



Ninth Street Neighbors

It is common for the street homeless to live in shared areas, typically close to resources they need for survival. Our community has a number of these "camps." Housing for New Hope is working closely with volunteers, congregations, and businesses in three areas to help the homeless: with Open Table Ministry, in the New Hope Commons area near Highway 15-501; First Presbyterian Church, in downtown Durham; and Ninth Street Neighbors, around Ninth Street in Durham. We asked Griff Gatewood and Matt Pridgen, both involved in the Ninth Street effort, to share their thoughts.

A New Response to an Old Question

by Griff Gatewood

About a year ago, I began serving on the Deaconate of Blacknall Memorial Presbyterian. Shortly after that, a perennial conversation sprang up: how do we relate to the men who are homeless who live around our church?

This is an old question that Blacknall has answered in many ways. We have welcomed brothers and sisters to worship. Staff have handed out sandwiches. Donations have been given to Urban Ministries and Durham Rescue Mission. But the question came up again: how do we relate to these guys who both worship with us and panhandle from us?

A real breakthrough happened when we met with staff from Housing for New Hope. They spoke to us about their vision of saying both "yes" and "no." This reflects our hearts' desire to offer hope while keeping boundaries. They also spoke of the treatment model known as Housing First, which places housing at the therapeutic center of the recovery from homelessness and disabilities. This model has given us hope for the guys across the street.

Out of this meeting have grown our efforts to educate our congregation and coordinate with our neighbors who have homes—be they churches or businesses—and our neighbors who don't. In our church, we have developed *Befriend, Be Wise, Be Involved* as a guide. First, it encourages people to encounter their neighbors who are homeless as people and not as problems. Second,

Shop at Whole Foods on May 6, and Support Housing for New Hope

On Tuesday, May 6, Whole Foods in Durham will donate 5% of that day's sales to Housing for New Hope.

Housing for New Hope staff will be on hand throughout the day to share stories about their work. And please join executive director Terry Allebaugh and friends, who will provide musical entertainment in the Whole Foods Café from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Whole Foods is located at 621 Broad Street in Durham (at the intersection of Broad Street and Main Street, across from Duke's East Campus). It is open from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week.



Homeless men are fixtures in the parking lot of St. Joseph's Episcopal Church, close to Ninth Street in Durham.

it instructs them to be knowledgeable about how to stay safe as they engage these neighbors. And third, the pamphlet offers ways that they can be more involved.

My hope is that from these efforts we will be changed as a church and be prepared to respond when Slim or Larry needs a place to live. My hope is that as people are educated, guided, and encouraged, we all might be blessed by the Holy Spirit to be good actors of the gospel as we seek to love and know our neighbors in our community.

Griff Gatewood is housing developer for CASA in Raleigh. For more information about Ninth Street Neighbors, please contact Griff at (919) 286-2518.

American Dreamer

by Matt Pridgen

This can't be right. In Durham, North Carolina? One block from Duke University? They live...in the church parking lot?

Poor guys. If only there was something I could do. I suppose cash is out of the question. The last thing they need is more booze. And the last thing I want is to be an enabler.

There must be somewhere they can go. Isn't that what the shelter is for? How about all those empty bedrooms in Trinity Park?

Maybe they're hungry. I guess I could get them something from Cosmic Cantina. But what difference will one deluxe steak burrito make in the long run? And besides, I really should be getting home.

Hey, how does that verse go again? I think it was Jesus...or maybe it's Deuteronomy. The one about the poor always being among us. How does it go?

Maybe I could help them get a job. You know, teach a man to fish. But they smell so bad. And what do I know about fishing after all?

Now I remember. Something about bootstraps. And how we're all equal in God's eyes. You know they don't call this the land of opportunity for nothing.

Matt Pridgen is a member of St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in Durham and a program associate at the North Carolina Community Development Initiative in Raleigh. To read more of Matt's dream, please visit www.housingfornewhope.org and click on "First Person."