

REPORT ON AND URGENT APPEAL FOR SHEPHERD'S VILLAGE

Since some of you might wonder how this new project has been going, I decided to write on the progress of Shepherd's Village for the sake of keeping record and for feedback as well.

This is a report and also urgent appeal for our Shepherd's Village.

1. We were so fortunate to have tremendous support from the Lynnwood City Mayor, City Council members, Good Shepherd Church and the Buddy Shelter that allowed us to set up 5 tents, a storage bin, and a community room (donated by the BS). The setting up process was not as easy as it seemed to be. One weekend, a couple of our Board members and a few volunteers from the community helped out as well, but come Monday they all went back to their jobs leaving the unfinished tent village in the hands of Tony and me. I wasn't of much help, and Tony took the whole job in his hands. Visiting Shepherd's village on a daily basis was grueling enough for me on top of a million details — following up on students and the daily outreach.
2. We got good publicity from the Everett Herald and got many responses from curious neighbors. We welcomed two wonderful volunteers: one is Mr. Peter Vander Weyst, an Accounting Instructor at EDCC. And the other is former business man (UW MBA) – Robert Schwindt. Slowly they will be involved with students.
3. Because the pallets underneath the tents were larger than the tents, rain soaked through the tents. For a week no one could sleep in them until we exchanged for larger tarp to cover the whole pallets.
4. A couple of male students attempted to sleep in there but they didn't return the next day — perhaps it was not livable conditions. No report from them. One student kept sleeping in a storage bin because it was better than the tent. The tent we got was 7x7, a capacity for 3 persons, but wasn't strong enough to tolerate the winter weather – rain and/or snow. Tony, the manager has been sleeping in the unheated community room. Our current tents must be evaluated. As I see, it doesn't fit for winter. It makes me feel that we need more of the type of the community room – self-standing unit. This tent condition unfortunately slowed me down in getting new students into our village. I rather lost a few.
5. Our new student, Michael reports that everything in the tent was too damp or almost wet that he couldn't sleep in there. And on top of this trouble, last night when we saw snow falling, we discussed — Michael, a new student, was not going to sleep in the tent. He was going to sneak in to his old apartment he vacated from because he couldn't pay rent which caused him to become homeless. It was not rented out yet and he still had a key to it. I told him if that's

not possible I will keep him in a motel room. Sure enough, this morning early I got a report that all tents were collapsed. This makes us feel an urgency to do something about it.

Tony reports: *Despite trying to sweep snow off tents, the weight of the snow did damage tent poles and fabric at corners. At this time I am trying to dry them out but this will take a few days. I will try to use adhesive to repair tent poles but need a warm place to do this. Fabric can be sewn to repair once dry. These tents were not really meant for this extreme weather or use. We need to come up with a better and safer solution for student sleeping quarters.* TonyT



A Tent before being covered by a tarp



Tents covered by tarps



Tents collapsed by snow

6. While we were discussing with authorities about electricity, weather got so bad and cold that I couldn't sit in the community room without severe cough. But I needed to visit the tent almost on a daily basis but very briefly. Thus, we communicated over the phone or via texts or e-mails many times every day between me, Tony and other residents.
7. One most difficult task was to connect electricity from the Good Shepherd Church to the community room – around 200 feet distance. Although we got approval from the Church, there was a difference of understanding between the good-hearted city officials, inspectors, and PUD. We spent about a couple of weeks doing discussion and phone tags since everyone was busy although we got an angel electrician who is not going to charge us for her labor. Finally when we got OK, a suggestion from the electrician was to spend a little more money now to do it right – this was suggested also by the inspector – or pay a whole lot more later when we need more electricity. Since I got someone who was willing to help financially, I think we need to do it right. When I got ready with someone to help with a van and a hitch to pull the trench machine and the electrician to do the job, the city inspector couldn't come out on our time and weekend fell upon us; a few more days delay. When were ready again, this time it snowed down and we couldn't dig into the ground — we were put on hold again. Now we have to see if snow will met down for us so that we can dig into the ground. Although many people try to help with good hearts, from the position of those who sleep there, everything seems to be so hard and takes so long.
8. My conclusion is that these tents are not working out. We need to get a few more self-contained units, or at least one more. I suggested two guys sleep in one unit. All of them don't want to do that. They seem to have some sort of hang-ups for having another person in the same room. This means each student needs an individual room, which was the original plan

anyway. It is not a matter of taking time or doing it a few months later because it is an immediate need.

9. I send CC of my troubled correspondence to our board and a few supporters. I got response from one supporter who is willing to do matching funds if we want to purchase a self-contained sleeping unit. I checked with the manufacturer who can put one together quickly.

I also sent SOS to Lynnwood City Mayor and a few council members for any matching funds from the City's discretionary emergency funds.

10. In the meantime, one of the board members suggested a much cheaper shag (a storage bin type) instead of expensive manufactured items. A meeting is set up to meet with Buddy Shelter and Elan Vista Solutions on February 9, Thursday, 2:00 p.m. at Lynnwood Denny. Any interested party is invited. If you can't make it, send your suggestions or opinions to me. My preference is to go with a long-lasting-durable structure with heating and lighting.

11. Another unfortunate thing is the fact that Rev. Chris Boyer is on 2 weeks' vacation. We have to wait another week till he comes back so that we can receive approval from him that we may add another self-standing unit. He and his congregation have been so generous that I don't see any problem, but I have to get his greenlight.

12. In the meantime, I might have to put Michael in a motel room since he became a Village resident/family. \$368.00/week with discount for us.

13. From the perspective of those who don't see the scene and are not in contact with students on a daily basis, it can be hard to see this as an emergency. But as one who sees it on daily basis, I feel it is an emergency that needs to be solved ASAP.

14. All in all, we are grateful to the whole community for giving birth to this new life that will be a great help to our homeless students now and in the future. Birth-pain is not something easy to go through. Later, our City and Foundation History will tell of how we started the Shepherd's Village. Thanks be to God for every angel involved.