

The Boston Globe

Homeless teeter on the edge, steps from the theater

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RE [“BUDGET trims lead homeless shelters across Mass. to cut services and beds”](#) (Page A1, Nov. 7): In just a few weeks a Boston Christmas tradition will begin that brings smiles to the brightly dressed young and old who visit the Opera House to enjoy “The Nutcracker.” Yet there are many in Boston not so blessed, but challenged, who depend on food pantries, homeless shelters, or regretfully must sleep on the street. The budget cuts affecting service and beds will make a difficult situation so much worse.

A few years ago I volunteered as part of the mayor’s homeless count to identify the homeless and offer them shelter at the Pine Street Inn. It was around 11 p.m. on a cold night, and I was with a group that was walking through the Theatre District when we came upon a woman who was sleeping behind the bushes a block from the Opera House. She refused assistance, as she had a number of blankets and was sleeping on a cardboard box.

As we moved on, I was struck by a stunning reality. Only a few hours earlier, all the young people, dressed in their fancy outfits, after enjoying the beauty of the “Nutcracker” spectacle, had unknowingly walked right past this lady and her bed.

One would hope that Boston residents will realize the call to assist their local shelters in their humanitarian efforts, and open their eyes and hearts to the less fortunate they encounter.

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