

Homeless homes

People maybe do not want to see what they are seeing when they go by a man or a women sitting on a cardboard outside, but it is a sad fact that homeless people are on the streets and suffering. Why are we not showing affection, why are we not lending them a place to sleep and take a shower or even a hot meal to eat. At the end are not we all humans? Do not we have the same rights to sleep in a warm bed at night. We want to awake awareness and get them in hold of homelessness, and involve as many people as possible to get a glimpse of a homeless life. We keep pushing away the awful truth about them. We decided to call one of the homeless home takers and interview one of the people that is homeless. There is few homeless houses in Malmö. And we came to decision to call Stadsmissionen and make them know that we are coming and wanted to interview someone that is willing to talk to us. And maybe could take a picture with us both.

We called them and said:

-Hello my name is Pauline and me and my colleague is from Glokal folkhögskolan here in Malmö, and we are doing a reportage about homeless people, and wondering if we could book a time to come and visit you at Stadsmissionen to get an interview. The lady that we called was not happy at all, and did not want us to disturb on their private life. We both felt that she was very protective And we respected that. Later on we kept on searching for someone to interview and emailed Kontrapunkt (also one home for homeless people and asked if they were willing to do the interview. And they agreed, So we are going to interview one of the volunteer on kontrapunkt and ask them a few questions about the homeless and how it is to work with homeless people. Today 2017-02-16 we are going to Kontrapunkt that is not too far from Glokala Folkhögskolan.

We both head down to Kontrapunkt and had an interview with Sofie. We arrived to Kontrapunkt, and we knocked at a small red door. And there was Klara, that met us at the door and welcomed us She said that Sofia is not here today and asked if it was ok if we talked to her Klara. She asked us if we wanted coffee and we said yes and smiled pleasantly. It was a dark cold environment, and there were no one else in the room, just some volunteers walking around and cleaning before the homeless people were about to come. It was a moist and heavy air to breath and it smelled old. We sat down at a table, we asked Klara if we could both record this interview, Klara allowed us to record our interview.

Klara who introduces us to Kontrapunkt explains that from the beginning it was a culture . And now the focus is shifting more and more to social activities. Kontrapunkt is a association to Kontrakultur. It is a warm place which helps homeless people and offer them a warm place to be in, and not being on the street during a cold night. As homeless people counts also asylum seekers. The place offers a big room with kitchen. There are tables and chairs and a chilling room with lazy bags and carpets. When we asked Klara what was the reason that made her become a volunteer she responds with that In the time when she was an exchange student from Germany, she wanted to help people and signed up to become a volunteer at Kontrapunkt .She strives to make planet Earth a better place and lives after that all human beings has same value and deserves a warm place for sleeping”. On the question if she ever felt uncomfortable in some situation because of a homeless who did not wanted to be in the

house and obey the rules, she tells about some situations where the visitor comes intoxicated on alcohol and behaves unpleasantly towards the staff and the other visitors. Then the male part has to escort the problematic man, so the other can continue to sleep or hang out in peace. On Kontrapunkt alcohol and other dangerous substances is forbidden. Kontrapunkt opens at 5 o'clock afternoon. The homeless are waiting outside to get in and volunteers are welcoming them. Before their arrival the four chefs in the kitchen has prepared a dinner for them, and soon as they come they get offered a warm meal. With little resources Kontrapunkt can provide only a meal a day from Monday to Thursday. Some days when it is a special holiday for a certain ethnic group the staff on Kontrapunkt arranges a day with food and music to celebrate this occasion. On a ordinary day the homeless people are hanging in the room playing cards, talking, eating together, doing everything to make the time pass by. The room receives up to 110 visitors, but it is never full and too crowded. For those who wants to take a initiative and help the homeless can sign up to be a volunteer just like Klara and many others. As Klara says with a goodwill we can make a helpful community. We can help them through dealing with them and just talking with them. After all they are also humans. They are allowed to stay in Kontrapunkt for a dinner and to sleep over in the big room, and as the morning comes, they must go out at 7 o'clock in the morning.

We asked Klara -

How can you provide better conditions for the homeless people than, redcross or stadsmissionen?

-We have night open, so the homeless can come at night and keep warm. Redcross only has soup kitchen maybe once a month, maybe even once every second month, so it is not often. And the other only takes on homeless people unless it is -5 degrees outside. And if then, they only take 20-25 people, when they come here, 150 people fits in this room. Mostly it is people from Romania, and it is often couples that come in together. Secondly it is people from Sweden.

We also asked why we could not interview directly a homeless person.

Klara said that, they wanted to provide for that safety, and do not want to expose them either, we need to respect their privacy. Kontrapunkt is where they can come and feel safe.

- Klara, do you have any personal experience of homelessness?

No, i have a home, and i have never been homeless.

Klara moved here from Germany year 2009 to study, and then became a volunteer here at Kontrapunkt. she feels very good being able help and provide the best she can for the homeless people.

Are homeless people asking mostly for money to buy alcohol or drugs? we asked.

No, not here. But if we do find alcohol we take it from them, and later when they go from Kontrapunkt we give it back to them.

We asked Klara, why they give them the alcohol back? Klara answered that, we give it back because we do not want to scare them away. We are not a rehab, But if they ask for help with their drinking problem, it's of course that we book a meeting for them so they can go and talk to someone, and get medical help as well.

What are the ages that mostly comes here?

It is very different, it can be from ages 18-75, as i said before it is couples from romania. But before that, it was men that came in.

What can we do to help? As in our community?

Well we are always in need of extra volunteers to come and help us out, and if we are more volunteers, we can do more together. But first if you need to come to an information meeting, so you get all the information before you can come and volunteer.

The interview is coming to an end, and we wanted to thank Klara for taking her time for us to do the interview. And that we would talk to our classmates that we should help them out at Kontrapunkt. "To help someone feels always good"



one sign from kontrapunkt Klara at Kontrapunkt
"Together we are stronger"

by Pauline Johansson and Aleksandra Veljin