Homeless families and their children filled the seats of dining hall at the Dorothy Day Center in St. Paul.

Chef Greg Scott has been busying preparing a Thanksgiving meal to warm their hearts.

"A good meal can deter your mind for a few minutes and stop you from worrying about where your next dollar may come from," he said.

He said he wants his clients in the shelter to feel special.

Dozens of volunteers prepared more than 300 pounds of turkey and other yummy dishes.

"It was definitely worth the labor," said Scott.

Warren Ketnner is a volunteer in the kitchen. He considers the shelter to be his refuge.

"Since I've been here I volunteer 24/7," said Ketnner. "I'm also in the Catholic Charities men's choir."

One year ago, Kettner lost his job doing maintenance at an apartment building and he lost his home along with it. He says soon he will back on his feet.

"I've been living in a men’s shelter," he said. "I’m scheduled to go into a new place called Higher Ground."

This will be the first phase to address a long-time issue of overcrowding at the shelter. Catholic Charities will begin opening portions of its' new shelter and housing complex, Higher Ground just before Christmas. Construction is projected to begin in Dec. 21, 2016.

"This is like the biggest Christmas gift ever," said Chef Greg Scott. "Our clients will finally be able to have a room of their own and get the resources they need to excel."

The new shelter will include 278 free and pay for stay bunks. There will be 193 small apartments on the upper floors. The lower levels will provide permanent housing.

"At the same time we are taking our huge warehouse of donated food and changing that into a food hub so we can distribute that to our other different shelters throughout the twin cities metro," said Scott.

The project, including both Higher Ground and the Opportunity Center is expected to cost $100 million. It will be funded through a partnership between public and private sources.

The change is a glimmer of hope for Warren Kettner.

He’s a man who considers himself lucky and thankful.