

When a Bed is More Than Just a Bed

Sleep in Heavenly Peace – Frederick County Maryland Chapter

When you see postings from Sleep in Heavenly Peace, it's about smiling volunteers sanding, drilling, and assembling beds on Saturday morning. The delivery pictures are of happy children stretched out on new beds with brightly colored sheets, quilts, & pillows. But behind closed doors across Frederick County, life is different.

- We went to a house in downtown Thurmont at the request of a teacher who knew of a student who needed a bed. When we arrived, the young man showed us down the steps to his "room" in basement. It was there that we discovered that he was sleeping on the bare concrete floor with two thin blankets and a dog bed for a pillow. We ran to the truck to get his bed and set it up.
- A social worker reached out to us about a non-custodial parent who could not have his three kids visit for the weekend because there were no beds for them. We were able to deliver a bunk bed for the two boys in one room and a single twin bed for their sister in another room. That's one challenge to the transition in their lives that was removed.
- Many times, when we deliver beds to families moving from homelessness to housing, the beds are the only furniture in the townhouse or apartment except for an occasional kitchen table and a few chairs. The rest of their lives are in small boxes and bags. At least, they have a comfortable place to sleep.
- We have delivered many beds to Grandparents who now have custody of their grandchildren because the parents are incarcerated or in treatment. These seniors already have little they can call their own and cannot afford to buy beds for the kids on their limited resources. We are blessed to have partners in the community who help us make these beds available to our neighbors.
- A Frederick County teacher found out that his brother-in-law had died suddenly, leaving his sister with 5 children to raise. The teacher and his wife took his sister's 4 older children into their townhouse with 2 kids of their own. Within a few days, SHP was able to install beds for the nieces & nephews and supply extra bedding items for the teacher's own children while they tried to find a path to tomorrow.
- The onslaught of the pandemic, followed by the resulting loss of jobs and loss of housing, has caused many families to "double up" in one townhouse or apartment. SHP's ability to deliver 'bunk' beds is often the solution that allows everyone to fit in a limited space until things improve.
- There are many more undiscovered needy families in Frederick County, with stories and situations that most of us find hard to comprehend. Our Frederick County chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace is seeking every path to get the word out about the resources that we can deploy to reduce the stress in these family's lives.
- We are also looking for people who can donate money for lumber and mattresses, as well as new twin size sheets, blankets, and pillows. Working together **"No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town"** will be a reality one day soon.