

PROGRESS REPORT on the Shepherd Village by Jean Kim

How it came into being?

Rev. Chris Boyer wrote (January 2017):

Through her foundation, Rev. Dr. Jean Kim provides educational support for homeless students. They may be enrolled in GED, college, vocational training or literacy programs. Last month, she approached Mayor Nicola Smith asking if a Tent City could be established on city property to provide some of these students with a more stable living situation. Staff ascertained that the number of policies and ordinances that would need to be rewritten to accommodate this request would delay the implementation by many months — she requested something immediate. It was suggested that a private land owner be sought and that the City would waive some of the requirements of its "Tent City" ordinance to facilitate placement. It was further suggested that Good Shepherd Baptist Church might be a willing host..... On December 7, Rev. Dr. Kim and some members of her foundation's Board met with Rev. Boyer and Sgt. Cole Langdon of LPD and some details were tentatively agreed upon." ...

After some more meetings among related parties the Tent City came into being. The Tent City resident named it "Shepherd Village" because it resides in the backyard of the Good Shepherd Baptist Church on 196th, Lynnwood. It is a home for 5 homeless college students as I wanted to start small and grow.

Under the leadership of Rev. Deuksil Jung, several volunteers – Mr. David Cousineau, EDCC Academic Adviser, Mr. Ryan Larsen, social worker, Tony Thompson of JK Foundation, Kevin, Carl, some village residents, Darrel Potter, CEO, Buddy Shelter and his crew– all rolled up their sleeves and helped build the Shepherd Village.

Good Shepherd congregation and their pastor (Rev. Chris Boyer), as well as the Board of the Education Foundation all supported and helped the project with their prayers. The staff of Tent City 5 gave us good training and support, and became our allies with the spirit of camaraderie. The City of Lynnwood, churches and many volunteers all became partners of the Village. Lynnwood Lowe's (Assistant Manager Michael Noll) gave a deep discount on supplies.

Therefore, it was a product of the whole caring community. Thanks to all those who offered their hands to make Shepherd Village a reality for

homeless college students. Our testimony is that when our community puts love and compassion together, we see a miracle that otherwise would not have been possible.

Freezing temperatures, rain, and the delivery scheduling conflict blocked our way. But nothing could stop our love to help these homeless students who struggle to get up and attend classes from the freezing or wet streets every morning. In the end we made it. We see the end products.

Below is a sample tent with a tarp and without a tarp.



Before the tent has been covered by tarp.

After the tent has been covered by tarp.

In the tent: a warm sleeping bag, a durable mat, a small desk, and a chair are provided for each resident.



From left to right: a storage bin, toilet, and community room (donated by an angel, Buddy Shelter). Happy Gary proudly stands in front of the community room.



In this gate-locked, cozy and protected environment: five tents, a storage bin, a portable toilet, garbage cans, and a community room.

(This project will cost us approximately \$7,000.00)

Good Shepherd Church graciously allowed us to connect electricity from the church building to our community room. Now we are waiting to have an electrician do a professional job.

It is not a permanent home but is much appreciated by residents who struggled so hard in the freezing cold and wet outdoor living of Washington State.

Gary, one of the residents writes:

Dear purple pastor: I am very thrilled to have this setup. No more fear of street violence, no more nervous watching behind my shoulder, no more caution, no more looking for space to lie down every night; I am so grateful for this little space of mine. I am going to get an education and grow and build my foundation for myself. I am going to succeed and it was your pushing and my following through with goals and commitments. Yours Truly, Gary (Ambassador)

Our next vision is to provide 10 self-standing units with heat and light as pictured shown below; Manufactured by Buddy Shelter/Elan Vista Solutions, Marysville, Washington.



**We will begin to seek a site to have them stand, as well as the funds to pay for them.
Estimated Cost: \$100,000 for 10 units.**

Why Are They Homeless?

Homelessness often stems from unemployment; underemployment; lack of education; injuries on jobs or accidents; poor health; physical, emotional or psychological disabilities; generational poverty; alcohol or drug addiction; eviction; and prior incarceration. These challenges often destroy peoples' hope and their motivation to try to improve their lives. The loss of hope pushes them into paralyzing despair which creates a vicious cycle; thus they are often trapped in long-term unemployment and homelessness.

Looking at the root causes of homelessness in the U.S. from a sociopolitical, economic and cultural standpoint, we find that our current economic system is chiefly responsible because it creates unprecedented wealth and poverty and an ever-widening gap between the two. While many Americans benefit from economic prosperity, our economic system has also created poverty and given birth to many negative outcomes such as lack of affordable housing, lack of jobs for all people who desire to work, low minimum wage, gentrification, inadequate welfare, slashed public assistance, racism, unfair tax policies, social/cultural values, lack of long-term treatment services with vocational training and housing for the mentally ill or formerly incarcerated people, too large of a gap in income inequality and a lack of political will to end poverty and homelessness in the United States. Most of the above are policy issues. Our poor policies have created a society that throws students – grade school to college age – into homelessness (for more details visit www.jeankimhome.com: “Why People are Homeless”).

Notes from Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett:

In their book, *The Spirit Level; Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett write: “It is a remarkable paradox that, at the pinnacle of human material and technical achievement, we find ourselves anxiety-ridden, prone to depression, worried about how others see us, unsure of our friendships, driven to consume and with little or no community life. Lacking the relaxed social contact and emotional satisfaction we all need, we seek comfort in over-eating, obsessive shopping and spending, or become prey to excessive alcohol, psychoactive medicines and illegal drugs. (Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett. *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger* (NY: Bloomsbury Press, 2010), 3).

The common problems in unequal societies are related to level of trust, mental illness including drug and alcohol, life expectancy and infant mortality, obesity, children’s educational performance, teenage birth, homicide, imprisonment rates, social mobility. There is a very strong tendency for ill-health and social problems to occur less frequently in the more equal countries (Ibid. 19).

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