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[ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]

Shelters bring holiday to homeless

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While most Columbia students head home for a relaxing Thanksgiving with their families, some area homeless people will head to local shelters for holiday meals or spend the day alone.

Many local churches, including Broadway Presbyterian and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, provide special Thanksgiving meals to the homeless and low-income community residents.

Elouise Williams, a volunteer at the Broadway Presbyterian Church, located on the corner of Broadway and West 114th Street, said the church's Thanksgiving soup kitchen program, which is run by more than 100 volunteers, will serve about 200 people this year.

The church will serve up traditional turkey dinners—along with yams and cranberry sauce—on both Thursday and Friday afternoons at noon and 1 p.m.

“On Thanksgiving they wait on line to receive a ticket in the morning, and then eat a traditional meal at noon,” Williams said. “As long as

they are on time, they can eat as much as they want.”

Fifty volunteers at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, located on Amsterdam Avenue and West 112th Street, last Sunday served a traditional Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings to 250 people, said program co-director Charmaine Melendez.

According to Melendez, the volunteers were church and local community members, as well as some Columbia student advocates from the Community Impact group Project Rights Opportunities. She added that the turkeys were donated by the cathedral's congregation.

Yesterday, area homeless people were making different plans for the upcoming holiday.

“This Thanksgiving I am going to do my recycling, and then I'm

gonna have a camp-out in the park. I've got my sterno, my bricks, and my grill, and I'm gonna put it all together alone," said Ronald Freeman, as he stood in front of D'Agostino's market to cash in bottles and cans he had collected.

Another homeless man, Roman Pedro, said though he is terminally ill, he has no plans to spend Thanksgiving with his family.

"I have had AIDS for 10 years, and I am dying anyway, so what does it even matter to me?" Pedro asked.

Joe Deighan said he will spend Thanksgiving like most other days—haggling with area store owners to get his recyclable materials cashed in.

"We need to recycle so that we don't have to eat out of the garbage on Thanksgiving, or any other day of the year. But regardless, I hope that people will help us needy on a day like Thanksgiving," Deighan said.

Alan Hamilton, another homeless man, said he appreciates the efforts of the local soup kitchens.

"On Thanksgiving, I'll be visiting the Broadway Presbyterian Church. They feed you, and when everybody leaves, sometimes you can even eat twice," Hamilton said.

Antonio Navarro will head to the Broadway Presbyterian Church on Thanksgiving.

"I wish I could see my family, but under the conditions I really can't. I wish it could be better than it is," Navarro said.



STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER—MATT YOSPIN

John Cardinale, head of the jazz department at WKCR, and members of other student groups housed in Ferris Booth Hall, are awaiting news of where they will be relocated.



CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER—JONATHAN HO

A homeless man slept on a bench in the park adjacent to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine earlier this week.