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Man Shares Rags-To-Riches Story In Boston

Gardner Was At Center Of Movie, Best-Selling Book



BOSTON -- The man at the center of a rags-to-riches story shared his experiences Tuesday at an event in Boston, where he spoke about his journey from homelessness to running a multimillion-dollar company.

"We're about to see a whole new class of homeless people in America," Chris Gardner said.

NewsCenter 5's Liz Brunner reported that Gardner speaks from personal experience.

"You can be homeless, but you don't have to be hopeless," he said.

From living on the streets of San Francisco to a successful stockbroker with no college degree or Wall Street experience, Gardner's story inspired not only a New York Times best selling book, but the movie, "The Pursuit of Happyness," starring Will Smith.

"That happened with the biggest movie star in the world, and a billion people around the world have seen the film," Gardner said. "And they all say the same thing, 'I know what you were talking about,' and 'thank you for sharing.'"

Gardner now shares his story as part of his mission in life, as he did Tuesday morning at the One Family breakfast in Boston. The organization is a nonprofit that is devoted to ending homelessness in Massachusetts.

"People don't realize it, but 12 percent to 30 percent of all the homeless people in America have jobs and go to work every day," he said.

Gardner said what's happening on Wall Street is only making matters worse.

"There's an opportunity to learn from and say to yourself, 'going forward, how will I manage things differently? Going forward, whose responsibility is it to take care of me and my family?' It's not the corporation that you work for, clearly, they don't care anything about you. It's not the government. It's your responsibility, and I think a lot of people are finally getting it. This is the last wake-up call," he said. "I think there are a lot of small business people in this country who would like to be bailed out as well. Who's going to bail them out?"