



■ Jon Lanham, the triage director for Father Bill's and MainSpring in Brockton, shows the sleeping quarters to Mandela Fellows from Bridgewater State University during a tour of the homeless shelter on Monday.

Furthering their education

Mandela Fellows from BSU tour Brockton supportive housing for homeless

By Sara Cline
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

BROCKTON
lavia Nabagaba, who is visiting Massachusetts from Uganda, pulled out her phone to take pictures.

But she wasn't taking pictures of Fa-neuil Hall, Plimoth Plantation or even Fenway Park, instead they were of supportive housing for homeless people in Brockton.

Twenty-five people, from Africa, participating in the Washington Mandela Fellowship visited the Father Bill's and MainSpring Homeless Shelter on Monday to see how the city helps their homeless population.

"I want to share this because I think this speaks volumes," Nabagaba said. "People look at

WEB EXTRA

■ Visit our website to view more photos of the Mandela Fellows' visit to Brockton enterprise.com



■ Jon Lanham, the triage director for Father Bill's and MainSpring in Brockton, gives a tour of Jeff's Place to Mandela Fellows from Bridgewater State University on Monday.

the U.S. as a super power and that people living here have the American dream. We don't usually get to see this side of life here.

"It shows how across the continents we are all dealing

with the same thing, homelessness," Nabagaba said.

Nabagaba is one of the 25 fellows, hosted by Bridgewater State University, who are attending a six-week program where they visit institutions, attend events, meet residents and officials.

At the end of the program, the fellows return to their countries to share what they learned.

"Countries are battling the same problem but it is clear our care is not on the same level, which makes me think about what we can improve on back home," Nabagaba said after touring a room at Jeff's Place on Spring Street.

The nonprofit believes in a

"housing first" approach to ending homelessness – to first move people into housing and then address the issues that led them to homelessness in the first place.

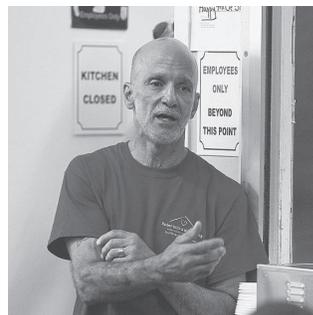
In addition to housing, Father Bill's and MainSpring provides various services that help people obtain skills, jobs and counseling.

"What I learned today is that we need to help people living in a crisis and help them overcome that crisis and go back to a normal life," said Filinto Omar Rartinas Salla from Guinea-Bissau. "We can not leave anyone behind."

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■ Mandela Fellows from Bridgewater State University walk to Jeff's Place, a boarding house for homeless of Brockton.



■ Steve Cabral, a former resident of the Father Bill's and MainSpring in Brockton, speaks to the Mandela Fellows from Bridgewater State University during a tour of the homeless shelter on Monday.