

*March 2008*

*To the Prescott Community:*

We the guests at Prescott Area Winter Shelter (PAWS) want to express our deep appreciation for all that you have done to make the shelter a reality.

This shelter represents a dream come true for many of us. You may never know how much it has meant to first of all know that there are people in our community who care as you have shown. You have provided a warm and safe place to come when it was cold, lonely, fearful and often unfriendly on the outside. You have fed and clothed us with abundance and made us feel welcome; you have offered support and encouragement for us as we strive to get once again on a path of community integration and wholeness, some of us would like to introduce ourselves to you.

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**I am L, age 47.**

Before PAWS I have lived on the streets of Prescott for 7 years. For many years I worked as a homemaker and housekeeper. I have a learning disability and psychological disability which have presented barriers to living wage employment.

During my stay at PAWS I have been able to apply for Social Security, I am currently waiting for their response. I have enrolled in Vocational Rehab and I have been able to rent a small trailer which I plan to share with one of the other guests I have met here. For the first time in 7 years I will have a home I can claim as my own. I would so much like to give back to other ladies who may share a similar plight to me by volunteering my time to work with PAWS if there were any way it could remain open. Even if no one received compensation, I believe we could make it work. In the dark of the night it remains cold on the outside. All we seek is a place for the weary to rest our heads.

**I am M, age 52**

Before coming to PAWS I had lived in various shelters, psych hospitals and on the street for about 1 1/2 years. But none of them were anything like PAWS. After having been a victim of brutal violence and left for near dead I began a struggle with addictions from various prescriptive and non prescriptive drugs. Prior to these life

altering events I have worked as an LVN , an RN and a flight attendant. Finally I too am seeing a light at the end of a long dark and gloomy tunnel.... I have been a guest a PAWS since mid December and at last I can see my life coming together. Yesterday I moved some of my things in with another guest who stayed at PAWS for a short while. We are helping each other with our problems. I went to church yesterday and I am making friends and connections in the community. I would so much like to see PAWS remain open for those like me who have had little other hope. I would love the opportunity to return to PAWS to give back some of what I have received.

**I am M, age 38**

I was left in the cold with no where to go when I returned home from work one day and found the tent I was sleeping in gone, along with my companion and belongings. Can you imagine the hurt and devastation I felt? I don't know what I would have done if it PAWS were not there. I have been psychologically challenged with certain emotional issues and this has made adjustments even more difficult for me.

I now have a good chance I believe at getting a supportive job which will help me to continue to rebuild my life. I just hope and pray there will be a place for me until that happens. I value so much the friends and support I received here. I too wish there were a way that I can remain connected to the spirit I have experience here and give back so that others can share the opportunity I have had for healing and hope.

On this last 2 days this shelter is to remain open, at least 4 new guests have arrived. One is 41 years old, has had recent back surgery and uses a walker. Since being at the shelter she has also discovered she has gallstones with need prompt attention. Another age 58 works part time and is actively looking for a full time work. She makes only \$400 per month and has lived in several different locations with friends over the past few months, she has not lived on the streets yet, but this evening she feels very close.

Very Sincerely,

The Guests at PAWS