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[The Santa Fe New Mexican \(Santa Fe, NM\)](#) • Sept 11, 2009 • Pasatiempo

It could happen to you

"The homeless are us. They are our brothers, our sisters, our aunts, our uncles, our cousins. They're not some separate people as too often we view them -- as a separate race. They're us."

So says Annette, one of many homeless (or formerly homeless) people interviewed by Anna Carvlin for her book of oral histories, *Dwell at My Door: On Being Homeless -- Forty-five Life Stories*.

All proceeds from sales of the book (which Carvlin self-published) go to

St. Elizabeth's Shelter on Alarid Street in Santa Fe, where Carvlin works as data and development director. The author interviewed people who ended up at

St. Elizabeth's (which has 32 beds and a 30-day residency limit) after ill health, financial challenges, domestic abuse, or other situations put them on the street.

Carvlin didn't edit the interviews. The result is a lot of candid, sometimes hopeful, sometimes hopeless, accounts. Some of those whose stories appear in the book take full responsibility for their situation: "I just did a lot of nothing with my life sometimes," an interviewee named Wesley explains. Others maintain a practical perspective and suggest that homelessness is a disease that can hit anyone. "Millionaires are homeless when their houses burn down. I met someone at St. E's who was a millionaire," says another interviewee.

Carvlin signs copies of her book from 2 to 4 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 11, at the First National Bank of Santa Fe branch at 516 W. Cordova Road. Call 992-2224 for information. The author also takes part in a discussion, free and open to the public, on mental illness and the impact it has on the homeless at 7:15 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 14, at The Life Link, 2325 Cerrillos Road, 438-0010, as part of a National Alliance on Mental Illness program. Visit dwellatmydoor.com for more information on the book.

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