Time heals
By Ben Curtis, Street Minister

They say that time heals a broken heart. Many of our friends out on the street have broken hearts, deep emotional wounds and psychological trauma. Can time play a part in their healing?

Last week, a couple of volunteers and I were down in the SODO district talking with folks camping out there and giving them much needed survival supplies. We spent the majority of our time with one man and a couple of ladies that were all staying in close proximity to one another. You could tell they had their own little community.

We gave them numerous things including socks, water, food, hygiene supplies, a backpack and other clothing. We also spent time talking with them and listening. When we were getting ready to leave, the ladies thanked us for all we had given them and then, something struck me. The guy said ‘Thanks for spending time with us.’ For him, out of all we had given, our time was the most important.

For all of us, our time is in high demand. Every day, all day, things call out for attention. But can we find time for our friends experiencing homelessness? It might be more healing that we realize.

To volunteer, contact Tonette at tonette@seattlenightwatch.org.
Forest or trees?
By Ann Sakaguchi

It’s easy to get lost in the forest if you keep staring at each tree. We are now in a big building repair project at Nightwatch. Our ancient building that houses our 24 formerly homeless seniors, as well as the Dispatch Center, is getting fixed. Windows are being replaced and sealed to keep the rains out. Workers are high above the ground, on scaffolding that covers one side of the building. I can hear the chunks of cracked and broken-down stucco hit the dumpster below as they work.

I’ve been focused on the details. How many windows will be needed? When will the dumpster arrive and displace staff/volunteers’ parking? Where should the porta-potty be placed, so that the garbage/recycling/compost bins are still accessible?

What color should we paint the building? Details. Details. Details.

A new, young friend from out-of-state asked me this: “Why doesn’t the city do something about homelessness?” For the next several minutes, I pontificated about the challenges of solving homelessness. His eyes glazed over. Then he asked “But what do you do?” To answer him, I had to zoom out, and look at the big picture, or the forest.

My own eyes glaze over if I fixate on the details. For this big building project, I need to remember the forest: we’re doing this to ensure a safe and comfortable place for Nightwatch tenants and clients for years to come.

It’s a big project, as in big ticket, like over $200,000 worth of work. We have lots of folks willing to help us. Will you join them and help us?

Thank you for your support of Nightwatch in the past.●