

Warm Hearts for Cold Nights Virtual Meeting 11.30.23

Led by Elizabeth Shelton, UWSEMO



The meeting began with greetings and thanks to everyone involved. Rules of etiquette and goals were outlined:

- Update participants on current efforts
- Share ideas for emergency sheltering
- Leave with actionable items
- Set date for next meeting

Update on Current Efforts & Explanation of initial proposal:

- Many organizations have been working on an emergency sheltering solution for many years.
- A plan on behalf of UWSEMO, The Salvation Army, Community Partnership, and First Call For Help was presented to the Cape Girardeau City Council on Nov. 7 requesting \$10,000 from casino funds for overnight emergency sheltering during extreme cold weather. The request was denied by the majority during the Nov. 20 meeting. The detailed plan is posted on the UWSEMO website.
- The virtual meeting was scheduled to explore options in response to the many community members who expressed concern and wanted to help.
- Utilizing space at The Salvation Army is still an option, but it's the busiest time of year for them, and there are guidelines that must be followed per Salvation Army corporate.
- United Way meets the need but works to address what creates the need, which is why we direct people to CP SEMO. They have the training, personnel, and additional resources to help. UWSEMO reimburses CP after they present receipts.

Background Regarding Volunteers

- 30 people trained last year with The Salvation Army (TSA). Any person can volunteer up to 3 nights at TSA without training.
 - Must have trained volunteers assigned to following roles: shelter manager, safety manager, mental health support, food supervisor.
 - The shelter manager must complete an additional four-hour training.
 - The Salvation Army (TSA) trainings are set by corporate and occur when the trainer can be available.
 - It's possible TSA trainer can offer another one near the beginning of the new year, but that needs to be confirmed after the holidays.
- Can we get a volunteer to coordinate all volunteers?
- Can people volunteer as community service? Street Level says they can accept people looking for community service.
- Are there any training equivalencies for people with experience? Such as working in social work for so many years, etc.
- The Salvation Army recommends 12-hour shifts to reduce manpower, but attendees are more comfortable with 6-hour shifts.

Are there any churches that can help?

- Concerns about liability, safety, training, and interference with other existing programs.
- Grace United Methodist Church has space but requires Safe Gatherings training and doesn't have a volunteer base at the church. Has been working with police dept to hotel. Funding is low and fundraising is not expected until late winter/early spring.
 - Training requires referrals, usually from church pastor.
 - Unsure if available to non UMC members. Costs \$50 per person.
- Church on Perryville Road offered to open for emergency sheltering, however, there were issues with transportation.
 - Transportation to facilities is often a barrier.
- Many churches are unable to take animals, which is often an issue for unhoused.
- Concerns about sheltering people with restraining orders and who are unable to be around children.
- Churches request/require folks to provide their own blankets/bedding.
 - Rapid response with Red Cross?
- "Room at the Inn" model – churches take turns helping overnight shelter.
 - Is this something the ministerial alliance can address?

Are there city facilities we can use?

- Can the Osage and Shawnee Center, police station community room be used for warming?
 - City barriers, rental costs
- City Manager needs to be involved in long-term solutions; he is over housing. Can we get his buy-in?
- Can we address the city again with funding request?

Available materials

- Cots available at Salvation Army; Red Cross donated blankets
 - Where can donations go? – Street Level. CPSEMO's NeighborHUB.
 - Neither can store cots; both can give away donated blankets.

Registration and resources for unhoused

- We are asking that unhoused go through CPSEMO for tracking and additional resources.

Long-term considerations

- Future creation of coalition to address shelter needs
- Research what is working in other communities and how we can apply it here

Fundraising ideas

- Will need to form an event committee
 - Scout Hall, or such event venue – large community event, such as dance party/concert/music/festivity event

- Bowl-a-thon gets younger gen involved, can be competitive against schools, school staff, students v. police/fire, etc.

Meeting recap

- UWSEMO will create and send a link to a Google sheet for meeting attendees to share their contact information, if they wish.
- Recording of the meeting will be available online.
- For now, continue referring to CPSEMO for hoteling and services.
- Will be in contact about a follow-up meeting after the holidays.