



Shelter Stories

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. LUKE'S SHELTER

SUMMER 2010

Offering transitional shelter and life-reclaiming support to people experiencing homelessness

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From resident to role model

A measure of how far Larry Roberson has come since arriving at St. Luke's Shelter can be found in a hotel room in Ocean City, Maryland's beach resort. That's where the 48-year-old Roberson spent several days in April on his first real vacation ever.

"The bed was this big," Roberson says, stretching his arms as far as they can go. "My hotel room was right on the beach."

Roberson's trip to Ocean City is part of a longer journey from his native North Carolina to Baltimore and then Washington, where in the mid-1980s, he began using crack cocaine and became homeless.

In 2008, after more than 20 years on the street, he found his way to St. Luke's and spent nearly eight months as a resident. He's now back, but as a staff mem-

THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE Onetime shelter resident Larry Roberson has returned to St. Luke's as a staff counselor.

ber, mentoring residents who aren't that different from him.

They've been on that journey, too.

"I was honored to get the opportunity to serve," says Roberson. "I want to be a light of encouragement for the guys."

Roberson came to Washington in the early 1980s, working as a bartender and maintenance man. He enrolled in an automobile mechanic program, but the late hours and the fact that, as he puts it, "I had not learned yet to use my own mind," led him to begin abusing drugs.

Even while he was using, he volunteered at Third Street Church of God's homeless outreach programs. He learned about St. Luke's at Miriam's Kitchen, where he ate breakfast on occasion, and his caseworker helped arrange an interview. He stopped using and came to St. Luke's.

During his stay, Roberson struggled with his job hunt, but found that boosting the spirits of other residents helped him. "One thing I've learned is to encourage myself and other people," he says. "What you're going through will lessen as you encourage someone else."

Eventually, Roberson got hired at Charlie's Place, where he works as a kitchen coordinator and helps schedule volunteers. Last fall, he accepted a second job at St. Luke's. He's also considering college. In his free time, he writes poetry and visits with his mother and siblings, who live in the area. And he's planning his next trip, hoping to get to Philadelphia to see the Liberty Bell for the first time. "Places like that will spark my mind," he says.

Roberson's goal at St. Luke's is simple: to touch the lives of one or two residents. If everyone does that, he says, "we can change our world, one person at a time."

—Story and Photo by Derek Willis

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From the Pastor

Greetings! Life at the Shelter has been humming along as usual, thanks to our fantastic residential supervisor, Saeed Woodall.

As you may be aware, Shalom Mulkey has stepped down from her volunteer role as Shelter director after years of service. She has poured her heart and soul into this ministry, and for that we are immensely grateful and in her debt.

So how is the Shelter being run? Through partnerships! St. Luke's United Methodist Church has merged with Metropolitan Memorial UMC at Nebraska and New Mexico

avenues, and Metropolitan runs a four-man shelter. The two shelters have agreed to partner with one another. This means we will be writing grants together, coordinating our publicity, and helping one another strengthen our respective shelter programs.

But St. Luke's Shelter continues to need your support. While the Metropolitan shelter's strength is in its congregation, the greatest asset of St. Luke's is the broader community—you. Your donations of money, meals, and supplies are what enable us to provide this much-needed service.

We would also love for you to consider joining the Shelter's advisory council. The more ideas, the the more skills and areas of expertise, the better Shelter we will become. For information, contact Derek Willis, 202-904-1168, dwillis@gmail.com.

I look forward to getting to know you as we work together, helping transform not only individual lives but of our community and city.

We go forward!

—Kate Murphey



ROCK-AND-ROLL FUNDRAISER, JULY 10
"Pre-post-rock" quartet Yell County will headline Charm Aid 2010, an annual benefit for St Luke's Shelter to be held at Gin & Tonic, 2408 Wisconsin

Avenue NW, on Saturday, July 10 at 6:30 pm. The show also features Dirty Bomb and Glover Park's own The Charm Offensive. Suggested donation: \$10. (Photo by Mark Trimble/Creative Commons)

ST. LUKE'S SHELTER

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ADVISORY COUNCIL

Traci Copeland, Tyler Gordon, Margaret Guroff, Barbara Halpern, Merilee Janssen, Susan Lepper, John Snedden, Derek Willis

STAFF

Residential Supervisor:
Saeed Woodall
Shelter Aides:
Joseph Boddie
Glenn Ralph
Larry Roberson

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Bobbie Carr, Shelter Dinners

SERVICE PARTNERS

Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place
Georgetown Ministry Center
Metropolitan House
Miriam's Kitchen

How to Contribute

Along with spreading the word about St. Luke's Shelter's work and mission to friends and neighbors, you can help the Shelter by donating meals, time, or money.

Here are some easy ways to contribute:

- Through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) for federal employees. Our CFC number is 50532.
- Make a contribution by check or online with a credit card at our website, www.stlukesshelter.org.
- Shop online at iGive.com and a percentage of your sale can be donated to St. Luke's Shelter.

- Share your wisdom by teaching Shelter residents about a life skill. Recent classes taught by volunteers included basic computer skills and resume writing.

- Become an overnight volunteer and spend a Saturday night in the staff suite at the Shelter.

- Drop off a hot meal for seven (six residents and one staff member) at the Shelter. Many dinner volunteers stay to share a meal with Shelter residents.

For more information on giving money or goods or volunteering your time, please contact Derek Willis, 202-904-1168, dwillis@gmail.com.

Why I Volunteer: The Breakfast Club

As a Washington, D.C. transplant, I entered into ministry with the men at St. Luke's Shelter not by any initiative of my own. Ever since my husband and I were led to Glover Park a year and a half ago, the notion of "place"—as a foundation of the Christian faith and inseparable from the Christian calling to love—has never been more pronounced.

By the Lord's provision, we were welcomed into a church community through which we were introduced to St. Luke's Shelter, an incredible ministry taking place just around the corner from our home. A group of us now meet regularly at the Shelter on Saturday mornings to cook and eat breakfast with the residents.

I eagerly look forward to the moments I get to spend with the men, listening to their stories and sharing my own, laughing a lot, fighting for the last piece of bacon, getting updates on job prospects, and being reminded of how little I know about professional sports.

But as I was reflecting on the question of why I choose to serve the Shelter, I realized that my ministry has become so much more than just a Saturday morning affair. It is about loving other people and letting them love me. It's about building bridges and deepening friendships with people from a diverse set of circumstances, backgrounds, and parts of the world, all of whom—myself included—now call Washington home. It's about entering into each other's brokenness and carrying each other's burdens, both large and small, holding each other accountable to the commitments we make, and staying connected when one of us moves



FOOD FOR THE SOUL Meals at the Shelter are provided by—and shared with—volunteers. (Photo by LoveJanine/Creative Commons)

on. It's about entering into and being a part of a community whose

mission is to invest in the future life of this city and love the people who inhabit it.

Whether I'm enjoying blueberry pancakes on a beautiful spring morning, shoveling out a neighbor's snowy walkway alongside a Shelter resident, shopping for groceries for our Shelter meals, or worshipping with another resident at church on Sunday, I serve to both feed others with and be fed by the love of Jesus Christ. It has been a privilege to be a part of the St. Luke's Shelter community, and I can only pray that I will touch the lives of the men who move through it half as much as they have touched mine.

—Sarah Campbell

Walk for Justice

This fall, St. Luke's Shelter and Metropolitan House will benefit from congregational mini-walks held at their churches as part of the Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Initiative. Last year, this regional fundraising initiative raised \$5.8 million dollars for 134 homeless service providers in the DC area.

In addition, each shelter will benefit from those who take part in a November 20 Walkathon on the National Mall. To support the shelters during a mini-walk, look for information in September. To walk for St. Luke's Shelter on the Mall, visit www.helpthehomelessdc.org.

SHOWING THE FLAG St. Luke's supporters turned out in force for a recent Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Walkathon.



Gracious Gifts

In April, the congregation at Church of the Annunciation generously donated \$706.77 to St. Luke's Shelter. The money was collected from the church's poor box, which is used each month to collect donations for ministries in the area. The donation was dropped off by longtime Shelter volunteers Bill and Lee Maksymiec.

Thanks to Church of the Annunciation for their gift in support of St. Luke's.

Thank You, Notes!

On February 20, four a cappella groups performed in "Sing Out for Shelter," a benefit at Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church. For the past eight years, Metropolitan has hosted the annual concert—organized by an octet called The Augmented Eight—and Metropolitan House shelter has been one of three beneficiaries. (Also performing were The Georgetown Phantoms, Venus d Minor, and The 18th Street Singers.) This year, Metropolitan House chose to share its portion of the proceeds with its new sister shelter, St. Luke's. Each received more than \$1,900 from the event.

Save The Dates

We would love to see you at one of our upcoming events. Current and prospective friends, donors, and volunteers are always more than welcome.

- **Saturday, June 5: Glover Park Day**

We'll have a table set up from 11 to 5 on the grounds of the Guy Mason Center, 3600 Calvert Street NW. Stop by to learn more about the Shelter and volunteering opportunities, or just to say hello.

- **Saturday, July 10: Charm Aid 2010**

We're benefiting from a rock-and-roll show scheduled for 6:30 pm at Gin & Tonic, 2408 Wisconsin Avenue NW. (See page 2 for band lineup and details.)

- **Monday, September 6: Labor Day BBQ**

Donors, volunteers, staff, residents, graduates and neighbors mingle at this annual thank-you meal from 4 to 7 p.m. on the grounds of St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 3655 Calvert Street NW.

- **Saturday, November 20: Help the Homeless Walkathon**

If you'd like to walk for St. Luke's in this three-mile walk around the Tidal Basin, register at www.helpthehomelessdc.org. (See page 3 for details.)



St. Luke's Shelter, a collaboration between a community of faith and a community of neighbors, provides life-reclaiming support to homeless individuals.

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