

'Homeless' by Choice in Florida

This summer 24-year-old Brian Seeley wanted to do more than  just soak up the sun on the beaches of sunny Florida. He decided to live alongside the homeless in Lakeland, Fla.

The Southeastern University senior wanted to build lasting relationships when he willingly gave up the comforts most college students enjoy by sleeping outdoors, taking bucket showers and eating with the homeless at places that offer free food.

"I want genuine friendship with the poor or the people who are down and out right now," says Seeley, who graduates in December with a degree in practical theology.

Seeley began making connections with the area's homeless community in 2008. Eventually it turned into serving meals each week along with others from his church, Abundant Life Church of God. Over time, friendships grew, and Seeley decided to take 10 weeks this summer to bring those relationships to a new level.

"What's cool about being out here and coming on their turf is the ones I had made relationships with, they've had an opportunity to serve me back," he says. "And because it's been this reciprocal relationship, we've been able to develop a real friendship."

Seeley's hope is that individuals and churches will make deeper connections with those around them.

"My heart is that if we could all become more personal in our approach to one another, and specifically the homeless," he says. "I think that's part of what being a Christian

is-breaking those barriers.”