

# EVANSTON REVIEW

3.8

A PIONEER PRESS NEWSPAPER



Photo for Pioneer Press/George Pfoertner

### Outreach worker

Ellen Goodman scans downtown Evanston streets as a worker for EntryPoint, the homeless outreach program initiated recently by the Lake Street Church and Hilda's Place. Story, photos on Pages 14-15.

### This Week

#### Crime rate drops 26%

Evanston saw a 26 percent drop in the city's 1998 crime statistics following the all-time-high numbers the Evanston Police Department recorded in 1997.

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### Diversions



#### Take heart

Just in time for Valentine's Day, one-of-a-kind cards by area artists go on exhibit at Northbrook Court.

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### Schools

#### Major test

The new Illinois Standards Assessment Test, which debuted this month in schools statewide, is an examination for students to take very seriously.

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**Inside!**  
**Pioneer Press'**  
**CAMP GUIDE &**  
**TODAY'S NEW HOMES**

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# Program seeks out, helps homeless

By MARILYN CLAESSENS  
STAFF WRITER

Some of the homeless people rode elevated trains day and night to stay warm. Others lingered at 24-hour hamburger restaurants or huddled in apartment vestibules.

Since Jan. 1, however, Evanston's shelter for homeless adults has been going out into the community to help people on the street.

Members of a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week outreach team leave the homeless shelter — Hilda's Place — in a 1999 Honda Odyssey van to link people on the street with services.

Since its inception a month ago, the social workers in EntryPoint, a federally supported program sponsored by the Center For Public Ministry, have helped more than 70 homeless people who couldn't be sheltered in Hilda's Place but needed services immediately.

CPM Connections for the Homeless, which operates Hilda's Place in the Lake Street Church in downtown Evanston, has 36 beds that fill easily in winter.

On the program's first weekend, EntryPoint served seven homeless people who ordinarily would have been turned away because the shelter beds were filled or they were ineligible to stay there.



Photo for Pioneer Press/George Foss

EntryPoint worker Ellen Goodman checks an alley where homeless people may be sleeping.

"We connected them with services back in Chicago," said David Myers, executive director of CPM Connections for the Homeless.

Myers had estimated EntryPoint would serve about 15 homeless people in a month. The 70-plus people served in January can probably be attributed to the New Year's blizzard, he said. EntryPoint is funded by a HUD SuperNofa grant providing \$210,000 a year for three years (\$630,000). Myers said the grant can be renewed, and they will reapply in two years.

EntryPoint social workers transport people to the train, give them tokens or take them to Chicago shelters if Hilda's Place is not an option.

In some cases they need some sort of treatment before they can be housed in a stable way, said Margaret Norton, EntryPoint director.

"They may need psychiatric evaluation, medication or substance abuse treatment, but ultimately we like to see people in permanent housing," she said.

The outreach workers — Ellen Goodman, Kevin Foss, Buzz Johnstone and Eric

Johnson — are social work undergraduates. Norton has been a hospice social worker, and she has worked in drug intervention in Cook County Hospital.

On their three shifts, the EntryPoint workers identify themselves when they approach homeless people and ask them if they can be of service.

The workers monitor a police scanner and make rounds every two hours, mainly around downtown. Evenings are the busiest time, when such warm locations as the Evanston Public

Library, downtown bookstores, soup kitchens and warming stations in churches are closed.

While EntryPoint's choice is to house people at Hilda's Place, Norton said "we do the best we can to place them on the North Side of Chicago."

One of the homeless people to whom they reached was a middle-aged, bed-ridden man, a frequent visitor in a downtown bookstore. He presented a formidable challenge because he didn't talk to police, and he was terrified of shelters. He finally stayed at Hilda's Place.

(Continued on page 15)

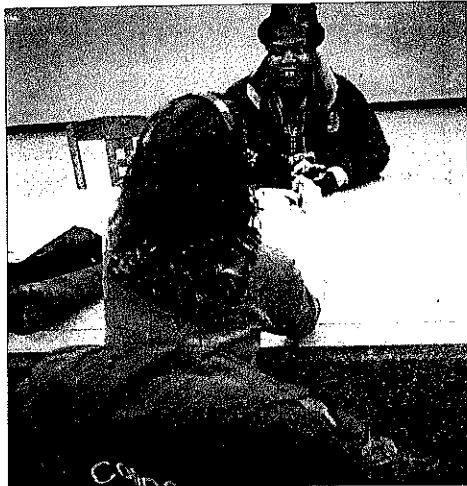


Photo for Pioneer Press/George Foss

Harold Benjamin answers questions during an EntryPoint interview to determine what services he may desire. The interview took place last month in a conference room at the Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Ave.



Photo for Pioneer Press/George Foss

Beverly Sexton helps EntryPoint staff member Kevin Foss make sack lunches that program workers will give out to homeless people they find on Evanston streets.

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## ■ Homeless *Continued from page 14*

Hilda's Place, where he could be linked to psychiatric help. EntryPoint extends the Good Neighbor Initiative that originated in 1996 from concerns about homeless people at risk for sleeping in apartment vestibules, train stations and other private property.

Those concerns were evaluated by CPM Connections, the city's police and human services departments, downtown merchants, nearby residents and the Evanston Chamber of Commerce.

Another separate issue then was the presence of panhandlers downtown, an issue that now "is pretty much nonexistent," said Police Chief Frank Kaminski.

Speaking at a recent meeting of police officers, representatives from CPM Connections and Terry Jenkins of Evmark, Kaminski said EntryPoint adds a pro-active monitoring resource all day — every day.

"This gives us another tool to use," said Officer Ed Steinhoff, the 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. beat police officer downtown. "This is one of the options we have to keep them out of the court system.

"They don't have any money to pay fines, and in some cases they wanted to be locked up because they wanted to be taken off the

street."

Steinhoff and Jenkins separated issues presented by homeless people and by panhandlers.

"The homeless people are down on their luck for one reason or another," said Steinhoff. "They have lost their homes or their well-being. They have a certain degree of pride to them."

Contrasting those individuals to panhandlers, he said police identified 36 panhandlers (in 1994), and learned that 31 of them had homes or places to stay.

"They were scam artists and some had extensive criminal records," Steinhoff said.

Terry Jenkins said mer-

chants and property owners who have talked with him or attended meetings about EntryPoint "have generally been very positive."

The joint concerns of people's well-being and the economy of downtown and what could detract from that must be considered, he said.

"We walk a fine line between the public good and the rights of the individual."

Myers said CPM Connections for the Homeless aims "to serve and be a resource to the entire community, not just the neighborhood around the shelter."

With EntryPoint, he said, "our commitment to the community continues to grow."

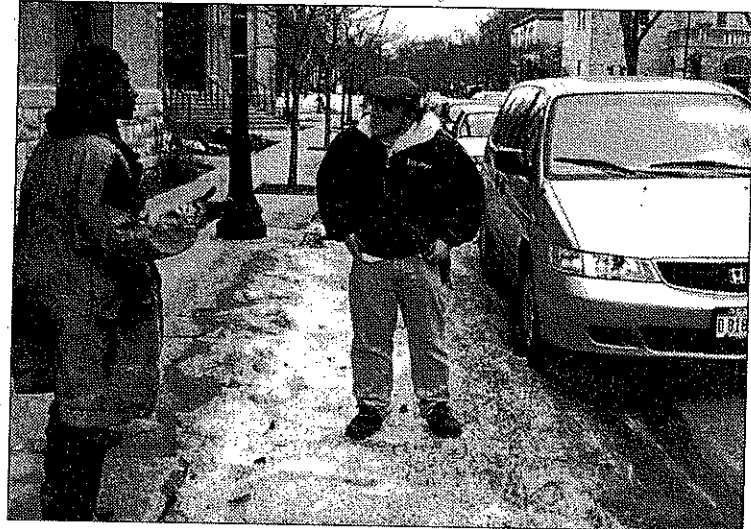


Photo for Pioneer Press/George Pfoertner

Kevin Foss prepares to give Beverly Sexton a lift in EntryPoint's new van to the Evanston Social Security office so she can receive a new identification card.



Photo for Pioneer Press/George Pfoertner

Ellen Goodman scans the commuter train platform in downtown Evanston. Goodman works for EntryPoint, a homeless outreach program sponsored by the Center For Public Ministry.