

FEATURES

Homeless man does more than share at shelter

By Warren Hynes
Staff Writer

Leonard Powell walks out of the kitchen with an air of satisfaction. Another meal has been served, and he has played a big part in it. He has made sure the kitchen has remained clean and has fulfilled all duties that go along with being a volunteer supervisor at the Inter-Faith Council Community Kitchen and Shelter.

But Powell is different from some of the other volunteers at the kitchen and shelter. He isn't there just to serve food. He's there to eat as well. And to sleep. Leonard Powell is homeless.

"If you work, you kind of earn your bed," he said.

Since leaving home because of family problems several years ago, Powell has been a continuous volunteer at the kitchen and an "in-and-out" resident of the shelter, he said.

"I had nowhere to go," Powell said. "I didn't want to sleep in my car."

Powell sports a husky, teddy-bearlike build, wearing a brown and blue flannel shirt and blue jeans. His white hair hints at his 58 years, and his sideburns stretch just below his ears. As he sits behind the reception desk at the shelter, he talks of some of his past experiences at the kitchen.

Powell has been a volunteer since the original shelter opened Nov. 1, 1982, on the corner of Rosemary and Sunset streets, he said. "I saw to it that they needed a little help."

For five years, the kitchen and shelter were not together in the same building, and Powell said this was quite inconvenient for shelter guests, especially during the winter.

"We used to have to go walk out in the cold to eat," he said. "It was eat, hit the street, come back and eat, hit the street."

Some eight and one-half years later, Powell is a fully established supervisor at the kitchen, which is now located together with the shelter in the old municipal building at the corner of Rosemary and Columbia streets.

Powell said he has the responsibility of making sure the kitchen remains clean, and as the room appears virtually spotless, it seems he has been doing his job. He has a list of his "things to do" tucked in his pocket and has been busily accomplishing those duties this afternoon.

But when Powell stops his work and sits down to talk, this man reveals some of the fear that he feels.

"I'm just glad for the shelter to be here, because otherwise, there's no telling where I'd be," he said. "I haven't come to make a home. I'm just in a position where I can't get out."

Powell said he drove a cab for most of his life but had to stop when he got sick. He has tried to find another paying



Jane Hutchinson, a UNC graduate, prepares bread in the Inter-Faith Council Shelter

job but has had no luck, he said. "I've just given up because of the way the system works."

In addition, he says he requires some government aid. "I need help with social security."

But he is not without a substantial family. Powell has five daughters, one son and eight grandchildren. They visit some, but Powell feels a kind of pain when family members visit the homeless shelter, he said. "It kind of hurts for

your grandchildren to come see you when you're down on your luck."

Whether Powell is really an unlucky man is debatable. While talking to shelter volunteers and guests, he brings smiles almost instantaneously to their faces by the warmth in his voice and the good nature in his words. It seems that he has touched the lives of many people in this building.

"You can't come here and not do something," Powell said.

Powell gets up and walks into the kitchen. He picks up a mop and starts cleaning the kitchen floor, doing his part.

But doing much more than just "earning his bed."

Moore

from page 3A

make its decision concerning CGLA funding in the spring.

"As with all resolutions, its purpose was to put the opinion of the Summer Student Congress on record," Moore said. "This is not an issue of whether or not homosexuals should be represented at this University. We all feel homosexuals are part of this University."

"We believe funding a group purely on its sexual lifestyles is not an appropriate use of the student fees," Moore said.

Cohen said the lawsuit and the resolution were separate issues. However, "the resolution would not have passed if Tim had not appointed representatives," he said.

Heyd said the case was not important and was detracting from other student congress business.

"The supreme court cases are always moot," Heyd said. "They focus on small, nitpicking issues that infer the rules of student government instead of what student government should be doing."

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