

Sharing sanctuary: safety, sobriety, spirituality, solutions....

...all this and more without government funding.



"Homeless helping homeless" at its best

Center member Howard Murphy (seated, left) coaches Hurricane survivor George Claiborne (seated, right) about job strategies in the Greater Milwaukee area. Kendall Williams, Interim Shelter Manager (standing), listens with Shereka Anderson in the background. George, Shereka and her daughters, Amonée and Eneisha, are from Mississippi. George has decided to start his new chapter in Milwaukee. Shereka is still unsure.

Leaders and members of the Tony Lee Sanctuary Center (pictured at right, three top right) welcome seven people who became a family as they were displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Flown to Wisconsin and transported to State Fair Park, they learned of our Center through the "homeless network." The

Repairers of the Breach community members embraced the visitors and showered them with love and compassion. After sharing their survival stories, members of their new-found "Breach family" vowed to pray for them and encouraged them to keep strong in hope and faith, assuring them that life would improve and they would endure the challenges to come.

Carrying bags bursting with blankets, shoes and clothing, their hearts warmed by the generosity, compassion, hugs and prayers of our members, seven homeless people from Mississippi left profoundly aware they have a new family named Repairers of the Breach.



Group photos by M. Brown

Survivors of Hurricane Katrina—some of our country's newest homeless people—find compassionate support at "The Breach"



Lynn is a new member of our community of homeless people in transition at the Tony Lee Sanctuary Center. She grew up in a small and stable family: one mother, one father, one sister. Despite a learning disability she finished high school. She married and had two sons, but her husband systematically abused her throughout their eighteen-year marriage. In and out of the domestic abuse shelter system, she tried for years to keep her family together. But the violence never stopped. When the boys were 11 and 14, they were taken out of the home by family members. Now 18 and 21, they struggle to forgive. When Lynn finally left their father, she became homeless, on the streets. She has found safety, stability, hope and community at Repairers of the Breach. Here, she showers, gets clean clothes, has occasional meals, uses the phone. She plans to attend on-site literacy classes to improve her reading comprehension and to work with our employment counselors. Her desire for a living-wage job is strong; her need is even stronger. Like so many members of our community of homeless helping homeless, Lynn is "transitioning" back to the mainstream.



Portraits courtesy of Leroy Skalsstad

For Stanley, who has moved on, our Center continues to be an anchor in life's changing waters. Having lost his apartment in 2000 after years of hidden drug addiction, he wound up in the penitentiary on a drug charge — "an eye opener." He spent the next three years in a cycle of recovery and relapse, ending with parole revocation and a final return to prison, where he had a spiritual awakening. "Seemed like a void was filled when I found the Lord." After his release he heard about our Center from a homeless man while staying in an overnight shelter. Stanley credits "The Breach" for keeping him out of trouble during his new chapter. Using the Center's resources, he found solutions to his homelessness. "I was doin' good coming to The Breach." A year after his release, he has a home, a fiancée and a well-paying job building transmission parts at Milwaukee Wire. Fourteen months clean and sober, "Life is great, and The Breach is still there for me. When I call Sister, she does her best for me." A proud "alumnus," Stanley calls our Center "a very good place.... Homeless people need a place that's positive. We're not bad people, we just had bad experiences."



Not only do homeless people have the solutions to homelessness, they are the solutions. — Tony Lee, late visionary and co-founder
For information on how to donate to or volunteer for Repairers of the Breach, call (414) 934-9305; write c/o PO Box 13791, Milwaukee, WI 53213; or email mfw.repairers5812@sbcglobal.net

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