



Cedric Allen says Social Heart is a local nonprofit geared toward helping the homeless population in Winston-Salem and surrounding communities.



Submitted photos  
Volunteers with Social Heart serve food at the Bethesda Center on Christmas morning. Social Heart is a local nonprofit founded by Cedric Allen.

# Social Heart helps homeless residents

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

On any given day or night, you may find city native Cedric Allen distributing food, coats, gloves, or even hygiene products to those in need in various parts of Triad. While some may take what they have for granted, Allen says he goes out of his way to help homeless residents in the area because that was once him.



"I've been homeless, so I know what it's like to be in the streets," Allen said, a growing up in the Kimberly Park Housing Development, Allen said, he learned the importance giving back to those in need, from his mother and others in the neighborhood. He said when he was growing up when someone in the neighborhood couldn't afford certain things, the entire community would lend a helping hand.

"Growing up in the projects, we were taught to give back. It was like a family; we helped others in need and when my mother couldn't afford certain things, that's when the community would step in and do what they could," Allen continued. "Because of the way I was raised, I've always been a giving person. Anybody that knows me will tell you that I just love to give."

That giving nature that was instilled in Allen as a child, stuck with him into adulthood and led to the start of Social Heart, a local nonprofit that feeds the homeless. In 2009 with just \$50 and a dream, Allen told several of his friends he was going to start a nonprofit to help those in need. He told The Chronicle that although several said it couldn't be done, he didn't let that discourage him.

"When you have a vision, some people can make you sit back down and make you give up on yourself, but you can't. And that's just what it was. They told me I could not do it and it's not possible," Allen said.

Despite the naysayers, Allen followed his dream and today Social Heart is known throughout the community for helping those in need. If you follow Allen on social media, you can see the impact the nonprofit is making.

On Christmas morning, with the help of the Social Heart Family, Allen fed dozens of families at the Bethesda Center on Patterson Avenue. Last week when nighttime temperatures dropped to single digits, Social Heart hit the streets of Greensboro to pass out blankets and coats.

With help from countless volunteers since 2009 Social Heart has helped feed hundreds of individuals across the city, state, and country. Allen said just like the extended family that helped him growing up, Social Heart is looking to spread the message of giving.

"I couldn't do any of this without the community.

Social Heart is not about me it's about a network of people coming together to uplift our community," he said. "That's why I always call out my business partners because this wouldn't be possible without them."

Along with helping the less fortunate, Social Heart has also been on the front line when it comes to fighting injustice in the area.

In 2016 it was Social Heart who first brought attention to the living conditions in the Rolling Hills apartment complex when they set up a protest outside the entrance, after the landlord tried to stop volunteers from distributing food. At that time city officials found a number of violations at the apartment complex in East Winston, including sewage backup, mold and rodent infestations.

Since then new ownership has taken over the property and improvements have been made, according to Allen, who visits the complex regularly to distribute food. When asked why he's so passionate about helping those in need and fighting injustice, Allen simply said because people helped him.

"When I was at my lowest, God sent people to talk to me," he continued. "My grandma always told me there's power in giving but you have to give from the heart."

For more information on Social Heart or to volunteer, contact Cedric Allen at (336) 995-8298.

# MLK Burger King rezoning delayed; Hawley House expansion approved

BY TODD LUCK  
THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem City Council approved rezoning that'll let Hawley House expand and delayed a vote on the Burger King on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive during its Tuesday, Jan. 2, meeting.

The Burger King location closed down several months ago. Carrols LLC, which owns and operates the building, plans to renovate the location after buying the property from Burger King. The rezoning involves the renovations, which have been put on hold as Carrols is still trying to acquire the property. The location will most likely be shuttered for several more months as the rezoning was delayed until April 2 at the petitioner's request.

The City Council also

unanimously approved rezoning for YWCA's Hawley House, a woman's substance abuse recovery program located in a two-story house in the South Ward. The program had single-family residential zoning that allowed six residents to stay there. The new multifamily zoning will allow it to have up to 12 residents. YWCA Supportive Services Vice President Kristin O'Leary told the council the rezoning will give more women much needed services.

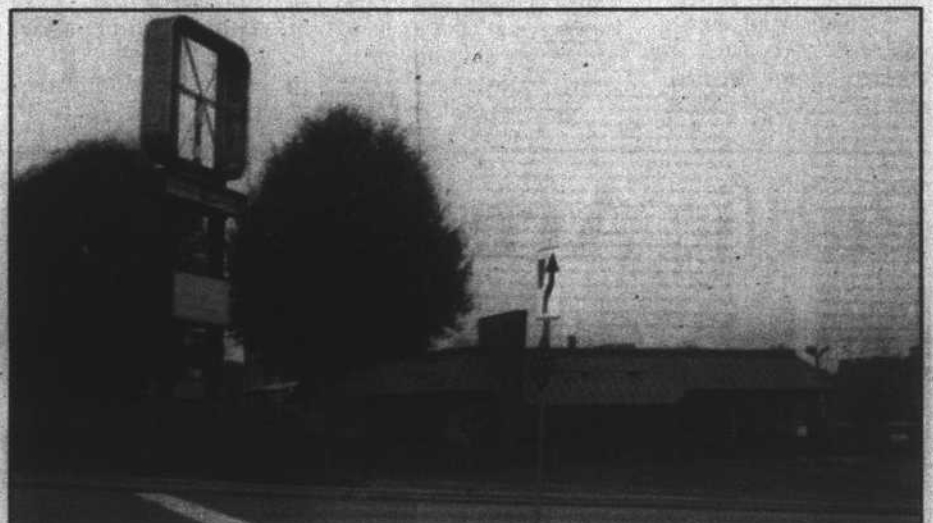
"The increase with the opioid epidemic in the number of phone calls that we get, we have just had a tremendous amount of disappointment to those women who are really trying to seek help," she said.

The residential program at the house lasts 9-12 months. Residents are often referred by another

YWCA program, Project New Start, which provides classes, Bible study and other services for incarcerated women and a post-release support group.

O'Leary said that the rezoning will allow three to four more women from New Start to stay at Hawley House for 60-90 days after release. This will give them access to the many resources available to residents there, such as physicals, access to medication through Crisis Control Ministries, vocational services and transportation to their appointments.

O'Leary said that the house already has the space for the additional residents. To meet zoning requirements, it'll need to install a sprinkler system, which she said the nonprofit hopes to cover with a city grant it's applied for.



Plans to rezone and rebuild this Burger King on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive are delayed as its owneroperator Carrols LLC is attempting to buy the property.



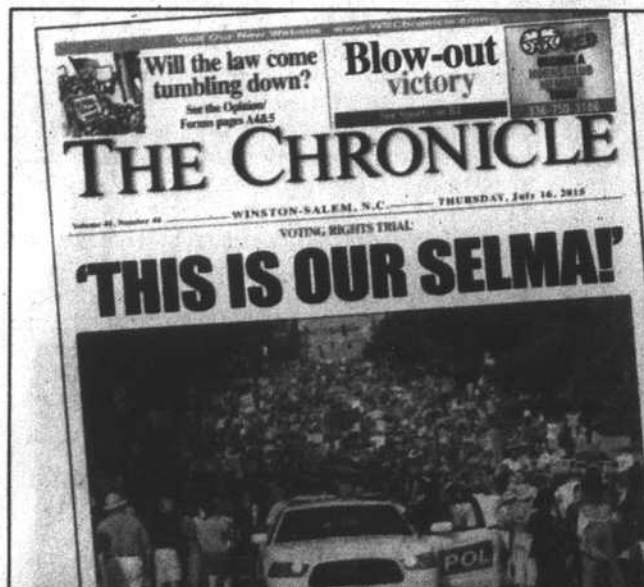
Hawley House will be getting more clients as the Winston-Salem City Council approved rezoning that'll allow more women to stay there.

She said she's tried to make Hawley House a part of the neighborhood. Clients at the house are involved in the community and volunteer at neighborhood events.

Member John Larson said that spoke well of the program.

"Hawley House is an example of how an organization such as yours works within the neighborhood fabric, is a contributing element, and has, in fact, strengthened the diversity of a neighborhood, providing a valuable service for the community," said Larson.

A condition was added to the zoning that it will revert back to single-family home zoning if the YWCA ever ceases the program there for more than a year.



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