

Right to Dream, Sleep, and Be Human

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formerly houseless, Ibrahim Mubarak.

Earlier that morning, Mubarak and other advocates of the houseless were at the courthouse, suing the city for a mounting stack of fines the city has been piling on the camp for months.

A few guys are gathered around an iPhone, smoking cigarettes, and getting a kick out of a YouTube clip of Mayor Sam Adams speaking in court.

The city says the recycled doors that barricade the camp from Burnside Street, and "prevent just anybody from coming in," said Mubarak, are too high.

Mubarak introduces me to a few other comrades, some of whom are in rotating shifts as volunteer security guards and checking folks into the camp where up to 90 people call home each night.

There are tents for single women, single men, couples, and tents exclusively for battered individuals. Anyone entering, 17 and older, must read or re-read the camp's code of conduct, a printed and laminated list of rules stuck to an outer post. No drugs. No alcohol. No open flames in camp.

Prior to my tour with

Mubarak, I sign the red book, a visitor log tracking the names and dates of all camp occupants. Above the check-in desk is a community cork board, posted overhead with housing information, free dinner events, and other opportunities of interest for those who stay.

Mubarak walks me by the

sheveled with blankets and bedding, asking a man nearby if he knew who was in charge of cleaning it up. The man says he will do it.

It costs about \$1,200 a month to operate Right 2 Dream, says Mubarak. Most of the budget is spent at the Laundromat.

There is a kitchen tent filled

Behind the closed-walled kitchen tent was an open tent with the only free electrical outlet and running water spigot nearby, a place to eat and wash dishes, and for volunteers to meet.

Mubarak pointed out the donation tent, stuffed with random goods other people think houseless people might need,

brick walls barricading the back of the camp.

Behind the tents is a make-shift rack of donated and personal bikes. Dignity Village donated raised garden beds which sit at the center of the camp, just away from the designated smoking tent.

Across from two porta-potties, one designated for men and one for women, a Christmas tree stands between the garden beds, its branches still wrapped.

"Why won't they open the vacant buildings for people to stay?" said Mubarak pointing to Chinatown as he stands on the sidewalk near the decorated doors that barricade the south side of Right 2 Dream.

Agencies, individuals and education groups donate \$100 to paint a door. The money goes to the operating costs of Right 2 Dream Too.

"I want to see affordable housing, more jobs, universal healthcare, dedicated social services and apartment readiness classes," said Mubarak. "I want to see social justice in that everybody is equal."

As he talks, some people walk by and stare. Others, some with worn clothing and missing teeth, smile, pat his back and shake his hand.

Any religion that professes concern for the souls of men and is not equally concerned about the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried.



- Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

large makeshift tents, protected with blue tarps from above and strewn with bedding and a few sleeping bodies below. "Quiet time is 10 p.m. to 8 p.m.," he said, but people are allowed to rest here during the day.

Mubarak makes an inquiry about a tent which looks di-

with cooking devices, utensils and donated foods from Quaker Oats to mac & cheese, bread and potatoes to canned food and hot cocoa. A new friend living at the camp later tells me he's roasted an entire turkey in the camp's modest outdoor grill. Only bones were left after everyone ate, he said.

and a trailer compiled of scrap wood—an office-in-progress, soon to be hooked up to the Internet for people to look for jobs and housing.

Mubarak leads me to the permanent shelter area, where more than 20 two-person, camping tents are clustered like mushrooms within two

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Salutes

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