

Shelter Association of Washtenaw County

homelessness: it can happen to anyone...

What is a 'homeless shelter'? Do they provide only shelter? Food? A place to shower? Clothing? Yes - to all of the above, but the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County provides so much more!!

Located in the Robert J. Delonis Center, this shelter provides temporary shelter and supportive services in a safe and caring environment and works with the community to allocate the necessary resources to meet the needs of people who are homeless.

- SHELTER

THE NIGHT SHELTER PROGRAM:

Night Shelter residents have a bed for up to 90 days during which time they participate in intensive case management. To enter the Night Shelter, one must commit to working on finding and saving income, obtaining sustainable housing, and be clean and sober at entry and willing to try to remain so for the duration of one's stay.

WINTER PROGRAM – THE WARMING CENTER

Any time the temperature (or wind chill) falls below 20° the Shelter Association opens the second floor Service Center overnight to provide life-saving warmth to people in the community who have nowhere to go.

THE ROTATING SHELTER: During the depths of winter (December through March) the Shelter Association expands the capacity of the warming center through a Rotating Shelter Program. Thirteen faith based organizations host up to 25 individuals each night, providing a bed at their facility for one week. Through this program over 300 persons who would otherwise be out in the cold can find warmth and safety each year.

- FOOD

The Shelter Association is a recipient organization of Food Gatherers. The dining room is staffed during meals and food is served in the dining room and to the residents.

- CLOTHING

The Shelter Association provides clothes and clothing services. Clothing vouchers are provided so they may shop at the Ann Arbor Thrift Shop for clothes. They provide access to laundry facilities at the site free of charge, storage space so they may keep clothes in a safe, dry space and give donated backpacks for storage and as luggage. During the winter they provide winter gear including hats, boots, socks, gloves.

- HEALTH CARE

Two Medical Case Managers (one providing services on-site, one reaching out to hard to engage populations such as those camping outdoors) are on staff. They provide direct client assistance with chronic care, reminding them of upcoming appointments, and even arranging transportation when necessary. In addition, physicians and nurse practitioners are also available to provide medical care.

- HOUSING

The Shelter Association has a full time housing specialist who assists individuals with housing searches and provides access to supported and transitional housing organizations. In addition to assisting the general population with housing needs, the housing specialist manages 36 housing vouchers which subsidize rental rates and assure ongoing supportive services.

- ACTION PLAN

The primary barrier to permanent housing is poverty. To address poverty, case managers focus on helping clients identify and/or increase sources of income, save money toward housing and acquire sustainable housing. Clients in the Night Shelter Program save 70% of their income and work with their case managers to achieve the goals established in their personal action plan. Working with their case managers, Night Shelter clients develop a Personal Action Plan that utilizes the expertise of the Shelter Association and the other 30 on-site agencies as well as other community resources.

- SERVICES ONLY PROGRAM

For individuals experiencing homelessness who are not currently in the Night Shelter Program, the Shelter Association provides an array of services to both provide immediate assistance and encourage long-term change. Services such as laundry, showers and health services may be utilized by anyone in need. When ready, individuals may access services such as employment assistance, benefit assistance, housing search and many others that help them find or increase income and find sustainable housing. Currently over 30 agencies provide services on-site ranging from the AA to the VA that help individuals who are not yet ready to enter the Night Shelter Program, who are waiting for a bed to open or who have temporary shelter elsewhere but need to access their services.

- WHAT CAN WE DO??

The Shelter Association has a "Wish List" which will be posted on our website (in the Respect Life section), and in the next issue of Chips and Sawdust, but continue to save your travel size shampoos, lotions, etc, and deposit in the green can in the vestibule. They can also use new or gently used towels, twin-size bedding, pillows and pillow cases, large cans of coffee, razors, shaving cream, backpacks (new or gently used), toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Volunteers are a crucial resource for the Shelter Association. There are many areas which can use help, for example, clerical, administrative, medical, etc. For more information on how you can help, contact Laura Rayburn, 734-662-2829 x226 or www.volunteers@ewashtenaw.org

Financial donations are always accepted and are tax deductible.

For further information on the Shelter, please check their website at: <http://www.annarborshelter.org>