NHS

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cost the shelter approximately \$3200.

The money for that often comes from the Salvation Army support that people give during the Kettle Drive around the holiday time. The shelter has those funds to draw back on for these situations, but they are very limited.

"We had some people that we had to release from the shelter sooner than we wanted to," Cooke said.

The need was there for an expansion and the Yankton High School National Honor Society (NHS) members took on the job of helping plans move forward.

"When you find kids today that want to leave something behind in our town as our legacy, that is what really stuck in my heart," Cooke said.

NHS president Joseph Kelly and other members of NHS were participating in the "30-Hour Famine" event at Calvary Baptist Church back in February.

As they were learning about different hunger situations throughout the world, the group decided to make sandwiches and bring them to the homeless shelter.
While students were there,

they were given a tour of the facilities.

"I noticed that it was extremely small," Kelly said. "I heard them mention how they had to turn quite a few people away because they were so full."

A few weeks after that experience, Kelly was nominated to be president of the NHS. He brought the idea for a possible expansion of the Homeless Shelter to Amy Reyes, NHS advisor and YHS counselor. Reyes then spoke with YHS Principal Jennifer Johnke, who is a part of the Yankton Women's Shelter

Board.

"From there we met with representatives from the Women's Shelter Board and the Homeless Shelter Board," Kelly said. "We found that there is quite a gap between the two."

The domestic violence grants, which fund the shelter, allow the River City Domestic Violence Center to house only people that are homeless due to a situation of domestic violence. It is these women and children, who are not victims of domestic violence, that

don't have a place to stay.

"That is when we started trying to find out how to get a bigger shelter," Kelly said. "It all just kind of lined up."

"Our number one thing was to get a bigger shelter, but we didn't know how," Cooke said. "When the National Honor society, with 78 kids, came in and wanted to help,

the doors just started opening to a lot of things."

The process of expansion has been in the works since April. As a part of their strategic planning, both groups had to decide on either an alternative location for the shelter that would be more cost effective, or choosing to build

a new facility all together.

Members of the Homeless
Shelter Board began talking to
Dennis Byrkeland, owner and
operator of both the Star Brite
Inn and StarLite Inn motels.
Byrkeland had been a great
help in housing people when
the current facilities often
reached capacity. He showed
interest in selling the Star
Brite Inn to the homeless shelter to use as a new facility.

"It is not completely certain yet but we are moving towards the progress of purchasing it," said Homeless Shelter Executive Director Eric Miller.

But with a new location comes new expenses, money needs to be raised in order to purchase the motel, and to also cover the added cost of maintaining the larger facilities. As a result, the homeless shelter board is in the process of developing a fundraising campaign.

campaign.
"We are working out
a fundraising goal for the
campaign between \$350,000 to
\$400,000," Miller said.

Members of NHS want to visit local businesses and help the homeless shelter board in their effort to earn donations. Part of their challenge will be the fact that United Way's fundraising drive takes place from September through

October.

"It is hard because Yankton has a lot of great needs, as well as community approaches to meeting those needs," Cooke said. "Funds can be often limited because people already support so much."

As a result, both the homeless shelter board and NHS will have to raise funds for the shelter before and after the United Way period.

"We want to support what they do because they support us," Cooke said.

Therefore, the fundraising will involve two phases. The first of which, will involve going around to local businesses during August. Then the group will plan another fundraiser for November.

"We are going to try and get a first round of businesses in before Sept. 1," Kelly said. "We want to ask for support from them in hopes to get the new shelter running as fast as we can."

Another idea that NHS is currently planning is a "Cardboard City" event. This will involve members of NHS spending the night in Riverside Park in cardboard boxes. The event is to raise awareness of homelessness and also get pledge donations from community members.

Dates are still pending, but the group is hoping to hold the event in November, at the end of United Way's fundraising season, or in the spring.

"Once they have the new facilities, we (members of NHS) are planning on having people volunteer to mow the grass, paint and do any other work they need done at the shelter," Kelly said.

Until then, NHS members will be helping out with the Homeless Shelter's annual dunk tank at Riverboat Days.

Spectators can pay \$1 for three chances to dunk one of their favorite community members. Volunteers that will step into the tank include: Homeless Shelter Executive Director Eric Miller, Stewart Elementary Principal Jerome Klimisch, Yankton Medical Clinic's Dr. David Withrow and Parks & Recreation Director Todd Larson.

Kelly hopes that these fundraising events will segue into NHS's continued partnership with the Homeless Shelter. Progress will be shared with next February's NHS inductees and hopefully, they will continue the project and its fundraising efforts.

"I think this new venture with the kids has opened up the door to at least double, if not triple, our occupancy," Cooke said.

The cost of facility is one price but it will cost much more to run such a larger facility. The shelter board is also exploring options for transferable housing. This means that the occupants can provide some of their income to help

run the shelter until the shelter can raise enough money to

sustain it themselves.

The board has discussed an estimated cost of the new facilities which would include the purchase of the Star Brite Inn and some of the operational costs. This will help get a sense of how much it will cost to run it and negotiating

the sale of the motel.

However, the shelter board will be selling its current facilities on Fourth Street to help cover the cost. That money will provide a significant down payment on the new shelter. An option to buy has been established, which will lock up the property until November.

the property until November.
"We have a buyer and a
purchase agreement in place,"
Miller said. "We are just waiting to see the progress with
Star Brite."

Despite final plans still being decided, partners of the project have no doubt about the need for larger facilities. The face of homelessness has changed and this new shelter will be a way to help as many who have experienced it as possible.

"We understand that situations beyond our control can cause some rough conditions," Cooke said. "Everyone knows how expensive life is; not everyone is prepared to lose a job."

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Exhibit

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crates between storage at the former Happy Days Skateland building and the Mead Building.

First Sgt. Brooks Schild told the *Press & Dakotan* the Guard was asked to help out following a visit by Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

"About a month ago, the governor came and visited Yankton and went through the Mead Building and he was pretty impressed with progress on it and how beautiful it's going to be," Schild said. "Right after that, we got a call (whether we) can help support a request to move all these 20 huge crates. There wasn't anybody who could do that."

Schild said they were more than willing to help with the move to further the museum's

"You throw in the beauty of

the building and then the history that's going to be in that building and the educational opportunities that are there, we just felt like we couldn't pass up that chance to help them out," he said.

Nelson said a number of items will need to be updated due to the exhibit's age.

"It had a lot of interactive components to it that we'll have to, of course, bring up to date and make a little bit more current," she said.

She added that the exhibit had traveled between 2004-2006, but was initially designed and constructed beginning in 2000.

"In the last 15 years, traveling exhibits have changed significantly in what's possible to do," she said. "The interactive components of it all need to be updated because technology has changed so much in the last 15 years."

Nelson said the centerpiece of the exhibit will be a large keel boat replica.

"There is one piece, which we're hoping to continue to

Come play in the

include, which is a replicated portion of the keel boats similar to what Lewis & Clark used on the Missouri River. This is an interactive piece. This is something that kids could get on to, crawl on to and experience themselves."

Additionally, there will be wildlife and flora replicas throughout the exhibit and natural history education along with the expedition history

Nelson said the exhibit will be a significant boost to the museum's mission.

"This will be the very beginning component to the overall permanent gallery," she said. "What it will do is teach our visitors to the area about our environment, how it got to be the way that it is and the part of nature we've become accustomed to just so that they understand more about the natural setting before we were settled."

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