

Lending a Hand to a Hard Worker

Mercury News, (November 19th, 2000) Zawdie McClendon is only 20 and he has been homeless twice.

The first time, easy Zawdie, people let him in a building's laundry room and did not complain to authorities. He continued going to high school and later was taken in by a friend.

The second time, when he "aged-out" of a group home at 18, he knew how to find temporary help at a shelter. On both occasions, he might have been able to stay with a grandmother, but wouldn't ask. "I didn't want to burden her," he says.

Part of the solution for Zawdie came from Unity Care Group, which helps disadvantaged youths and had a place for him at a San Jose transitional home with other young men and a counselor. The rest of the solution is being created by Zawdie, who has become dedicated to volunteer community work while also attending Evergreen Valley College. An internship at Hewlett-Packard Co. increased his interest in gaining computer skills.

On his path to adult independence, Zawdie needs help with tuition (#11 a unit)(26A) fees (\$16 a semester)(26B), books (\$400)(26C), a bus pass (\$429)(26D) and clothing for school and work (\$300)(25E). A sturdy bike (\$325)(26F) and a helmet (#35)(26G) would solve other transportation problems.