

# A winter warm front



John Leyba | The Denver Post

Greg Harms, right, executive director of the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, talks with Ron Hesler, 38, of Boulder. Hesler is in the shelter's transition program, which provides opportunities for residents to try to get a job and obtain housing.

## Out of harm's way and in Harms' shelter, homeless find opportunity

*Boulder's larger facility is better able to help because "everything is located under one roof."*

By Jim Kirksey  
Denver Post Staff Writer

The two-story stucco building along Broadway in the northern reaches of Boulder is a winter haven for the homeless.

Open just over a year, the new home of the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless is in its peak season — when the skies turn gray, the winds gain an icy edge and the temperatures fall.

"I used to kind of enjoy the snow. Now, I have mixed feelings about it," said executive di-

rector Greg Harms. "It's not only the cold; it's the wet that makes it difficult for people on the street."

The nightly number of guests climbs as the weather turns colder, especially in January and February.

Operating out of the new facility at 4869 N. Broadway, the shelter gives the city's homeless a safety valve when the cold becomes dangerous. The spacious new quarters offer expanded capabilities for providing beds and meals.

The shelter also provides opportunities for people to transition into a more productive lifestyle with a job and a home.

The old facility, an L-shaped motel built in the 1950s, was designed to serve a maximum of

30 people. Harms moved his office off-site to squeeze in 12 more beds to bring the total to 80.

"It was a building that was past its useful life," said Harms.

On some nights, the shelter bused up to 40 more homeless people to overflow facilities.

Meals were served in shifts — 30 at a time — in the 12-by-20-foot dining room.

"It was expensive and, frankly, it was not the best treatment we could give the residents," Harms said.

Now, the shelter is in a 30,000-square-foot building. It has 160 beds with all the ancillary services, a modern kitchen

### How to donate

Post-News Season to Share, a fund of the McCormick Tribune Foundation, gave more than \$1.6 million to 60 agencies last year serving children, the hungry and the homeless, as well as providing independent medical care. Donations are matched at 50 cents for each dollar, and 100 percent of all donations goes directly to charitable agencies. To make a donation, please see the coupon on Page 3C, call 800-508-2928 or go to [www.denverpost.com](http://www.denverpost.com). A list of donors appears in Perspective, Page 8E.





*"The number of people coming to our door hasn't increased dramatically, but they are staying longer."*

**Greg Harms, of the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless**



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**An woman waits for bed linen after checking in last month at the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, 4869 N. Broadway.**

## SHELTER: Longer-term residents get guidance in transition program

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and a dining room that seats 80.

"We are doing no overflow now," Harms said. "Everything is located under one roof."

When the shelter moved into its new quarters Dec. 6, 2003, it averaged 134 guests a night for the rest of the season, about 14 more than before, he said.

Early this year, the shelter capped its capacity at 120 a night in order to save money, but the cap is being raised to 145, Harms said.

The shelter, which gets 80 percent to 85 percent of its operating budget from private sources, is seeking funding from the Post-News Season to Share campaign.

"We're not serving more people. The number of people coming to our door hasn't increased dramatically, but they are stay-

ing longer," Harms said.

The average stay has gone from 24 days to 29 days.

About 25 to 30 of the shelter's residents are in its transition program, seeking to better their own situation and move into a more stable lifestyle.

Those people are longer-term residents of the shelter, trying to deal with life's troubles, looking for employment and a place of their own. They are accepting the guidance available at the shelter to accomplish these goals.

Still, the shelter houses about 90 emergency clients a night. Those homeless are seeking a warm bed.

The emergency sheltering program runs from mid-October through the end of April.

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