

STREET ROOTS PHOTOS

Four years in the making, New Blanchet House opens

STAFF REPORTS

The Blanchet House of Hospitality in Old Town Chinatown celebrated a new lease on life this week with the grand opening of its new building at Northwest Third Avenue and Glisan Street.

The new \$13 million facility houses a commercial kitchen operation, a dining hall and two floors of dormitory-style housing for residents in the program: men struggling with homelessness, addiction, unemployment and other hardships. Residents volunteer their service in exchange for hot meals and hospitality, including work at the organization's farm in Yamhill County. Food raised on the farm, along with community donations, helps supply the kitchen, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner six days a week. Today Blanchet serves between 700 and 900 meals a day.

The move has been four years in the making, since 2008, when the organization launched its campaign to replace its crumbling, 100-year-old brick box with a new facility on the same lot. The old building still stands, dwarfed by the new four-story center next door.

In 2009, The Portland Development Commission granted the parcel to Blanchet House in exchange for the old Blanchet property.

The old building had no extra space and for years each meal meant a line of people wrapped around the corner down Fourth Avenue. The new facility has space for people to queue up inside.

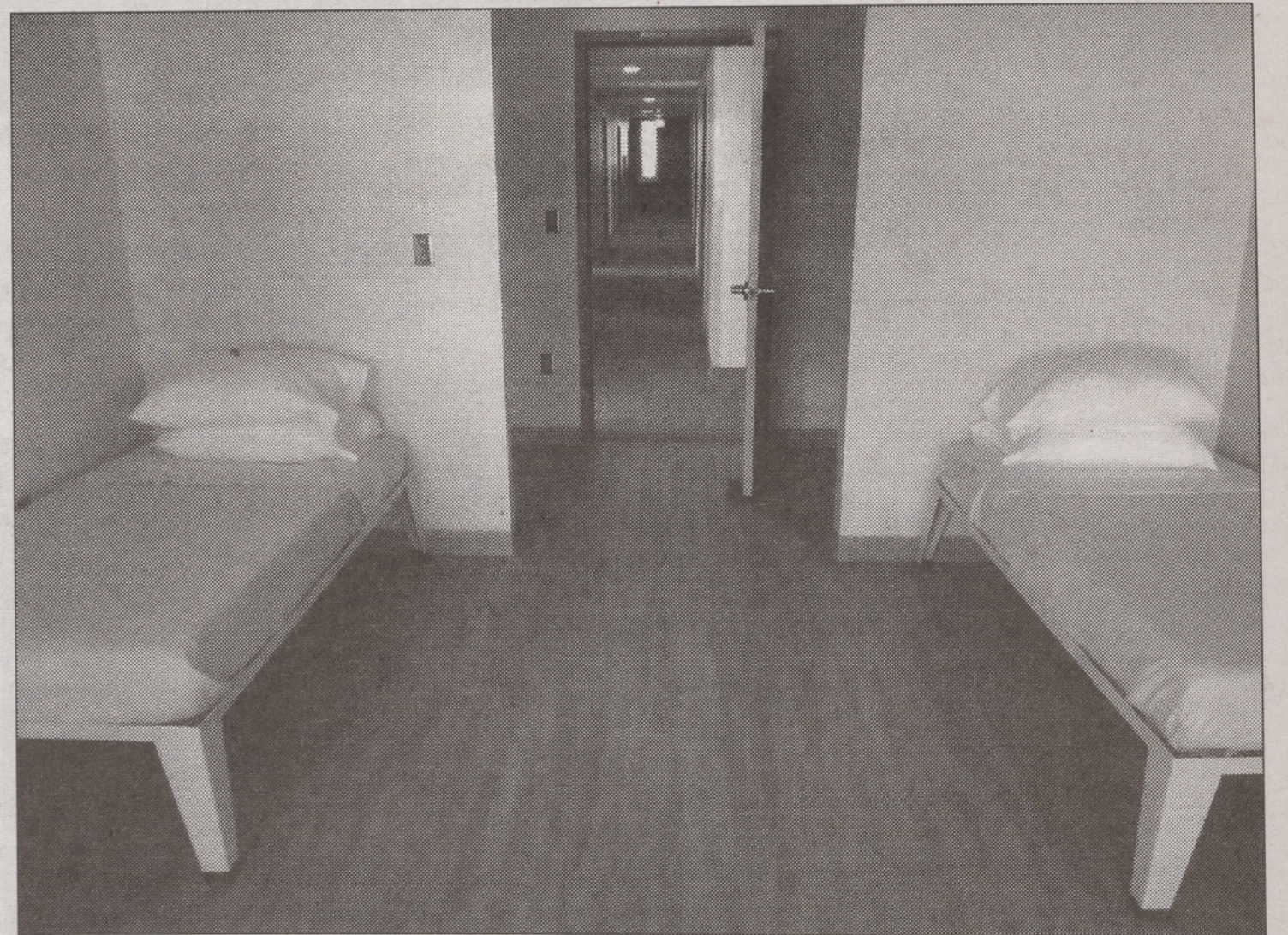
Launched by a group of University of Portland students, Blanchet House opened its doors for its first meal 60 years ago. Each year more than 1,000 high school students volunteer at the center.

In addition to the organization's farm, the kitchen relies on Urban Gleaners, which collects food from stores and restaurants in the Portland area.

The new facility is in part a hands-on project for its program participants. Residents working in the organization's wood shop, located on the farm, made much of the furniture in the new center, including the tables and stools for the dining hall, and dressers, desks and nightstands for the rooms upstairs.



Above top, the new Blanchet House of Hospitality exterior. The new commercial kitchen facility. Lower right, many of the furnishings in the rooms were built by residents at the organization's woodworking shop in Yamhill County.





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