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## Shelter director retires

**Dan Carl, 69, leaves after 7 years; Marshall Smith takes over the post**

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Staff Writer

Dan Carl is among the latest to leave the Salvation Army Night Shelter for good.

He's not homeless. Carl worked seven years helping homeless people get back on their feet.

Carl would continue to serve as director until the day he died if he could, he said, but at 69, his retirement was in the shelter's best interest.

His last day was Monday.

Carl hopes its new director, Marshall Smith, can help the agency accommodate increased demand for the shelter as the county population continues to swell.

Smith is aware of the problems associated with economic progress.

"When the boom comes to town, there are people that ride the wave, but it's not the people on minimum wage," he said. "It just exacerbates the problem."

This winter may be tough for minimum-wage earners, as higher fuel costs could make it harder to pay heating bills and transportation costs, Smith said.

Carl said understanding and compassion are needed to understand that those staying at the shelter aren't lazy, but may be unable to pay bills, may have been rejected by other nearby shelters or may suffer from mental illness or drug addiction.

"My feeling is that the crown jewel of the human spirit is the God-given gift of dignity," he said. "That's what we're here to do: to restore the personal dignity of everyone who stays in the shelter."

### More than a shelter

During Carl's tenure, the shelter went from operating six cold-weather months of the year to being open year-round. It also went from merely housing people overnight to providing case management to help clients become self-sufficient.

"The way that we can accommodate more people in this shelter is to get the people we have here on their feet so when they leave, we have space for someone else," Smith said.

Currently, all 24 of the shelter's beds for men are full, and half of the 12 women's beds are occupied.

For the past four or five years, the shelter has relied on a full-time social worker from Community Link to provide case management services. Community Link is a Concord agency working to end homelessness outside the confines of the shelter.

People who spend at least 14 days at the shelter are eligible for those individualized services, which include life and job skills training, as well as help finding community resources.

Dennis Daugherty, vice president of casework services at Community Link, estimates his agency has cut the average stay per resident from a year to six months. Daugherty said the shelter has succeeded in helping about half its long-term

residents become self-sufficient.

### **Help is on the way**

Community Link is working with Piedmont Behavioral Healthcare, which treats mental illness, substance abuse and development disabilities in five counties including Cabarrus, to secure more funding to move residents out of the shelter and into transitional housing.

He said residents are helped into permanent housing but don't get much follow-up. Transitional housing is an intermediate step between the shelter and owning a home, in which low-income residents can make more affordable payments on their way to owning the home.

Family Promise of Cabarrus County, a network of Cabarrus County churches whose mission is to provide shelter, food and activities for homeless families, may also take some of the burden off the night shelter.

The group received confirmation in October that it won a \$75,000 grant from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, according to recruitment coordinator Bob Harmon.

Combined with the agency's recently approved nonprofit status, he said, the grant will make it easier to raise startup costs for a day center for the homeless to get work-skills training and classes.

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