

Brother Francis Shelter Newsletter



A Catholic Social Services publication

February 2011

Shelter Wish List

- Coffee
- Bread
- 8 oz. Styrofoam cups
- Plastic forks, knives & spoons
- Paper plates & bowls
- Bleach
- 33 gallon trash bags
- Cleaning sponges
- Warm hats, gloves & socks
- Underwear (all sizes, men & women)
- Shoes & boots
- Blue jeans (all sizes, men & women)
- Spray deodorant
- Toilet paper
- Disposable razors
- Feminine products
- Toothbrushes/paste
- Vinyl gloves
- Pinesol/Bleach
- Financial donations

BFS Advisory Council

Pat Byrne
Kay Gajewski
Marc June
Greg Kimura
Tom Kron
Don Lederhos
Lottie Michael
Chuck Szopa

Young Vet Faces Challenges

Quincy Sullivan was your typical rough and tumble boy growing up. During his childhood he spent significant time with his grandfathers (both veterans) and went on morning runs with another strong military role model who worked at the recreational center in Pittsburgh where he grew up.

Quincy earned an art school scholarship for an award winning mural at the Rachel Carson Museum in Springfield, Massachusetts, but instead chose to join the Army in 2000 at the age of 18. Quincy's Army career started just a year before 9/11. He spent six years in the military and participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

The rigors of OIF took a toll on Quincy both mentally and physically. As a result, he suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury and sciatica, a painful condition caused by the inflammation of the sciatic nerve.



Quincy Sullivan

After his discharge from the Army, Quincy went back to Pittsburgh and got his Associates of Arts degree in Multimedia but had trouble finding steady employment. A buddy living in Anchorage encouraged him to move north for greater employment opportunities. That was a little over a year ago. The friendship became stressed due to "girlfriend drama," and lack of consistent employment.

Quincy arrived at Brother Francis Shelter in early December of 2010 and met with

continued on page 2

Anchorage Daily News' Readers Respond

BFS Welcomes 162 New Donors

What a tremendous response we had from Julia O'Malley's article "Homeless Numbers Surge" in early December! In addition to the donors who have been our solid foundation, 162 more people have joined in the effort to help the homeless in Anchorage. Without your gifts, we would not be able to serve the growing numbers of homeless. Thank you for showing how much you care!

Did you know?

BFS distributed 11,311 articles of clothing last year.

The BFS clothing room is open 4 days a week and provides free clothing to shelter guests as well as low-income community members.

Every article of clothing is donated.

Gently used, warm clothing in adult sizes is needed now to meet the high demand.

~ Save the Date ~

Easter Mass at BFS

Sunday, April 24th

Time to be determined. Please visit cssalaska.org and click on events in April or call 222-7327.



Continued from page 1

Ronnie Arnett, BFS Case Manager Supervisor, immediately. "The first person I met was Ronnie. I was so stressed out and confused. She set me up right away, got me a locker and long term storage and a bus pass. I had lots of stuff with me so it was a huge relief," Quincy explained.

Quincy quickly began searching for employment, but found himself caught in a dilemma. There was a chance that the prescription medications he was taking to relieve the pain from his combat injuries would cause a pre-employment drug test to be positive. As a result, Quincy stopped taking the medications. This led to pain and spasms from his sciatica further complicating his mobility. He doesn't own a car and needs to walk with the assistance of a cane or ride the bus.

Despite these challenges, Quincy recently secured a job with The Salvation Army. He starts next week as the Assistant Kitchen Manager in the Adult Rehabilitation Program. He is very pleased that the job comes with living quarters. As appreciative as Quincy is for all the services offered at BFS, he is overjoyed to have privacy again.

Approximately 19% of the guests served at BFS are veterans. We anticipate seeing more young veterans like Quincy in the months and years ahead from OIF and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. BFS is tremendously grateful that donors like you have been helping keep our doors open since 1982, providing a safe, warm place for veterans in their time of need.

New Opportunity for Vets

Quincy's story connected with me on many levels — as a veteran of the US Air Force, a therapist, a mother, and as the Executive Director of Catholic Social Services. Many of us can relate to Quincy's struggles and have compassion for his challenges.

Quincy's story illustrates the complex problems that veterans often face. Military life is very structured and provides a steady paycheck, housing, utilities, transportation and food. Most of our military members join at 18, and after they are discharged there is a need to acclimate to life in a non-military society, a time to transition and learn how to secure life's basic necessities. Combine this phenomenon with injuries, and you have a vulner-

able person who could benefit from additional services.

The State of Alaska has the highest percentage of veterans in the US. Currently, the Veterans' Administration (VA) is focused on providing services to the veteran and not other family members. This leaves a huge gap in services. CSS, along with many collaborative partners, is applying for a VA Supportive Services for Veteran's Families (SSVF) grant to address some of these concerns. This grant will allow us to provide very low-income veterans and their families with supports leading to housing stability. This means we will have funds available to help with rent, utilities, transportation, child care, and other basic necessities critically important to maintaining housing.

These funds will allow flexibility in addressing other pressing needs such as legal services, personal financial planning or moving expenses. CSS is excited to be able to reach out to a population that has served this country so valiantly, but rarely finds the supportive family services they need when they return to our community. If funded, this grant will allow us to do just that.



Susan Bomalaski, today's guest columnist, is the CSS Executive Director and can be reached at sbomalaski@cssalaska.org or 222-7351.

Do you YouTube?

Watch our short and compelling video featuring Lee a BFS guest. To view please visit cssalaska.org.