

Letters to the editor - Dec. 28, 2008

Sunday News

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SUNDAY NEWS

Room at the mission

As the provider of 80 percent of the emergency shelter beds in the county, Water Street Rescue Mission is actively involved to ensure the emergency needs of the homeless are met. As such, we need to clarify a point in Helen Colwell Adams' article "A hole in our net" [Nov. 30].

Indeed, for the first time in decades, the mission turned away someone from our 42-bed men's emergency shelter this fall when all beds were full. It would be erroneous, however, to portray this as a usual occurrence when the mission's men's emergency shelter averages eight to 15 available beds every night of the week.

It is true that our 80-85 beds for homeless women and children are often full. But other community resources, such as winter shelter programs run by churches, our own recently opened family shelter and our bad-weather shelter, allow us to suggest viable options to women and children. We are involved in community discussions about how to replace the loss of 20 emergency-shelter beds being provided by Crispus Attucks, and we remain committed to providing shelter to all homeless persons in our county.

We also provide Christian addiction-recovery programs for up to 100 individuals who have been unable to maintain permanent housing due to their patterns of addictive behaviors.

-Jere Shertzer, president, Water Street Rescue Mission