

Press release

The future of homeless people lies in housing

Street Nurses launches its end of the year campaign

Brussels / 27 November, 2024 - **In Brussels, more than 800 people sleep rough every day and at least 6,000 others live in temporary shelters. A third of them have been homeless for more than two years... The situation is similar in Liège.**

Yet homelessness is not inevitable. Even for those who are currently homeless, there is a future. And that future lies in housing.

That, in a nutshell, is the message of the campaign launched by the Street Nurses at the end of November.

<https://www.infirmiersderue.be/en/donation-donation-lets-build-future-homeless-people>

Homeless people will only find their place in society once they have a home. This is a realistic prospect for the future, in the day-to-day experience of the Street Nurses field workers. Every year, they can rehouse around twenty of the most vulnerable homeless people in Brussels and Liège.

But it's a long-term job. For people who have been living rough for several years and have several problems, there is a long way to go before they have the confidence to return to housing. If housing is available at all, that too remains a major problem.

To highlight this prospect for the future and keep its operations financially possible, Street Nurses is launching its winter campaign '*Donation after donation, let's build a future for homeless people*'. Running from the end of November to the end of December, the campaign aims to raise public awareness of the need to end homelessness through housing, public solidarity and the collection of donations.

***'Being able to say "I'm home", you can't imagine how good that can feel'*. (Luc, lived on the streets for 7 years)**

The campaign draws attention to the intensive and often lengthy support needed by people who have been on the streets for several years, and to the crucial role of housing.

Koen Van den Broeck, spokesperson for Street Nurses: *"With Street Nurses, we accompany our patients step by step so that they can get out of their situation. We work on their hygiene, health and self-image, looking for their abilities and the things that give meaning to their lives. We put them back in touch with the medical and social network, we support them in sorting out their administrative situation so that they are once again entitled to an income, we help them to look for accommodation, to moving in and feel at home, we help them to look for solutions to make*

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their loneliness bearable, and so on. Some even come to think of us as their family. In short, we spend years rebuilding this future with them. It takes a lot of people and resources. That's why we're hoping that the public will also contribute to this process, donation by donation. "

Housing is the solution to homelessness

For *Street Nurses*, there is only one good solution to homelessness: decent housing! Only in proper housing can people feel secure and work towards their health and integration into society. However, the organisation notes that it is still difficult to find enough affordable and suitable housing available to this target group.

"Ending homelessness is not only possible, but also necessary if we really want to improve the health and survival of homeless people and if we want to effectively combat poverty and exclusion. Access to decent housing is crucial in this respect as a lever for lasting change", states medical coordinator Pierre Ryckmans forcefully.

A campaign supported by business and the media

The campaign is financed thanks to the support of partners such as **KBC Brussels**, the **National Lottery**, **Interparking**, **CHC Group**, **Prefer** and **AB Tech**. Media space is provided free of charge or at a greatly reduced price by various media. The campaign will be visible through posters, advertisements, postcards in restaurants, radio spots and posts on social networks.

To find out more about the campaign, make a donation or get involved, visit [the Street Nurses website](https://www.infirmiersderue.be/en/press-campaign-winter-2024).

Street Nurses works on the 'end of homelessness' in Brussels and Liège, by accompanying long-term homeless people to a new life in a permanent home. Attention to their hygiene, health and self-esteem, cooperation with other organisations and the creation of housing facilities, as well as the mobilisation of the public, are the main levers in this process.

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Pictures: <https://www.infirmiersderue.be/en/press-campaign-winter-2024>

Testimonial (free to use):

Small steps also make a big difference

"He doesn't want accommodation. He wants to stay on the streets", we were told.



Although Mr V. had been living on these streets for years, the local people had known him for much longer. Some of them had gone to school with him. His health was not good: he had a number of physical and mental health problems. He was difficult to communicate with. Even though he was kind and polite, he wasn't very talkative. He would often run away from us, telling us he didn't need anything.

Little by little, he began to recognise us and say hello.

Then came the moment when it was important to take care of him. *'A shower? No! A basin? No! A wipe? Well, if you insist.'* Until the day of his first shower! We accompanied him to a hygiene centre. It was a positive moment for him. Even though he was still tired from his life on the streets.

We referred him to a day centre, where he could enjoy a nap or a quick coffee. This led us to discuss the question of accommodation.

All he wanted was a small studio to himself.

We were very lucky when a flat became available in his neighborhood! He very quickly agreed to visit the place. Aside from the stress involved, he quickly agreed to let us guide him. He's been living there for a few months now. He feels at home there, even if it will take some time to stabilize in housing.

Just goes to show that sometimes all it takes is a few small steps to achieve big things.

Eva, Street Nurses