



Service pays respects to homeless who died **by Laura Crimaldi**

Boston, 12.21.06 - More than 160 men and women statewide who died on the streets during the past year were remembered yesterday in a candlelight service that called on the public not to turn a blind eye to a social ill that claims so many lives.

"Ending homelessness is something that we need to work towards and it's not OK for us to have people dying on the streets," said Erin Donohue, a spokeswoman for the Massachusetts Shelter and Housing Alliance.

Mourners filled the church to honor the 163 homeless men and women who were each memorialized with a cardboard tombstone decorated by clients at the St. Francis House day shelter.

A candle was lighted for every deceased homeless man and woman as their names were read aloud during the interfaith memorial service, which featured words from City Councilor at large Sam Yoon, chairman of the City Council's Housing Committee.

"People were remembering a time when there wasn't this level of homelessness," said Joe Finn, director of the Massachusetts Shelter and Housing Alliance. "There was a public commitment to taking care of these people."

The death toll of 163 people is an unofficial number that was reached by organizers by collecting the names of the dead from homeless shelters statewide.

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