

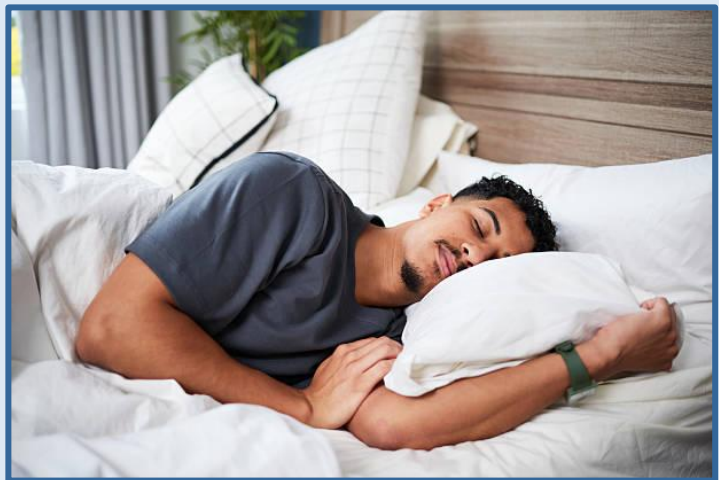
Dear RCHP-AHC Friends,

It is impossible to work on other stuff in your life if you cannot get a good night's sleep.

When we started RCHP-Affordable Housing Corporation, in 2006, it was because a group of us at RCHP had become convinced that a 'grace filled' solution to someone's unstable housing was to load the blessings on the front end so that rebuilding a life could start with sleep!

If you cannot get a good night's sleep, how can you work on mental health issues, holding down a job, reconciling with family, dealing with addiction, going back to school? The approach to affordable housing had started to change in the early 2000's, from "temporary housing" or "housing programs," to "Permanent Supportive Housing." We started riding the Permanent Supportive Housing wave as soon as we learned of it.

"Permanent Support Housing" felt to me like another word for the theology of my church. We believe that God says "yes, I love you!" to each and every one of us before we have a chance to say "yes" or "no." It is God's desire to load us with blessings of safety, comfort, kindness, support, and, when that happens, the 'response' from most human beings is to respond in ways that reflect that kind of abundant grace.



We have worked with various 'populations' (I dislike that word, by the way...because it assumes similarities in situations when often there are not). We have received grants to provide affordable homes and housing supports to Veterans, Homeless Youth, Youth Aging out of Foster Care, ReEntry folks, Homeless Families, Refugees, Asylees, Asylum Seekers, Victims of Trafficking. **What is similar, for all who come through our doors, is that graciousness and abundance on the front end pays off.** It pays off in a good night's sleep, peace of mind, and, often, a desire to work through various issues and to seek employment and to move toward self-sufficiency (whatever that means in a particular individual's case).

There is talk in the housing world these days of a return to the “you have to earn it” mentality. “Housing First” and “Permanent Supportive Housing” is being dubbed as “giving people something for nothing.”

That mentality, offered up by those who haven’t walked a mile in the shoes (or bare feet) of the poor, is a big mistake.

We have a world where the poor have had way fewer ‘abundances’ heaped on them than the rich have. We have a world where the poor have way fewer ‘abundances’ heaped on them than the middle-upper class have. There is no room for resentment toward the poor, or backward policies that impact the homelessness in ways that undo the possibility of a good night’s sleep.

That does not mean there isn’t accountability. There is. However, accountability is often demanded well before it is appropriate. When every day is a struggle for survival you develop habits sometimes that are not ‘becoming’ to those who don’t know the struggle.

So, friends, Christmas is the season of abundance, of gift giving. Can we take a ‘Christmas mentality’ into our thinking regarding housing? It is holy and right to do so.

Peace, Seth