

Triangle

Detox center for homeless addicts is under construction

'The Healing Place' lets ex-addicts help

BY AMANDA GREENE
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RALEIGH — Nine yellow bulldozers stood sentinel on red clay Wednesday on the spot where city planners hope physical and emotional healing will take place for the city's homeless.

Ground was broken for The Healing Place, a planned 41,000-square-foot shelter for 165 homeless men with substance-abuse problems. The shelter will be located on land that had been part of

the Dorothea Dix Hospital campus. Construction will take 11 months.

Maria Spaulding, director of Wake County's Human Services Agency, said supporters have raised \$4.5 million for the construction. Another \$1 million is needed to run it.

"The community really responded to our need, and now this program will give back to the community," she said.

The Healing Place program, launched in Louisville, Ky., aims to

provide support and a recovery program for homeless men with drug and alcohol addictions, enabling them to return to society.

Spaulding said each addict is paired with a man who has been through the program, someone who understands what he is going through.

"It's a peer-support program that cures addicts by listening to other addicts," she said. "It's really hard to lie to someone who has had the same addictions you have."

From maintenance to security, the program will be controlled by the patients. Spaulding said the

city will hire staffers from the Louisville facility and others to help run the Raleigh operation.

But Spaulding would not have known about the program if it had not been for the walking fingers of Linda Strothor. She was the chairperson of a city committee searching for a detox solution for Raleigh's homeless population in 1996.

Strothor said she simply found the Healing Place's Web site on the Internet.

"A higher power has been involved in every step of getting this program here to Raleigh," she said.

After taking two separate delegations to Louisville to see the program there, Strothor detailed her vision for Raleigh's homeless: a place where they can heal.

"I just might cry, this means so much to me," she said.

"This program is so important because it takes the homeless where they are and gives them back to their families and communities."

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