



Part One

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Wait...even the towel?



Welcome to Will's serial. It's a five part story about a MoveFwd client. We will tell you his story as our staff saw it unfold. Follow Will (not his real name) as we approach Minnesota's **Give to the Max Day on November 17**.

It was late in the afternoon. When Will first walked into the MoveFwd Drop-in Center, we were charmed by his smile and worried about his circumstances. His well-mannered demeanor and quiet confidence made it hard for our staff to fathom his living situation. He was managing to work full time in our community, but he was homeless and had been sleeping in his car for the past three months. He knew it wasn't safe – and it was getting cold at night - but he said he'd tried a downtown shelter and the one he found "must be what prison feels like."

A MoveFwd staffer asked, "Would you like to take a shower?" Will's eyes welled up with tears. "Yes." We found a donated towel – with the tags still on it – along with soap, shampoo, shaving cream and a razor from our Drop-in Center supply closet. When we told him he could keep everything, he said, "**Wait...even the towel?**" Sometimes it's hard for our staff to hide their tears when a young person in crisis touches their hearts.

When young homeless people find their way to our Drop-in Center, it's a great first step for connecting to the resources they need to stay safe and warm. In addition to finding a safe place to sleep, our case managers and volunteers can help them apply for jobs, get a social security card, connect them to food shelves and sometimes even provide a comforting, fresh towel when they really need a shower. Sometimes it's the big things, like shelter. Sometimes it's the little things that mean everything to a homeless young person, like soap and water. And a fluffy towel.

Our primary Drop-in Center, open Monday-Thursday, is located in our MoveFwd offices in Hopkins. It's near a bus line and works well for many of the young people we help. But it's almost impossible for homeless young people in Eden Prairie and Plymouth to navigate to our offices without a car, so we also have weekly drop-in hours at the Hennepin County Libraries in both communities. We love our partnership with the librarians!

While many residents of our western suburbs aren't aware of homeless young people in our midst, it's a growing problem. They live, work, and attend school among us. They try to stay under the radar. They're not "bad kids." They're usually homeless through no fault of their own. You may be surprised that we have helped a young woman who slept in a portable toilet, a young man who slept under a bridge and now you're getting to know Will, who slept in his car. One of the most important things we've learned about homeless young people in our suburbs is that they want to stay here. Their instincts tell them that downtown shelters might not be ideal for them *and* they want to stay close to their jobs, friends and schools.

Minnesota's Give to the Max Day is coming up soon. We hope you'll follow Will's story over the next few weeks to find out how MoveFwd case managers and counselors helped him navigate homelessness. Please visit our website movefwdmn.org to learn more about our free counseling and case management services. [Donate now](#) to help young people like Will, or wait until Give to the Max

Day.



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