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MIDTOWN

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The Healing Place

BY KATE TURGEON || PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANK PIERCE

Like many other homes, The Dixon-Kirby holiday house features a beautiful entryway. But this one is special. The visitors who walk through it this holiday season may help a homeless person enter a new life.



It will only cost five dollars to tour the Dixon/Kirby & Co. Holiday House in Midtown's Ramblewood neighborhood. Tours start December 8th and continue through the end of the year. In addition to an exceptional floorplan, visitors can expect to see gorgeous interior décor by Boyles Interiors, which will offer ideas from floor to ceiling and everything in between.

But the most amazing thing about this home is not the warmth and richness created inside and out, for which Mark Kirby and Brian Dixon are known, it's that this house may play a part in helping someone escape a life sentence on the streets.

HOMELESS FACE BIG CHALLENGES

Proceeds from the house tour and from renting the home for holiday parties will benefit The Healing Place of Wake County. Founded in 2000, The Healing Place is a rehabilitation center for homeless people facing problems of alcoholism or chemical dependency.

Unfortunately, a very large percentage of the homeless face these problems, says Barrett Joyner, development director at The Healing Place of Wake County. "Studies show if you take alcoholism, addiction and mental illness, that pretty much deals with about 100 percent of homelessness in America," he says. "We focus in on the drug dependency and alcoholism, which is roughly about 80 percent of homelessness in America."

Seven years ago, The Healing Place of Wake County opened its first shelter, for men, near the N.C. State Farmer's Market. Two years ago, a second shelter, for women, opened near Umstead Park.

At The Healing Place, residents work with counselors and peers. The curriculum consists of the 12-step program from Alcoholics Anonymous and Recovery Dynamics®, a method of 28 group sessions that apply the principles of AA. "During that, one of the most important aspects of the program is not only that clients understand the disease, but they also have strong incentive and a strong peer group that gives them tools to tackle that disease through those 12 steps," says Joyner.

The entire program is based on willingness and commitment on the part of the resident. "If the client gives a lot, the place gives a lot," explains Joyner. "Awards are earned as they go through the program. As they take on projects and take on work at The Healing Place, they move through the program and get more autonomy, more privacy and more benefit."

A CHANCE THEY WOULDN'T HAVE OTHERWISE

The Healing Place costs just \$30 per day per resident to operate, compared with \$80 for a night of incarceration. Police officers, parents, friends and family often drop clients off at the The Healing Place's detox center, where people arrive each night to begin recovery. However, it is up to each whether or not to stay and start the program. Between the men's and women's centers, The Healing Place shelters between 200 and 250 people each night.

Of those who do stay, 70 percent are sober one year after graduation. The Healing Place works with other agencies and organizations to ensure needs such as housing, transportation and employment are met before release.

Funded by the government, private individuals and corporate donations, residents incur no cost to stay at The Healing Place. The success rate of The Healing Place of Wake County is unusually high compared with other rehabilitation programs. Joyner explains why: "The Healing Place allows people to stay for as long as they need to. A lot of the (other) programs, I refer to as 28-day (treatment), everybody goes through and deals with short-term issues and then they get out, but they really haven't changed their behaviors. We don't have an exact time frame here. It takes what it takes."

The Healing Place of Wake County is patterned after a similar organization, The Healing Place of Louisville, KY, which has similar success rates and has received national recognition for its achievements.

A concerned group of Raleigh citizens toured the facility in 1998 and decided it should be replicated for Wake County. It provides the homeless with a chance they wouldn't have otherwise. "It does break that cycle," says Joyner. "Alcoholism runs in families. You get somebody off the streets. We work with them in finding a job. So when they leave here for society, they have gainful employment and stability in their lives. Every day there's a new story I hear that just amazes me about The Healing Place." ♦

THE DIXON/KIRBY HOLIDAY HOUSE

3724 Rolston Drive in Ramblewood, Midtown

Tickets are \$5 each at the door

December 8th through the end of the year

Wed-Sat, 11am to 5pm; Sun 1pm to 5pm

Sponsored by Dixon/Kirby & Co., homebuilder; Boyles Interiors, interior design; English Garden, Christmas tree and fresh arrangements; ArtSource, displayed art
Proceeds benefit The Healing Place of Wake County

For more information, visit The Healing Place website at www.hpowc.org or contact Barrett Joyner, Development Director at 865-2537

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