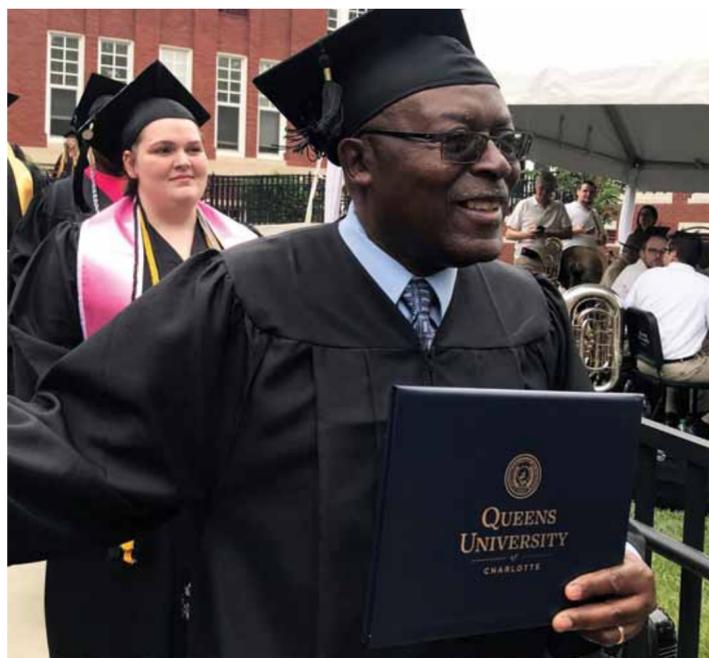
He moved to deny the neighborhood association's appeal, "because it's the right thing to do."

The full council agreed.

Von Friederichs-Fitzwater said Joshua's House could open by the end of this year or in early 2019.



Once a homeless addict, he learned to read at 37- Now, he's a college graduate



Allison Klein

Freddie Sherrill was homeless, an alcoholic and drug addict, and he used to steal his kids' Christmas presents from under the tree and sell them. He was eating out of dumpsters. He could not read or write.

Sherrill spent years in and out of prison and rehab centers in North Carolina. He once threw a brick through a store's glass window on a freezing night so police would bring him in from the cold. But after a long and painful journey, Sherrill was able to claw his way back to sobriety and he even learned to read.

In one of his biggest accomplishments yet, he graduated from Queens University of Charlotte with a bachelor's degree earlier this month at age 65.

"I started a lot of things in my life I didn't finish," Sherrill said. "College wasn't going to be one of them."

Sherrill's troubles started at a very young age. He had a hard time learning to read when he was a kid growing up in Charlotte in the early 1960s, and he was embarrassed about it. To distract his teacher, he used to put tacks on her chair, or worse, steal money from her purse.

By the time he was 8, he was skipping school regularly and stealing from the grocery store to feed himself and his four younger siblings. His family home was so dilapidated that when it rained outside he'd get wet inside.

Sherrill was hanging out with teenagers who gave him wine, and he quickly developed a drinking habit, then a drug problem.

"I used to be a shy kid, but when I took my first drink of alcohol, it made it all go away," he said. "It was the first

time I felt like I fit in."

He started breaking into homes and stealing purses, and as a teen eventually ended up in and out of prison and various treatment centers and halfway houses. This continued through his 20s and late into his 30s.

"I was stealing so much — stealing from neighbors, stealing my nephew's clothes to sell," he said.

He got married and had a couple of children, but he was an absentee husband and father. One day in 1988, he used his last few dollars to buy a bottle of wine, but his hands were so shaky, he dropped it and it shattered on the ground.

"I was crying, and I was trying to get a drink off the broken glass," he said.

He walked over to nearby train tracks with a pistol in his hand and pointed it at his head. He pulled the trigger. The gun didn't go off. Sherrill took it as a sign.

"I was tired of hurting everybody around me," he said. "That was the beginning."

None of the rehab centers in Charlotte would take him back. But a social worker found a halfway house in Morganton, N.C., about 60 miles from Charlotte, that accepted him. Starting fresh, he finally stopped drinking and using drugs.

He started doing yard work for a woman who brought him along to First Presbyterian Church of Morganton. The pas-

tor hired Sherrill to work on the grounds and other jobs. He said the pastor was the first man who ever trusted him.

Sherrill cared about honoring that trust, and he even started to care about himself. He went to a literacy center and started learning the basics.

"I spent a lot of time taking chances doing negative things," he said. "It was time for me to start taking chances doing positive things."

After a time, he convinced his wife to move to Morganton and bring their five children. Two of his daughters were in second and fourth grade; he couldn't help them with their homework.

"I could read Cat in the Hat books, I practiced those with my daughters," he said. "They could read better than I could."

Little by little, he learned to read and write. He took the high school equivalency exam five times and failed. On the sixth, he passed with one point to spare.

"When I stopped drinking and using drugs and alcohol, my whole life was different," he said. "It was like going from being blind to learning to see. I wanted to be a father. I wanted to be part of the world."

He had never had a bank account, so his friends at the church helped him open one.

"Today kids learn that in first and second grade," he said. "I had to get rid of the shame and admit I didn't know how to do things."

He walked over to nearby train tracks with a pistol in his hand and pointed it at his head

And he wanted a better life for his children. "I was determined my children would not grow up like I did," he said.

He moved back to Charlotte for a job as an events setup coordinator for Myers Park Presbyterian Church. He started taking college classes. It took him eight years to earn his associate's degree.

Around that time his son was close to graduating from high school. Sherrill went by Queens University to figure out how to help his son apply for entry, and also for financial aid. The staff explained the process and told him he should apply himself. He declined, saying he was too old, but he helped his son successfully apply to North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro.

Then he had an idea.

He wanted to be sure his son stayed in college, so he came up with a challenge. He'd enroll and have a little friendly competition with his son: Whoever got the best GPA at the end of each semester would give the other one \$100.

"I was challenging my son so he wouldn't drop out," Sherrill said.

In the process, he found he was enjoying taking college classes, and also feeling great about himself. His son graduated in four and a half years and is now a financial adviser with Merrill Lynch. It took Sherrill eight years, but he graduated on May 5 with a degree in human service studies. He'd like to get a job working with underprivileged kids.

"I'm having a different feeling about myself, my self-esteem," he said.

He's been sober for 29 years. And he has a college degree. He marvels at both of those things.

"It's surreal. I'm still pinching myself that this is something I actually accomplished," he said. "It's hard to believe it."

Miami News

New Facility in Miami-Dade Opens to Help Homeless Women, Children

Darryl Forges

Inside a brand new Northwest Miami-Dade building, you would think it's a comfortable apartment complex – but it's much more.

"This is a shelter, but so much more than a shelter for women and children in need in our community to heal, to reclaim their lives, and build a foundation for a brighter future," said Constance Collins, executive director of Lotus Village.

The new Lotus Village will accommodate nearly 500 women and children at any given time, essentially doubling the organization's

community impact. Millions of dollars from organizations and donors made this dream into a reality.

"One of the first things we said when we built this new village is we want to be sure to put children first," said Collins. "We know homelessness can be inter-generational."

"We all have the opportunity for a better life as a community."

That's why it's not only just a shelter, but a place that uses programs like child and family therapy, individual counseling and educational supports to make sure these families have another chance to become

better people, and families.

"I believe we are all one," Collins said. "We all have the opportunity for a better life as a community."



Jacksonville News

'Blessing of the bus': homeless families get safe ride

Beth Reese Cravey

The passengers will be precious cargo, the mission pure.

So Family Promise of Jacksonville, an interfaith hospitality network of area churches that helps families experiencing temporary homelessness, recently did a "blessing of the bus" for its newly purchased \$32,604 transport vehicle. The bus is actually a 15-seat Ford Transit van, which will be used nearly 365 days a year to transport clients to housing at member churches and to job interviews, medical appointments and school, among other things.

"This is the linchpin of our program," said executive director Mark Landschoot. "This is really a rescue vehicle. ... It makes life more manageable for the families."

How to bless a bus? "With joy and celebration," said development director Beth Mixson.

There was also a ribbon cutting, Scripture readings and a prayer, read aloud by a group of Family Promise pastors, board members, donors and other supporters who gathered in a circle around the van.

In the prayer, they thanked God for donations. They prayed for the parents, teenagers and children who will be riding the bus. They prayed for the drivers and volunteers who will be helping them get where they need to go.



"And all of God's people said ..." chanted the pastors. "Amen," said the group.

The vehicle replaces an aging van that was at least 10 years old and lately had spent more time in the shop than on the road. The new vehicle not only provides safe and reliable transportation, but a 50 percent drop in the nonprofit's transportation operating cost, Landschoot said.

"Our other bus was tired, very tired," he said. "Just worn out."

The fundraising campaign to replace the bus was Family Promise of Jacksonville's most successful, totaling \$61,363. The money left after the purchase was put into the nonprofit's transportation fund.

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Homeless veterans seek primary care

Kristin O'Connor

Hundreds of veterans are getting help from a primary care team established specifically for the homeless.

Dr. Susan Toth, Barbara Vidacs and Viana Garcia Jackson run the Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team (H-PACT) in the Lake Baldwin Outpatient Clinic.

"We're the three amigos," Toth, a doctor at the Orlando Veteran Affairs Medical Center, said.

The trio started working together to provide outreach, shelter and medical services to veterans in Central Florida.

Jackson, a social worker, has worked with veterans at several VA facilities across the country.

"Working toward getting them off the street so that they can have a higher rate of success, with engaging in treatment," Jackson said.

Jackson has worked with veterans at several VA facilities across the country. She said Florida presents different challenges because some of the veterans they see only live in Central Florida seasonally, during the winter months.

"We've had people who've been, who've accessed care at the VA in 10, 15, 20 different VAs across the country," Jackson said.

Engagement in health care is one of the primary challenges with the homeless population, according to Vidacs, who spent 24 years with the Army Nurse Corps.

"Particularly among the Vietnam population,



there is a large population of veterans that have been very difficult to engage because of the history related to that wartime. And unfortunately, it still exists," Vidacs said.

"I don't think our work will ever be done, as long as we continue to engage in wars and combat."

Toth said many of the homeless veterans in Orlando have chronic health problems that can become life-threatening in the hospital.

"We had one gentleman who was out in a tent, and one of the people in the camp called 911 and he had a heart attack," Toth said.

Toth described the man's condition as "touch-and-go" initially. After surgery and rehabilitation, he survived, and her team helped him find a place to live.

"There are success stories out there, they might not be told in front of the cameras every day, but there are," Toth said.

According to the 2017 Point in Time Count prepared by the Homeless Services Network of Central Florida, veterans make up 11 percent of the 2,074 homeless people living in Orange, Seminole and Osceola counties.

H-PACT at the Lake Baldwin Outpatient Clinic has helped 381 homeless veterans in the Orlando area.

Toth said the team's goal in the next six to 12 months is to begin using a bus to provide mobile health care to homeless veterans closer to the shelters.

Fort Lauderdale News

Florida waitress dishes out 75,000 dinners for homeless to fulfill God's calling

Jardine Malado

Florida waitress Gloria Lewis says she feels that God has called her to help out the homeless people in her community, so every week, she prepares 225 dinners and 180 breakfasts from her own kitchen to serve those in need.

Lewis, who founded her charity called Care in Action with her husband, Anthony Vargas, in 2012, started out by spending her own money to create 20 meals a week.

Each weekend, she buys \$700 worth of groceries so that she can prepare dozens of meals consisting of rice, chicken parmesan, spaghetti, meatballs, barbecue chicken and some vegetables.

With the support of Pennsylvania businessman Bob Byers, Lewis and her husband were able to feed more people in need. The businessman started to help out by giving the couple a check for \$10,000 in 2015 and he has since been sending money to the charity regularly.

Lewis, who came to the U.S. from Barbados in 1987, said that she serves the poor every week because she knows how "easy it is

to become homeless."

"I have always worked in low-income jobs and I could see just how easy it is to become homeless. It's so easy," she said, as reported by Fox News.

"The stereotypes that surround the homeless are so far from the truth. I see myself every day in these people and I think it could be me so easily so I go and feed them," she continued.

The 54-year-old grandmother of three expressed concern that the number of homeless people in Broward County is growing despite her efforts.

She believes that the soaring rent in Fort Lauderdale is one of the primary causes of homelessness and she is urging politicians to increase their efforts in making housing more affordable.

Lewis, who also works full time as a waitress in Fort Lauderdale, noted that her charity now prepares 200 meals for the poor every Sunday. According to her charity's website, her son helps out by writing encouraging Scripture or "God loves you" on the Styrofoam lid of each meal.

She believes that her charity work is "God's purpose," and she hopes to continue with her efforts in helping the poor.

"I couldn't do this without God, he called me and



my husband to do this. There's such a stigma about homeless people but they are a group of people that are so helpful to one another and so supportive. It's been my honor to do what I do," she said, according to Fox News.

Tampa News

USF Student Organization Does More Than Feed the Homeless

Hafsa Quraishi

For most college students, Friday nights are a time to wind down and enjoy their youth. But for one group at the University of South Florida, it's a time to give back to their community.

Project Downtown Tampa is a student organization that prepares and distributes food to the homeless once a week.

Every Friday afternoon at 4:30, the organization gathers in the USF Marshall Student Center food court. While their classmates snack on Papa John's and Chick-Fil-A, the group works in a back corner, preparing food to distribute to the homeless.

Logan Suites, a student who regularly volunteers with Project Downtown Tampa, is one of 15 people assembling turkey sandwiches from ingredients donated by a local restaurant.

"We're working in kind of an assembly line style, where each person does one job," says Suites. "So I will just put the meat on the sandwich while other people will do their specific jobs."

Since the university's funds can only be utilized for on-campus events, the organization operates primarily on donations. The ingredients for their sandwiches are donated by Salem's Fresh Eats, and their pastries are given by Panera Bread.

The organization holds an annual banquet to raise money, which goes towards other items the people they serve may need, including hygiene kits and bus passes. This year, they raised nearly \$20,000.

Though some simply see the group as a food delivery service, the group's president, Yasmeen Alkishawi, says it's about more than just food:

"We hold ourselves to the idea that we don't just go downtown to feed the stomach, but to feed the soul," Alkishawi says. "So we're not just dropping off food and leaving - we stay, we talk."

Alkishawi began volunteering with the organization as a high school student looking to log some volunteer hours. Now, five years later, she still comes almost every Friday.

"It's something that I promised myself that I'd make time for no matter what," she says. "It's a commitment that you make, so as long as they're there, I'm going to be there."

Project Downtown Tampa is based on a group created in 2006 by a couple of college students in Miami. This national organization now has more than 20 chapters across America, including ten in Florida. Together, they've distributed over 1.2 million meals and counting. While its founders built it on the Islamic principles of generosity, compassion, and charity, students of all faiths are welcome to volunteer.

The volunteers are usually a mix of current and former students who are committed to giving back to



their community. Alkishawi's fiancé, Abdul Dasankop, recently graduated from USF and works full-time – but he still shows up every Friday to chop the lettuce.

"You kind of just want to give your good in this world, like I feel it's your duty to do that," says Dasankop. "To take a couple hours out of my whole entire week, that's like nothing to me. I feel like I should be doing more."

One hour and 200 subs later, the volunteers load the food into their cars and head downtown. Those who couldn't help out earlier meet the group in an empty parking lot, ready to contribute.

There are four distribution sites the organization hits every Friday: Good Samaritan Inn, the Salvation Army, Borrell Park, and Lykes Gaslight Square Park. The group divides the food and splits up to serve each site before meeting back up at the end of the night.

Before they leave for those sites, Volunteer Coordinator Samaa El-Kolalli goes over the game plan and some last-minute safety reminders.

"If anyone asks you for something that is not food or water, refer them to your site leader so we can get the stuff next week," El-Kolalli tells the 30 students.

After those reminders, a handful of them set off for Good Samaritan Inn, a hostel where most of the residents can't afford dinner.

The lobby at the inn doubles as a living room, and, now, a dining room, as the students set up at a table right near the en-

trance. The volunteers hand a sandwich, water bottle, and a pastry to grateful residents who humbly say thank you as they make their way down the assembly line.

After about 20 minutes of socializing, the volunteers say their goodbyes and rejoin the other students at the Gasparilla Pirate ship dock by the Tampa Convention Center. There, they distribute the rest of the food they prepared.

One of the people mingling with the students is Heather Westgate. She met the students on a Friday a few years ago, when she was hungry and homeless. Now, she's back to visit her friends.

"Everybody that I've met from Project Downtown has become extended family to me," says Westgate. "It makes me feel like I still have people out there that care about me."

That familiarity is visible between Alkishawi and Westgate, who spend the rest of the night standing close together and gushing like sisters about Alkishawi's wedding. Westgate is on the guest list.

The group gathers one last time before leaving downtown. This time, for prayer, led by student Saeed Sinan.

"We only serve you for the sake of our lord, Allah, and we do not accept any reward or any thanks from you," Sinan recites, quoting a verse from the Quran.

And with that, the students go their separate ways. Until next Friday.

"We hold ourselves to the idea that we don't just go downtown to feed the stomach, but to feed the soul,"

Items the shelter will always need...

Gift Cards

Coffee and Coffee Cups

Towels and Washcloths

Toothpaste and Toothbrushes

Socks and Hygiene Kits

Cleaning Supplies

Plastic Cutlery and Cups



Send items to 4700 SW 51st Street Suite 208 Davie, FL 33314

Homeless Voice PSA- Energy Savings!

Sean Cononie

At the Homeless Voice, we don't want you to become homeless. We also want your housing cost such as mortgages to be as less as they can. If you save energy all year long it can amount to you paying an extra mortgage payment per year. When you do this you can save a ton of money on interest and shorten the length of your loan time. For instance, if you have a 30-year loan and you make a principal payment of about \$1500 each year your 30 year loan just went to 20 years. Save money on your electric bill and pay it to your mortgage each year. You can do it. Yes, you can. Here are some tips from FPL website.

What to do to save energy when no one is home varies on a lot of factors. For example, the time of year, location, size and type of home, length of time away from your home, etc...

During the warm weather, we recommend you set your home's cooling system to 78 degrees Fahrenheit when you are home. If you will be out of the house for four or more hours, consider raising the setting to 82 degrees.

When it's cooler and you need to heat your home, you can save energy and keep your costs in check by keeping your thermostat at 68 degrees Fahrenheit while you are at home and lower it to 65 degrees when you leave your house.

Going away on vacation?

Keep in mind that the best temperature setting varies from person to person, home to home, and A/C unit to A/C unit, but whatever your comfortable temperature is, remember this rule of thumb: "By simply setting the thermostat up 1 degree higher than normal while you're away during the warmer months can save you up to 5% of your cooling cost". Here are tips on a few different scenarios:

Away for a few days – If you're only going to be gone for a short time, just a day or two, it's better to keep the air conditioner on, but raise the thermostat to 82 degrees or higher so you're using less energy. Cooling an empty house to the temperature you'd be comfortable at while home can be wasteful and unnecessary. By closing the curtains before leaving the house will block the afternoon sun and help keep the home cooler.

Away for a week or more – For longer vacations when no one will be using your home for a week or more at a time, set the temperature to 82 degrees or higher while away. For ultimate convenience and control, consider installing a smart thermostat, and preferably one you can adjust from your smart phone. This way, you'll be able to monitor and control your home's largest energy user right from your phone – wherever you are and you can begin to cool your home before your return. Learn more about smart thermostats and the benefits they can provide by visiting our recent smart thermostat blog.

Away for the season – If you are a seasonal resident and will be away from your home for several months, first consider what type of thermostat you have because the perfect setting varies depending on thermostat type you own.

For manual thermostats, the perfect setting is about 77 degrees if you live in a condo 1,2 and 80 degrees if you live in a house. This setting will prevent mold growth in your home without making your energy bill go way up.

For programmable thermostats, consider setting it to 72 for two hours each morning prior to sunrise and then 82 the rest of the day. This will help prevent mold growth when the air is cooler and humidity is highest.

Humidity control – Set the controls of your humidistats and/or dehumidifiers to 58 percent relative humidity (RH) to maintain acceptable

humidity, since some humidistat sensors are inaccurate by as many as 10 percentage points

For maximum energy savings – Use portable dehumidifiers instead of air conditioning. Set dehumidifiers at 58 percent by sinks and showers, one for every 1,000 square feet. Be sure to place the dehumidifiers so the water runs into the drain.

Other steps to save energy when away from your home on vacation:

Refrigerator – If you are going to be away from your home for months at a time, you may want to consider turning off the circuit breakers for the refrigerator, and ensure that the fridge is clean and the door is left open.

Pool pump – If you have a pool, your pool pump can be the second biggest energy user. You can reduce your pool pump's run time while you are away to save energy. We suggest you run your pool pump four hours per day in the winter, and six hours per day in the summer. If you have a variable-speed pool pump be sure to talk to a certified or registered pool contractor on how to set it while you are away. Also, by lowering the temperature setting of your pool or hot tub you will reduce filter run times.

Water heater – A traditional, tank-style electric water heater keeps your water hot day and night so it's available when you need it. If you're not going to be home, you'll save energy by turning it off. See how to look for your tank's on/off switch. If you're going to be away for an extended period and don't have an on/off switch, you may want to turn off the circuit breaker to the hot water heater. Keep in mind that you may need a few hours to heat the tank when you return. For a natural gas water heater: Turn it down to "low" or to "vacation mode."

Lighting – Can be the fourth largest energy user for homeowners. But many of you are already taking steps to reduce the cost of lighting your home by swapping out older bulbs for more energy-efficient LEDs. Also, don't forget to turn off your lights when you leave for vacation and consider using automatic timers.

Electronics – When leaving on vacation, unplug all electronics, and turn off cable or satellite boxes until you return to ensure that you efficiently are not paying for energy you aren't using.

Did you know some appliances use energy even when they are off?

We suggest turning off or even unplugging appliances and other items that use energy even when they're in off- or idle-mode. Look for items that have always-on digital clocks or other displays, these can be energy stealers. Below is a list of some of the best appliances to turn off or unplug while you're away:

Home entertainment equipment, including video game consoles, set-top boxes (DVRs), and other TV-related devices – Just two of these boxes can equal the energy use of a refrigerator, and that can cause your bill to increase. So, unplugging these items could lead to a savings of a few dollars a month.

Desktop computers, monitors, and other computer equipment – This includes those pesky charging devices.



Be sure to give your home that lived-in look while you're away by using programmable timers that allow you to manage which lights to turn on, when and for how long while you're away from home.

Many of us have multiple devices – phone, tablet, laptop – and even multiple people using them. Did you know that the average cost of charging these devices is coming in at about \$15/year? It's definitely worth unplugging the chargers when you're not home.

Home stereo equipment, like AV receivers, stereos, and speakers – Left plugged in or turned on when not in use can add a few extra dollars to your bill. If connected to power strips, they can be easily be switched off and then back on.

Electronic kitchen appliances such as coffee makers, microwaves, or small refrigerators – Some devices, like toasters or stand mixers, don't draw any energy unless they're being used, so there's really no need to unplug them.

Miscellaneous devices, alarm clocks and night-lights draw relatively little power (just a couple watts), so although it's still beneficial to unplug or turn them off if possible, they may not be high-priority devices. With that said, every

penny counts!

Technologies that can automatically turn off your electronics

For many customers, it's also worth considering options that can automatically turn off electronics whenever they aren't being used (not just when you leave for vacation). The two most prominent options for doing this include using advanced power strips or smart plugs:

Smart plug is an outlet that can be controlled by a mobile app and lets you turn on and off any appliance that plugs into a standard wall socket.

Advanced power strip also known as APS look just like ordinary power strips, except that they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by many consumer electronics and present one option to address unnecessary power draw.

Lastly, safety and security – while saving on your monthly energy bill is important, safety and security are even more important. Be sure to give your home that lived-in look while you're away by using programmable timers that allow you to manage which lights to turn on, when and for how long while you're away from home.

We're always working to keep your energy bills low, and helping you find ways to make your bill lower. When you get back from your vacation, take our Online Home Energy Survey to get a free personalized recommendation for managing your energy usage.

By simply setting the thermostat up 1 degree higher than normal while you're away during the warmer months can save you up to 5% of your cooling cost

Or send your check to Angel Program * PO Box 292-577 * Davie, FL 33329

Go to pg 2 to cut out the mail in membership form

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