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Sometimes It's as Simple as Socks

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Joshua Seethoff '07, right, spends one weekend a month with the Adventist Medical Van in Portland, handing out coats, socks and hygiene kits, taking vital signs or just listening to people's stories.

Sometimes it's as simple as socks

Joshua Seethoff '07 knows what it's like to be on the streets.

So he feels right at home organizing the Hobo Sock Extravaganza at the Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing. Or collecting oral hygiene products from local dentists. Or volunteering his services with the Adventist Medical Van in Portland.

A lanky, soft-spoken man, Seethoff is quietly determined to make the world a little bit better. And he has found it's not that difficult.

During his monthly stint with the medical van, he helps take vital signs, dispenses hygiene kits, distributes clothes and sometimes just listens to people's stories.

His Hobo Sock Extravaganza was an outgrowth of that work after he noticed that many homeless people desperately needed socks. By simply putting a box on the Portland Campus, sending an email and contacting some friends, he was able to fill two large boxes with socks that he distributed through the van.

"Socks are a huge issue for this population because of the wet climate and the fact that they are always on their feet," he said. "It's amazing how much that pair of clean socks means to them. When they say thank you, you know you are making a difference in their life. That's why I got into nursing – the feeling you get from helping peo-

ple. You don't need to cure cancer to help someone."

Seethoff knows what it's like to struggle. He was addicted to alcohol and drugs and for a time, ate in soup kitchens and had no place to live. He credits the 12-step programs for helping him recover and figure out how he could contribute to society.

Seethoff's enrollment at Linfield was almost providential. He completed the prerequisites at Portland Community College, but his application to its nursing program was rejected because of a clerical error. Uncertain what to do, he glanced at a piece of mail from Emanuel Hospital that mentioned nursing scholarships at Linfield College. He entered the program in 2004 and he still has that brochure.

Although undecided about a specialty, Seethoff is leaning toward psychiatric nursing or an area that will allow him to work with clients for a prolonged period of time. For now he plans to hone his clinical skills in a traditional hospital setting.

"Even though I'm a senior in nursing and I know all the skills, sometimes I like to just put my hand on someone's shoulder when they are sick," he said. "Just simply touching someone who is ill can be an amazing feeling."

– *Mardi Mileham*