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The club is affiliated with
Kiwanis International, an organi-
zation that is more than 110 years
old; it has 30,000 members in the
United States.

Our membership stands at 22,
and the club is actively recruiting
local residents to join this organi-
zation.

The club plans to take on addi-
tional service projects as its
membership grows, as well as
incorporate more social
activities with its
families.

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It's the three-year delay that is the problem.

Three years in the life of a person living on the street, under a bridge, begging money for fortified wine or crack is hellish. But for a child, especially a young child, three years is literally a lifetime. Crucial developmental windows are open for six months, a year. Then closed forever.

During the critical first three years of life, children need to be nurtured, stimulated. A mother addicted to drugs or alcohol is not likely to meet those needs. When those needs are not met in toddlerhood, the result is not a kid with crummy childhood memories, it's an adult researchers say is five times more likely to be charged with a crime, and three times less likely to own a home.

No doubt there are more homeless men than women in our community, which is the Healing Place organizers' other argument for making men the priority. But of the 2,100 homeless people in Wake County, nearly 800 are women and children. There are only 281 beds available to them. And none of those beds is open to mothers who are drunk or high.

Let's be clear. This is a wonderful project, but we have made a choice: Single men before women with children. The groundbreaking on the first Healing Place is in November. Is it too late to re-prioritize?

As I said, I don't have anything against men. But when children's lives are at stake too, I wonder: Why not the women first?

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