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FEATURED

TEAM Workz Expands Offices, Strengthens Mission

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BY ANA RISANO || Managing Editor ana@thepilot.com
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TEAM Workz founder and director Cliff Brown and volunteer Bruno Decaudin in the nonprofit's new administrative offices

ANA RISANO / The Pilot

A local nonprofit aimed to help individuals in need has expanded its space to continue its mission of offering a hand up, not just a hand out.

TEAM Workz's new location at 515 Midland Road will serve as a secondary space for administrative needs, meetings and hosting life-skill classes. The resource center and main location for those seeking services remains off South Stephens Street.

"We wanted a more professional location that was going to provide the image we need to grow and to show what TEAM Workz is," founder and director Cliff Brown said. He is a retired sergeant with the state Department of Corrections and former president of the State Employees Association.

The nonprofit is largely known for helping people experiencing homelessness, but Brown emphasizes they help anyone who struggles to get by day after day. He called many of the nonprofit's clients "nearly homeless."

The new space, complete with three offices, a conference room and back area, gives the nonprofit room to meet with donors, partners, legislators and more. Brown said they plan to do virtual classes from the location to the resource center.

Bruno Decaudin, an IT specialist, has been volunteering with the nonprofit for more than a year to provide support and upgrade the existing infrastructure at both locations. He is also working to update the nonprofit's computers.

But it's slow work, with the nonprofit working with decade-old computers. Decaudin explained the issue is "planned obsolescence" through operating system updates that the physical hardware cannot support — and thus requires new equipment to ensure cyber protection and a smooth user experience.

The resource center was retrofitted in 2024 to create space for the nonprofit's three-step system for helping those experiencing homelessness, called the Transitional Advancement Program.

The process starts with identifying a person's specific needs, including immediate support like hygiene items, and acquiring background information. Then, the nonprofit works to connect them with additional resources, from monetary support to pay a bill to filling out the proper forms for food stamps.

The last step is for clients who qualify for advanced assistance, with the nonprofit working to provide further resources to change the individual's situation through obtaining a job, housing and transportation. That step also requires individuals to participate in various classes to help them learn new skills, including a 21-day behavior modification plan.

TEAM Workz served 160 individuals in 2025. A majority of those helped, 81, were between the ages 20 and 39. The nonprofit supported 42 of those individuals through temporary shelter, like an overnight stay in a hotel.

"(Recently), I was helping a lady who's got four kids. We put her in a hotel," Brown said, but noted the nonprofit often turns away up to

10 people a week seeking shelter because it does not have enough funding.

The nonprofit continues to search for support to further its reach and mission, whether through financial donations, physical donations like hygiene items or volunteers.

“At the end of the day, it’s a moral obligation,” Decaudin said. “It’s not a political issue. It’s a moral obligation that as human beings we have to help people who are not as fortunate as we are.”

The nonprofit is known as a resource hub within the community and has several partners across the county. Decaudin said they are known for helping people who do not qualify for other local programs. “There’s always a tissue box around because when you’re talking to these people, they break down crying and say, ‘You’re our last hope. You’re the only one that can help us.’”

TEAM Workz has worked for nearly a decade to address regional homelessness and housing insecurity, with a long-term goal of establishing a center that goes beyond emergency shelter to create lasting impacts.

“The problem is, people don’t want to talk about homelessness. They don’t want to talk about it,” Brown said.

The nonprofit’s long-range goal is the development of a 100-acre Transitional Advancement Center, complete with a natural disaster relief building, apartments, tiny homes, classrooms, gardens and a kitchen area. Services planned include stable

housing, job training, group counseling, financial literacy classes, wellness programs and case management services.

“Homelessness is a dirty word in Moore County because Moore County is a very rich, affluent county,” Decaudin said. “And to acknowledge that there is homelessness, in such an affluent county, it’s kind of like a black eye. But we cannot just wish it away.”

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To learn more about TEAM Workz, visit www.teamworkz.org/ or call (910) 315-0262. The resource center at 152 S. Stephens St. is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Ana Risano