

From the director

By Mel Eby

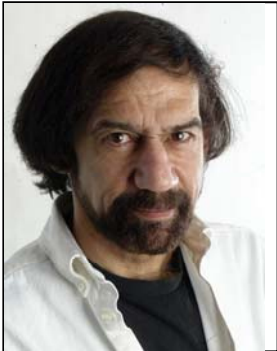


Photo: Amanda Nalley, Tallahassee Democrat

As you may have noticed in last month's *Tallahassee Democrat*, an all-time record of 245 guests spent the night at The Shelter. They included five families with children and numerous people who were sick. Our previous high, set on a 20-degree night in January 2008, was

230 occupants. This time around, a tropical storm was brewing.

Last month's record tally did not include another 100 people who stopped by for dinner and other services. We only have 110 beds and limited space for floor mats, so last month's surge left us scrambling. Forty men slept outside, spreading sleeping bags on our patio or beneath the roof of our pavilion. Needless to say, this influx is straining our resources. We have plenty of blankets, but we're short on sleeping bags. We also spent \$323 that night on prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines for those in need.

We understand that times are tough, so we appreciate the value of even the smallest gift. Our website features a complete shopping list of immediate and ongoing needs and credit card donations can also be made through the website at www.tallahasseeleonsshelter.com.

Food drive Nov. 8

Did you know that one third of the food collected at the 2009 Crop Walk will go to the Good News lunch program serving residents of The Shelter? The event is Nov. 8 at E. Peck Greene Park, by the downtown library. Details: Vicki Weber, 222-7500.



Photo: Mike Ewen, Tallahassee Democrat

Last month, six Florida State football players came by The Shelter to serve lunch. FSU offensive coordinator Jimbo Fisher, above left, is shown chatting with Theodo Buttes of the homeless speakers' bureau.

Speakers' bureau, football fever and a call for email addresses

Over the past two years, about 20 local homeless and formerly homeless people have participated in an educational speakers' bureau sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless and AmeriCorps.

One of them is Theodo Buttes, pictured above in a conversation with visiting FSU football notables.

The speakers are eager to share their stories with schools, congregations and youth groups. You will be able to read more about them in our upcoming fall newsletter. To add a friend to our e-mail list, contact us at shelter@hcsmail.com.

Donations needed

- Bath tissue
- Instant lemonade
- Publix gift cards
- Laundry detergent

Items may be taken to The Shelter's Bill Hanson Community Day Center, 466 W. Tennessee Street, from 9-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-4:30 p.m. daily. Or, try the kitchen off Macomb Street after 5 p.m.