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## Civitan Club Hosts Homelessness Awareness Panel

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# Civitan club hosts Homelessness Awareness Panel

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Homelessness Awareness Panel in Ritch banquet hall. Photo by: Megan Hartman

By: Jonelle Bobak

Five men that have experienced or are experiencing homelessness gave their testimonies on Wednesday night at an event for

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## Homelessness Awareness Week.

Gardner-Webb's Civitan Club spent the week raising awareness of the struggle that some homeless people go through. They organized a Homelessness Awareness Panel that was open for all students, faculty, and staff to attend.

"We are trying to knock down stereotypes of homeless people," said Keanna Caldwell, a member of the Civitan Club. "We want people to learn about their struggles."

A panel of men came from Miracle Hill, a rehabilitation center in Gaffney, S.C., that helps the homeless restore and start a new life. To start the event each man introduced themselves and stated whether they were currently homeless, in transition, or no longer homeless.

Clayson Timothy Kelly, who is currently homeless, gave his testimony first. "Homelessness is a business," Kelly said. "Even though it's a business it takes people to reach down to see that people are in need."

Kelly has been in Shelby less than a week. He traveled here from Seattle, Washington and is originally from New Jersey. He heard about the Shelby Rescue Mission while living with his sister. "I fell on hard times, but that was my choice," said Kelly.

He spoke on how he had to break past his stubbornness and realize how much God truly loved him. He warned to never close your mind towards God. He encouraged students to take advantage of the opportunities they are given.

"All you students have a chance to do something positive in your community, well anywhere really," Kelly said.

Ronald Theodore Moore, who graduated from Purdue University, had everything taken away from him in an instant. He showed up on the doorstep of Miracle Hill Ministries and is now turning his life around. "The one thing Miracle Hill Ministries gave me was stability; it gave me a place to start," said Moore.

They each had different stories and reasons for why they became homeless. Moore does not want people to stereotype the homeless

in that they all have the same story. He said not every person that becomes homeless got to that point in the same way.

“I started to have an attitude of gratitude,” said Moore. God was knocking at Moore’s heart for a long time, and Miracle Hill Ministries helped him to see that. “God will do what He has to do, but we have to do our part as well,” Moore said.

Tim Raney, who was once a client for Miracle Hill is now an employee.

“I feel like God put me here for a reason,” said Raney. He read a note that was addressed to him from a boy who was once a client at Miracle Hill. The boy expressed a deep gratitude for Raney and the love he showed. Raney explained that being able to be a good example to that boy was why he worked at the shelter.

“No matter if you are 59 or 18 years old, God has a plan for you,” said Raney.

The event ended with everyone singing a chorus of “Amazing Grace”.

The Shelby Rescue Mission and the Miracle Hill Ministries are always in need of volunteers. If you are interested, email Murl Lehman at [mlehman@miraclehill.org](mailto:mlehman@miraclehill.org) .



Photo by: Megan Hartman



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