Cupcake Making

By Lauren FitzGerald

Last night I had the pleasure of making cupcakes with the women upstairs at the N-Street shelter. I was unsure of what to expect at first considering I had never really “hung out” with any homeless people before and honestly still had some of the classic stereotypes in the back of my mind as to what they’d be like. I kept reminding myself as we went up that we were going to be decorating cupcakes, so it couldn’t be too bad! As I walked onto the fourth floor I was amazed at how small it was! I had pictured a Little Orphan Annie style room with many women but it was really just a hallway with several bunkrooms that housed A LOT of women! When we walked into the room I saw the women, they were almost all African American and middle aged but didn’t look like the typical street bum. Most were clean and dressed decently partially due to the services provided at the shelters I’m sure. Once we got into the cupcakes the women separated into tables, so I decided to talk to a few of them. The most notable was Barbara, I saw her working on a beautiful crocheted blanket and decided that I had to ask about the project! She told me that she learned to crochet from her grandmother when she was young but never really used the skill until she came to the shelter when she took a class at the village. In the time since that class she has begun to teach her own crochet and quilting class through the shelter and had even taught some of the ladies in that room how to crochet! I could tell from talking to her that she had a certain amount of pride in her skill as she showed me pictures of her work which really was beautiful! In addition to her class she also has a small online business where she takes orders for her work, a spot at the church’s Christmas bizarre and makes all the blankets for children that are christened at the church which she blesses before issuing. I loved talking to her and realized that none of these women were what I had thought the homeless would be like leaving me very excited for the rest of the trip!