

Compassion Story of the Month

With Brattleboro voting overwhelmingly to become part of the international Charter for Compassion, the Reformer and The Commons have agreed to publish a "compassion story of the month." This is the twelfth. Information on submissions from Brattleboro area residents is offered below.

Compassion on the Street

(These stories were dictated by the authors who agreed that their names be used)

Story 1 by Curtis Henry

I've lived in Rochester and Cleveland. But it is here in Brattleboro that I've encountered the most compassion.

Here's something that happened to me last week. Imagine this! I'm pan-handling in town, and a stranger walking past gives me a \$10 bill. That sort of thing doesn't happen very often.

A fellow I know, a drifter, standing nearby, noticed and said, "Hey man, let's go eat. I'm starving!"

We went to the nearby Super Fresh and treated ourselves to a bite. But the stranger's generosity had put us in an unusual mood. We talked about the hard luck we'd encountered over the course of our lives. I told him about the mental health issues I've been plagued with since I was a kid. He told me how being homeless had taken a toll on him. At the same time, we agreed that there were really lots of people around in need. And we talked about the man who, on an impulse, had decided to help us out.

The lunch cost us a total of \$3.00.

On the way out, we passed the counter with a gratuity jar. Pausing for a moment, I looked over at my friend, and he nodded. I took the remaining \$7.00 and put it in the jar.

Story 2 by Joe Pasquino

I became homeless three years ago. I'd had terrible problems with my family because of my addiction to alcohol and drugs.

One night last winter – it was 10 degrees outside, I fell asleep in an alley, and was freezing. (I couldn't go a shelter because of legal problems.) When I woke up, I found myself covered with a blanket. I discovered afterwards that my "savior" was a young fellow I'd never met, but who, for some reason, had chosen to help me. And he helped me again and again through that rough time, once when I was soaking wet. He even offered me a tent for shelter and protection.

He and I talked off and on, and I kept thinking, "I wish I could be a person like that."

I think meeting him changed my life. Now every chance I get, I try and offer a helping hand. I think of my young friend, and want to tell him that I'm passing it forward.

Submissions, from Brattleboro area residents, for future publication, not to exceed 650 words, should be emailed to: compassionstory@gmail.com or mailed to: Compassion Story of the Month, c/o Robert Oeser, PO Box 6001, Brattleboro, VT 05302. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address. Earlier submitted stories will automatically be considered in subsequent months.