



TENFOLD

Unlocking Opportunity

NIGHT IN THE SHELTER

The line begins around 4:30pm. Most neighbors don't notice, as it is commonplace in the city to see people lingering around buildings. As the time moves toward 7:30pm, the line grows longer, and it becomes obvious that something will be happening soon.

The door opens at 7:30pm, and the first guests walk inside. They are greeted with a warm hello and immediately asked to remove items from their pockets and check their bags off to the side. Then, they are asked to walk through a metal detector.

This is the beginning of a typical night at Tenfold's temporary homeless shelter, located in Tenfold's garage on East King Street. The shelter opened earlier this month in response to urgent community need. It will provide individuals experiencing homelessness a safe place to sleep each night until the permanent low-barrier shelter at Clay Street is able to open.



As the line of guests slowly make their way through the security protocols and move toward the check-in table, staff and volunteers begin to see people that they recognize. Many guests return to the facility each night and have begun to build friendly rapport with Tenfold's staff and volunteer team.

The range of guests is immediately striking. Some are in their mid-twenties, and others are in their seventies and eighties. Some share a smile, say hello, or strike up a conversation, looking for a small moment of connection. Others stay silent and avoid eye contact, clearly feeling anxious or exhausted from their day. Each guest is welcomed with dignity and kind eyes, affirming the hardship that is weighing on them.

Guests begin to make their beds for the evening, serve themselves some instant coffee or ramen, and settle into their space. Before long, all 57 beds are filled.

At times, moments of tension arise, and voices get loud. Territory and personal space are important and are easily violated in this small shelter. Staff and security are ready to deescalate if needed. However, cooler heads usually prevail quickly, as everyone recognizes that they are in this together, and that being in this space is better than being outside on a wintry night. For staff, safety is always the top priority, with empathy, compassion, and caring as a close second.



After the intake process is completed and everyone is checked in, staff and volunteers begin to interact with the guests. They share resources, such as a list of places to get free meals. Some guests share the stories of what has led them to this shelter. Eviction, losing a job, divorce, or fleeing physical abuse come up frequently, as do substance use issues and mental health struggles. These are all challenges that can lead to someone having nowhere to go at night and needing a place in a shelter.

At 10:00 p.m. time, the lights are turned off. Nighttime is usually very quiet, as most are exhausted from that day's journey. In the morning, a new group of staff and volunteers arrive. Light awakens some guests and others are offered a gentle nudge. Guests begin the process of packing up everything they own and tentatively leave

through the shelter door to begin their day. By 7:00 a.m., all guests have exited, and staff and volunteers begin the cleanup process. Linens are turned over each day, and surfaces are sanitized to protect guests' health and safety.

As the guests leave, staff and volunteers hold the hope in their hearts that each person will be safe throughout their day, and that they will feel that many caring members of their community are in their corner, supporting them on their journey to find safety, peace, and stability.

Tenfold's temporary homeless shelter will serve as a stopgap measure until the permanent low-barrier shelter at Clay Street is able to open. In addition to this emergency measure, Tenfold provides year-round services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and housing instability, including street outreach, case management, specialized housing programs, and free financial counseling and education. To read another story about Tenfold's work supporting unsheltered individuals, click here: www.WeAreTenfold.org/success_story/meet-pamela/. To learn more about Tenfold's continuum of services, click here: www.WeAreTenfold.org/about-us/.

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