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## Homeless get hot meal, checkups

By SEAN McCOY

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Daily News Photo by SEAN McCOY Yvonne Washington-Turay, founder of God's House International and a nurse practitioner, talks with a homeless man about his health on Christmas Eve.

ST. THOMAS - About 50 homeless people got a hot meal and 11 had a medical checkup outside the Salvation Army on Main Street on Christmas Eve.

Yvonne Washington-Turay, a nurse practitioner and the founder of God's House International, dished up food with Lauris Harley for most of the afternoon Saturday and offered blood pressure screenings for the homeless.

"Our goal was to provide a Christmas meal," Washington-Turay said. "We did some blood pressure screening and gave out little goodie bags."

She said that the organization's mission is to bridge medical, social, cultural and economic gaps faced by the homeless at home and abroad.

"We're trying to keep awareness on the issue," she said. "It's the holiday season and they are often forgotten."

Several homeless people spent the afternoon lounging in nearby benches after eating a wholesome meal. Others asked for advice in seeking medical attention.

Washington-Turay said that the event is funded from private donations.

"I have a passion to do this, I just love it," she said. LPN students from Schneider Hospital also volunteered their time

to help with the blood pressure screenings, she said.

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