

Dreams Come True for Hidden Homeless

Pastor John Wiley didn't think it was fair that the working  poor or "hidden homeless" in Kansas City, Mo., had to live in rent-by-the-week motels, paying \$800 to \$1,200 a month, so his church did something about it.

Three years ago, as Wiley watched nearly a dozen children get off a school bus and go into a motel, he thought, *No child should have to live in such a horrible place.* Soon after he drove by an old hospital and said to himself, "Somebody ought to buy that hospital and turn it into a place for homeless people and break the cycle of poverty."

He soon became accountable for his words. "God told me, 'You do it,'" Wiley says.

Since then, River Christian Fellowship has been reaching out to motel dwellers. "We've been rescuing these families, paying their rent and taking them hot meals, but the financial weight got to be a lot," Wiley says.

Last year the church purchased a \$16 million vacant hospital for \$1 million and converted it into the River of Refuge Dream Center, a 150,000-square-foot facility with 350 beds. The Dream Center is scheduled to open this fall, and its first priority is the homeless in metro Kansas City.

"We will also help people rescued from human trafficking by state and federal agencies, and provide a place for students willing to do humanitarian work for college credit," Wiley says. "But we have to first help those right in front of us, and the people in front of us are homeless."