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Winnipeg program that pays homeless \$11/hr to clean streets full every day

Siloam Mission runs program that provides daily employment for homeless and cleaner streets

By Erin Brohman, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 27, 2015 7:00 PM CT | Last Updated: Oct 28, 2015 11:49 AM CT



A program run out of the Siloam Mission that hires homeless people to clean up downtown streets is having huge success in its second year. (Brett Purdy/CBC)

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A program run out of the Siloam Mission that hires homeless people to clean up the downtown streets is so successful it fills up nearly every day.

The program, part of Mission: Off the Streets, or MOST, pays \$11 an hour, and for some, is a path out of homelessness.

People who stay at the shelter can sign up each day to be part of a team of eight that goes out to pick up garbage, shovel snow and do other street maintenance duties.

"A lot of people go each day," said Randy Malbranck, who's been working nearly every day on the team for the past 6 months. "You don't always get in but sometimes — usually — you do."

Malbranck and the daily team pick up garbage from an area extending from Higgins Avenue and Main Street to Isabel Street and William Avenue. Last year, 86 people were employed through the program.

"People see their capabilities and believe in themselves again," said organizer Cathy Ste. Marie. "They've still got gas in the engine. They're still capable, and it's a catalyst to get back into the workforce."

She added people who are able to keep employment through the program for a few months can then get references and valuable job experience.

"When we go out you see innate gifts ... the leaders, helpers, caregivers," she said.

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Malbranck said he has a lot of respect for the program and the "tremendous" people who run it.

"They're a good group of people. There are some people that require medication or some help, but even they are fine to get along with. You respect each individual and give them their autonomy, and everything will be fine for you," said Malbranck.

Malbranck once had the opportunity to rent but "things didn't work out," and now, he's taking another stab at saving to rent an apartment. Working gets him closer to his goal.

"I think it's very good. If somebody needs work or needs a little bit of money, it helps. It allows them to buy the things you just can't get at Siloam here," he said. "The next step is to just get a full time job."

Ste. Marie said the program is full everyday, and when that happens, people often come out to volunteer because it's a productive way to spend the day. Malbranck has been one of those people before.

"It adds to your life while you're here ... by the same token there are some people who use the money for the needs that got them here in the first place. It's unfortunate, but you have to work with that," he said.

The program is funded by the Downtown Winnipeg Biz with money collected during the CEO Sleepout and from donations to Siloam Mission.

Malbranck said he'll keep working until he reaches his goal.

"Ultimately to get out of here. I think that's everybody's goal. Sometimes if it's not the first step, there's a second step, a third step, you got to keep trying," he said.



Randy Malbranck picks up garbage, clears debris, sweeps and shovels snow for minimum wage thanks to a program out of shelter Siloam Mission.



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