



# Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Jared Hoy

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Stanley Correctional helps ensure no kid sleeps on floor**

*SCI is first prison to partner with nonprofit 'Sleep in Heavenly Peace'*

**STANLEY, Wis.** – More than 60 persons in our care at Stanley Correctional Institution (SCI) worked with community volunteers Wednesday to build 22 beds for children who would otherwise be sleeping on the floor.

“When individuals are released back into the community, we want them to have the skills they need to succeed and thrive,” said Jared Hoy, secretary of the Department of Corrections (DOC). “Part of that is helping the persons in our care find productive ways to give back and connect with their communities. This process starts right away during incarceration and is the reason why our facilities are constantly looking for appropriate opportunities to serve.”

When Derrick Laufenberg, the founder of Sleep in Heavenly Peace’s Chippewa Valley chapter, first saw an envelope from SCI in his mailbox, he was confused. He opened it to find a donation to his group from the prison.

In total, SCI has raised \$7,354.79 for Sleep in Heavenly Peace this year through sales of pizzas in the visiting room, cheese curd fundraisers and more.

As Laufenberg learned more about the prison, he decided that his group should give the men at SCI a chance to build the beds they worked so hard to fundraise for.

“We had to jump through some hoops to get this to work,” said Laufenberg, who believes this is the first time that Sleep in Heavenly Peace partnered with a correctional facility. “I just thought working with inmates – realistically – we could all be one decision away from being in a similar situation.”

Laufenberg started the Chippewa Valley chapter of the national nonprofit in 2021. The organization fundraises to pay for materials and uses volunteer labor to build beds from scratch



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that are each donated to a child without a bed in the region. This chapter has donated more than 1,200 beds to kids in Chippewa, Eau Claire, Rusk and Barron counties so far.

On Wednesday, a group of more than 60 volunteers incarcerated at SCI built 22 beds for the charity in less than three hours.

One of those volunteers was Sean Abbott, who said that in the community he had seen children without a proper bed to sleep in. Now he said he has a chance to help those kids and that in turn will keep him away from the lifestyle that led to his incarceration.

“Anytime I get a chance to do something positive in here, I’m going to take it,” Abbott said.

In addition to the bed building, other SCI residents contributed to the effort through the facility’s SCOPES (Stanley Corrections’ Outreach Program Equals Success) project.

Using donated fabric and materials, persons in our care made 10 quilts in bright, colorful kid-friendly patterns. The quilts will be donated alongside the beds.

In addition, the SCOPES group worked with another local charity to be able to provide an additional 10 quilts for these beds.

As a father himself, Omar Simpson said he was grateful for a chance to participate in Wednesday’s bed build event and contribute to the community.

“Every kid should have a bed and be able to get a good night’s rest,” Simpson said. “It means a lot. It could be my kids that need a bed.”

After the event, Laufenberg spoke with his team of community volunteers who agreed that it had been the group’s best build. They hope to return to the institution for other events.

“Our organization not only built beds for kids that day, but we were able to make an impact with inmates through our mission,” Laufenberg said. “I hope it is something that helped each one of them go to bed with a smile on their faces.”