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News

Monday, Jan 14, 2008

## News

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# Homeless get a new daytime refuge

By DEBRA SKODACK  
The Kansas City Star

Downtown's homeless will soon have a new daytime home, outside the downtown loop.

ReStart plans next week to move its daytime shelter from 600 E. 11th St. to a building at Eighth Street and the Paseo.

The center helps about 190 people a day by offering a place to shower, do laundry, store possessions and use a telephone to find jobs, make doctor appointments and call family. It's also a place of refuge from extreme weather.

The building where the center has been housed for several years is being demolished to make way for development.

ReStart is thrilled to get the new location, said Evelyn Craig, executive director.

"It's a cleaner, safer and more dignified place," Craig said.

The building at Eighth and the Paseo, vacant for about three years, is owned by the Don Bosco Centers. It is being purchased using a charitable account set up by the Downtown Council, an organization of downtown businesses and property owners, through the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation.

About one-third of the \$500,000 needed to buy and renovate the building has been raised, said Sean O'Byrne, vice president of business development for the Downtown Council.

The move, O'Byrne said, essentially ends a plan developed by a community task force two years ago to build a large, multimillion-dollar center at Margaret Kemp Park, Ninth and Harrison streets. That proposal, according to several former task-force members, faded in part because of neighborhood concerns and a lack of money.



As workers readied the new reStart daytime shelter at 1444 E. Eighth St. on Friday for its opening next week, Greg Russell attached a door hinge. Buying and renovating the space will cost half a million dollars.



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However, O'Byrne said he liked where reStart is moving, especially because it is close to reStart's overnight shelter and other large nonprofits that provide overnight shelter and other services, including the City Union Mission and the Salvation Army.

"This is the right building, the right location," he said.

Craig agreed.

"There were not a lot of buildings available that were zoned correctly and that were the right size," she said.

ReStart is leasing only the second floor of the 8,000-square-foot building, leaving space to house other programs, including possibly food service, O'Byrne said.

And, he said, the building takes up only 4,000 square feet of the property's 30,000 square feet. That means there is space for another building for services, he said.

The new daytime shelter's distance from a popular homeless lunch program at Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, 13th Street and Broadway, shouldn't increase the number of homeless people hanging out around downtown, said Cynthia Larcom, executive director of the Homeless Coalition for Greater Kansas City.

"It's a much more fabulous space for the population to spend the day and get services," Larcom said of the new location. "It is not that much farther of a walk."

**INSIDE**

More than two dozen agencies that help the homeless will receive \$9.1 million in federal grants. | **B2**

To reach Debra Skodack, call 816-234-4738 or send e-mail to [dskodack@kcstar.com](mailto:dskodack@kcstar.com).

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