

# Hamilton JournalNews

## Homeless man says shelter saved his life during heavy rain

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HAMILTON — Michael Herd said he's lucky to be alive thanks to a local homeless shelter.

"I think they saved my life," the 55-year-old Middletown man said Monday. "If it wasn't for this place, I don't know where I'd be. I'd get pneumonia real quick."

Herd had been surviving along the banks of the Great Miami River for the past few days. Having run out of money until his next Social Security check comes in February, Herd said he thought his plan would work. That was until off and on rain late last week turned into a steady downpour.

At the suggestion of a friend, Herd made his way Sunday to the Church Hospitality Emergency Shelter Network, or CHOSEN, inside Serve City on East Avenue in Hamilton.

Officials at the homeless shelter said they've experienced an increase of people seeking shelter from the heavy rains, which are expected to change to snow by today, according to the National Weather Service in Wilmington.

"Typically, we have seven to eight during the day," CHOSEN Director Kay Waldo said of people seeking shelter. "Today (Monday) we have 15 people playing games, cards, updating resumes. I'm sure we're going to have them lined up at the front door" as the weather worsens.

Waldo said the shelter has been at its capacity of 48 all winter.

Herd, who spent the night at CHOSEN, will remain there until he's able to find permanent housing. He found himself homeless when his apartment caught fire last October. Since then, he had been living at a motel until he ran out of money recently.

"I just appreciate being out of the rain. I just got broke," he said. "Basically, I'll have to start all over."