

STAR NEWS

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MAINSTREAMS

Manufacturers play a key role in area employment, economic impact. ■ 1B

SCOREBOARD

Elk runners are NWSC champs and Emma Bates nabs 5th title. ■ 10

ELK RIVER

OTSEGO

ROGERS

ZIMMERMAN

Youth homeless — for one night

by Bob Grawey

Staff writer

More than 100 youth and 20 adults spent the night outside recently in makeshift cardboard homes.

The temperature dipped below 30 degrees as they raised public awareness and money for homeless-

ness and for world poverty.

The youth, who were described as engaged and affected by the experience, met the goal of raising \$6,000. In turn Sean Nelson, youth and family pastor at Christ Church in Otsego, will shave his legs and armpits on Oct. 21.

Nelson directed the cause. The idea for it came from middle school students in Nelson's youth group last year. They had heard about another church doing something similar and asked if their youth group could do something like it, too. Nelson told them to get a proposal put together and they would talk about it.

"One of my philosophies as a youth pastor is to fan the flame of youth's aspirations and dreams," Nelson says. "If they are hearing whispers from God, I want to help them say yes to it."

The following Wednesday the middle school youth surprised Nelson by presenting their idea, complete with the project packaged in a presentation folder. Nelson bought into it.

Nelson says he has learned there are more homeless people in Sherburne, Wright and Anoka counties than

people think because it is more hidden than in Minneapolis where homeless are seen on the streets.

One incident the youth pastor heard about involves a couple who live in a camper/truck at a Highway 10 rest stop. Another incident more localized involves a student at an area high school who was found living under tarps in a wooded area during winter.

Some of the money raised by the youth will be given to a local or regional ministry that works with the homeless. Funds will also go for medical kits to be used by AIDS workers traveling between villages in Rwanda, as they care for those with HIV.

Youth listened to speakers on both topics, played games and ate a supper of Ramen noodles cooked over an open outdoor fire Saturday night. Sunday morning they had oatmeal.

"The point (was) to at least get the youth a little more in touch with what it might look like to be homeless," Nelson explains.

Youth from HighPoint Church in Rogers also participated.

For more information call the church at 763-441-5097.

