

A BEARDED STRANGER WALKED IN

It happened in Denver on Christmas Eve in 2004, and reported by the Associated Press.

Residents of a homeless shelter in that city had no idea who the middle-aged bearded man was who visited them on Dec. 24. They were surprised when the man parked his SUV in front of the shelter and walked into the building with a thick roll of \$100 bills.



The man gave each of the 300 residents of the shelter one of the bills. Before he left that evening, the bearded stranger had given away more than \$35,000.

The man told the crowd that had gathered how he had once been homeless and that he knew what it was like to be in need. He declined to identify himself, saying only that he lived in the Denver area, and had made another distribution at a shelter in Las Vegas.

The biggest single donation the stranger made was to a family of six to help them find housing. Louis Quezada, Tessa Wittner, and their four children had been living with Quezada's parents but were thrown out a few days before Christmas after an argument.

Of the gift, Quezada said, "It was like seeing Santa Claus and God all at once. You hear about stuff like that, but you don't think you'll be there when it happens."

The spirit of Christmas was on display that evening – more so than all the bright lights, the last-minute shopping in the malls, and the parties all over town.

But that same spirit – of unselfishness, of sharing, of love – is not confined to the Christmas season.

The people of Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home practice it all year long – not so much in money they give, although they do some of that in how they share of their material resources, but in their professional talents and in the compassion they exhibit to people in need.

In that sense, every day is Christmas.

– Beecher Hunter