B ack in 1979, if anyone had asked Middlesex student David Goodall what he might be doing in 25 or 30 years, it never would have crossed his mind to answer, “I’m helping the homeless.”

Goodall had no reason to think he would wind up in an Arizona homeless shelter. “Nor could I have predicted I would be featured in a full-page ad in TIME magazine, or serve six years on the MCC Board of Trustees.”

All of these things have, indeed, transpired over the years. Since Goodall graduated from Middlesex in 1981, he has been on a journey to minister to the homeless. His story is an example of the benefits of which was having his favorite charity featured in a full-page ad in TIME magazine, or serve as a corporate sponsor of the Ecumenical Chaplaincy’s annual benefit dinner and golf tournament.

When I hear from people I went to high school with, or served with in the Navy, they say, "You're doing what? With whom?" said Goodall, laughing. "They can't believe me. Every time I measure. Life is a little more surprising."

Goodall works at Lodestar Day Resource Center, an innovative new Phoenix facility that houses a dozen social-service agencies and programs for the homeless, all on one campus. "We have a 40-bed shelter, a dining room that serves 1,000 lunches a day, a health clinic, a dental clinic, as well as government agencies, private charities and faith-based agencies all under one roof," he said.

"It used to be that homeless people had to travel all over the Phoenix area to get help," said Goodall. "Now, all those agencies are right here in one place."

Known as "Chaplain Dave," Goodall helps the homeless get identification papers. "The Ecumenical Chaplaincy for the Homeless was founded by a retired Presbyterian minister who lived on the street for a month to find out how to get off the street," Goodall said. "He realized that the key was getting identification." A homeless person is "helpless, hopeless and invisible," said Goodall. "In Arizona, as in many states, a person can be arrested for not having identification. "If you can't work without an ID," he said, simply, "then the Ecumenical Chaplaincy for the Homeless has specialized in getting IDs for the homeless for the past 20 years."

Goodall appeared in a TIME magazine ad through his friendship with a loyal Lodestar volunteer, Brian McCaffery, who is also the owner of a successful Phoenix Toyota car dealership. McCaffery began volunteering at the shelter, then became corporate sponsor of the Chaplaincy's annual benefit dinner and golf tournament. He also encouraged employees to volunteer with the homeless. As a result of being such a good community partner, McCaffery's Avondale Toyota dealership has won the company's President's Award two years in a row— one of the benefits of which was having his favorite charity featured in a full-page ad in TIME.

Goodall's journey from attending Middlesex to ministering to the homeless has involved a number of unexpected twists and turns. But, Goodall says, he got off to a fresh start at MCC, where he began putting his life back together after a debilitating accident.

"I came to the college to find some way to live again, and they brought me back to life," he said. "The folks at Middlesex showed me that just because you’re injured, your life isn’t over."

When he got to MCC in 1979, the campus consisted of two buildings on the grounds of Bedford’s Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veteran’s Hospital. The whole idea of going back to school seemed daunting at first, Goodall recalled. "I was just a Vietnam veteran, on crutches and there was no hand-capped access on campus," he said. "Of course, I was much older than most of the other students, but it was a really wonderful experience," he said. Goodall volunteered in the VA Office, becoming the MCC liaison, and worked with other Veterans returning to school. A few years later, he transferred to Suffolk University.

While attending Suffolk, Goodall learned that MCC was about to form a board of trustees and needed two alumni members. He and others formed the MCC Alumni Association, and Goodall was elected its first representative to MCC’s new Board of Trustees. After the next 10 years, he became a trustee, helping to lobby the state legislature for funding to build MCC’s 200-acre Bedford campus.

After running a successful insurance agency, Goodall relocated to Arizona in 1993. For months after the move, he had trouble finding work in Phoenix. Then one day he volunteered to help a boy on the Fort McDowell Yavapai Indian Reservation get to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, and Goodall’s career in human services began.

"I was taking this boy to AA meetings regularly, and the director of social services on the reservation asked me if I’d start a substance-abuse program for the reservation," Goodall said. "I had absolutely no previous experience in the field, but she hired me. And, probably because of my lack of previous experience, we came up with some innovative programs."

"I was doing this work, and I had to return to the desert for health reasons. Once back in Phoenix, Goodall started to think seriously about being a Presbyterian lay minister. "I’m an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church, because the Presbyterians believe in priesthood of the laity," Goodall said. "I tried to say, 'Let’s fill a position at the ministry.' But I kept telling myself, 'Forget it, you’re too old,'" he said.

Several months later, his doctor told him he’d better return to the desert for health reasons. Once back in Phoenix, Goodall started thinking about being a Presbyterian lay minister.

"I went to school at Middlesex, so I knew how to get a degree in accounting from Suffolk University - he is now Ecumenical Chaplain for the Homeless in Phoenix. "I've been a chaplain in an Arizona homeless shelter," he said. "Nor could I have predicted I would be featured in a full-page ad in TIME magazine, or serve six years on the MCC Board of Trustees."

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