No Worries.

IT’S STORIES LIKE THIS ONE that have compelled the Boulder Shelter to redouble its efforts in helping people find stable housing as the solution to their homelessness. It’s a tall task and one we cannot accomplish without your help.

Told recently, by a Shelter staff person:

When he arrived to sign his lease, the first thing he said was “I’m nervous.” An understandable sentiment…he has lived on the streets, in the parks, and in the open space of Boulder for the past 26 years. Moving into his own apartment and meeting the expectations of his lease, of the Shelter’s Housing First program and of his case managers were going to be new challenges. As we settled into the large pile of lease paperwork it became clear he was ready for this change. He kept saying, “So, if I treat everyone with respect and keep the lines of communication open, we’ll be good, right?” Absolutely!

In the middle of the lease signing, he apologized for looking past me and proceeded to say, “That’s my tree. It probably still has my boom box under it from 1992!” He smiled, a warm, gentle smile, and proceeded to verbally guide me to his tree. We didn’t take a hike out to his tree as we had alternative plans for the afternoon…moving him in to his new home.

With the paperwork complete, we proceeded to his new place and he excitedly unlocked the door so we could go in. We walked through together looking at everything and making sure he knew how to make everything work. Then we were going to take a walk around his new neighborhood so he could see where he could do his laundry, where to recycle, compost and dispose of his trash, where his mailbox is, etc. Before going out, he asked “Can I leave some things here?” I replied “Yes, of course, this is your home!” His next action took me by surprise. He unzipped his pants! His snow pants… he wasn’t going to need them…for our walk or for the night. After 26 years of spending the night out in the myriad conditions that weather in Boulder County provides, he was finally going to have a night that he didn’t have to worry about staying warm and being safe. What a gift!
Finding a Place to Sleep

It’s raining outside. And cold.

“But at least,” you say to yourself.

“it’s not snow.” Because snow
means it’s below freezing out
there and you’re cold
enough now at night.

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Finding a Place to Sleep

Cardboard and quiet are critical components.

By Patrick Gildea

Blocking sleep, so you lean against the cold steel and let the thoughts come.

Why is no longer important. Now all that matters is how to get out of the situation.

For the umpteenth time you go over your options, and again, come up with nothing.

You need to stay clean in order to get and keep a job. Not only your body has to be clean, but your clothes.

You can’t give out a phone number because prospective employers often stay away when a friendly voice answers, “Salvation Army,” or “Boulder Shelter.” They’re unsure of giving a bum a fighting chance.

At dawn and yawn startles the silence. Time to get some shut eye and, to this end, you lie down in a semi-fetal position. First you spread the towel over your legs and then double-fold your blanket, placing it over your lower body. Your coat will keep the top of you warm, so the only item you have left to worry about is your feet.

The cardinal rule states that you can’t sleep with your shoes off. If you have to get up and run, or fight the last thing you want is to do it in socks. So obviously you can’t foresee the skin’s digging into someone’s hip bones.”

Then suddenly it’s 3:30. You’ve no need to look at your watch anymore. Every morning at 3:30 the temperature drops suddenly. It starts with your toes and slowly creeps up your body. The indifferent cold touches all of you, even though you’re covered. And you dread the thought of the upcoming winter.

“Boon!” you jolt awake to the sound of a back firing car and lie with pounding heart and even faster breathing. Quietly, you listen to the sounds around you and relax into an uneasy watchfulness. Your safety is of primary concern, but your need to sleep is of such importance that some part of you balances on a tightwire of dreaming and listening.

There she is again. Featureless face, yet radiating love and beauty. Open arms accept you for who you are.

Then she’s gone with the sound of approaching laughter. And you lie in silence listening to fading footsteps and dripping rain, as aspind loneliness seeps into the depth of your soul, like melted butter into the pores of a slice of bread.

And drops a tear from your eye.

It’ll be dawn soon and you can go find a warm place to drink some coffee and maybe have a conversation or, even some beer today. Back the memories of your dream. Maybe.
Summer is here! Traditionally, this is the time of year when the Boulder Shelter has limited its overnight services to homeless adults who are clean and sober and have income. However, as part of the new Boulder County Homeless Service System*, the Shelter is now open year-round for all qualified clients. Qualified clients are homeless adults who have lived, worked or gone to school in our community (Boulder County), have histories of homelessness and are deemed to be some of the most vulnerable people in our neighborhoods.

With the Shelter open at full capacity, 365 days a year, there is more time and space for Shelter clients to work with our staff to find a permanent housing solution, which is ultimately the goal. As we like to remind ourselves, and our clients, the Shelter is not the destination, it is only a stopping place on the way to stable housing.

Thank you for your support in helping Boulder County’s homeless adults on their path out of homelessness.

Greg Harms, Chief Executive Officer

*For more information about Boulder County’s new effort to address homelessness, search for ‘Homeless Solutions for Boulder County’ on the County’s website.

The mission of the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless is to create avenues to stable housing for our community’s homeless adults from a foundation of supportive and safe shelter.

The exchanges of goodwill and service that happen every night at the Shelter continue as they always have - largely because of the voluntary contributions of people just like you. (In fact, the Boulder Shelter is now open 365 days a year at full capacity.)

The offering of a safe, warm bed, a hot meal and basic health care to those in crisis is still a big part of what we do at the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless.

But we’ve learned that sheltering itself is not the solution to a person’s homelessness. And we believe the greatest obstruction to moving on in life is being un-housed. Only stable housing can make someone’s homelessness a thing of the past.

To that end, we have recently restated our mission to emphasize that all our work done for people experiencing homelessness starts from the assumption that the first support measure should be the provision of housing.

In many ways the Shelter’s mission is not changing. Most of our current programs and services remain. Our mission is evolving, however, as we rethink and deepen the ways in which we can assert that housing itself is the foundation and platform for achieving health, recovery, and well-being. Today more than ever, we see our fundamental objective as being part of the process by which people get housed again. And there is a newfound sense of urgency to appropriately prioritize and serve those with the longest homelessness and deepest needs first.

Clearly, the Shelter does not have the resources to offer everyone a place to live. That is why we are working within Boulder County’s homeless Coordinated Entry system to help prioritize clients for Shelter services and for housing. Shelter services are now focused on those…

- who have ties to Boulder County
- who have been homeless at least 6 months out of the last three years
- who have a disabling condition
HFS

In providing Housing-focused shelter, the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless is now organizing its services around this principle: engaging in activities and applying resources that lead to housing for our community’s homeless adults.

Housing-focused shelter (HFS) facilitates housing entry for high-needs individuals who are experiencing homelessness by providing overnight sheltering and wrap-around services on an extended basis. Those participating in HFS can remain at the Boulder Shelter until they have been successfully, permanently housed.

Did you know?

- The people who are most likely to end up with no housing at all are those who are the poorest, the most vulnerable, those with the weakest support systems and the fewest coping skills.”
  — Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, United States Senate, 2013
- The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless found that the average homeless person costs the state $43,000 a year in emergency-room visits, jail costs and other expenses, while providing housing for that person would cost just $17,000.
- Since October 1, 2017, 45 people have moved from the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless into housing.

a role in this ...

The Boulder Shelter is a safe, predictable way station for the most vulnerable in our community as they work with us to find a stable housing solution. These housing solutions will look different for different people. Some solutions will require ongoing support but some will not.

Regardless of the path, however, the goal is the same; stable housing for our homeless neighbors.

Thank you for making our work together possible.

• How long have you been volunteering at the Shelter and in what position do you volunteer for?
  ALMOST EIGHT YEARS. Performing the duties of kitchen lead for most of that time.
• What inspired you to volunteer at the Shelter?
  I do believe the answer will be the same as many of the other volunteers. A desire to give back. When you look at your own life and how fortunate it has been, it only seems right to try to help others not so lucky. The shelter has been a perfect place to hone the skills of sharing.
• What is your favorite story or interaction from your time volunteering at the Shelter?
  A young volunteer lady, from another country, was unwrapping frozen pizza when I arrived. So thinking she knew what to do, she was put in charge of the pizza cooking. Just before the doors opened the pizza came out of the ovens, hot, but still pretty soft. EEEk! Turns out she did not know to remove the cardboard from the pizza bottom. Quickly the pies were back in the ovens and fifteen minutes later, whew! All was well.
• What’s something you like to do when you’re not at the Shelter?
  I have many things I enjoy doing: making art, music, performing magic shows, hiking, skiing, and especially movie watching. A cinema fanatic am I.
• Any advice for new volunteers?
  Stay calm! Ask questions. Try to project an air of lightness, fun and humor if possible, while doing a serious job.
The Boulder Shelter in our community.

**Tube to Work Day**
Thank you for making your Tube to Work Day count even more by making donations to the Boulder Shelter!

**THANK YOU**
for donating your dimes to the Boulder Shelter at Lucky’s Market South Boulder’s Bags for Change program!

**AND** very special thanks to our committee, volunteers, golfers, and sponsors for your great support of our 24th Annual Boulder Shelter Golf Classic on June 4, 2018!

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