

KSTP AM 1500 TALKRADIO MAGAZINE

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AM 1500 Embarks on Campaign to Aid Twin Cities Homeless



People waiting for groceries at the Disciples Ministry Church Mission.



The "Hobo Bus" serves hot meals to North Minneapolis street people.

KSTP AM Talkradio's news and public affairs team aired twice daily, for a week early in December, a series of reports entitled "Street People: Adrift in the Cities."

Our staff discovered that, while most of us prepared to enjoy the warmth of the holiday season at home with family and friends, many people in the Twin Cities didn't go home for the holidays. They have no home. They're part of the growing subculture of the street; a growing army of the homeless.

Experts told us it's difficult to know exactly how many are homeless in our community; figures range from 1500 to 15,000. Marge Carpenter, Director of United Way's First Call for Help, says, "I'm not so sure numbers are important. We know they're there. We know their numbers have increased. It doesn't matter whether there's one or 15,000... we've got to be concerned."

The Rev. Clay Oglesbee is pastor at Simpson United Methodist Church in Minneapolis, one of the three church shelters in the city. He says the problem has worsened in the last five years. "It's a problem that's persisted for five years, but neither the state, nor

the county, nor the city, nor the federal government, nor anyone involved has come up with an effective response to the homeless."

Our reporters were told that budget cutbacks have cut deep into needed services for the homeless, and the tightening of federal and state rules governing General Assistance has those who run the shelters predicting a record number of homeless people this winter.

"Project Shelter" Needs Funds

In response to the needs discovered during production of the series, KSTP AM 1500 has begun a fund drive for "Project Shelter." Monies will be distributed by Twin Cities United Ways to area private shelters to enable them to continue operating throughout the winter. To make your contribution to assist those in our community less fortunate, send your check to
"Project Shelter"
c/o KSTP AM 1500
Box 1500
Minneapolis, MN 55440.

Who Are The Homeless?

Marge Carpenter told our reporters that the homeless don't fit our usual stereotypes. "It's not just the single guys that we have to worry about. It's women with children; the elderly. I think the stereotype is a man who doesn't want to work, drunk, chemically dependent. We also forget about the mentally ill," she said.

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