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Upcoming Changes to The Salvation Army's Family Shelters

The Salvation Army of Dane County currently provides shelter for families who are experiencing homelessness in our community. We operate the County's only nightly, drop-in family shelter as well as a 90-day stay family shelter.

In our Emergency Family Shelter, the capacity is 18 people or about 4-5 families each night which barely meets the need of the community. This year, we were given the opportunity to have space at First United Methodist Church to use as an overflow family shelter which has a capacity of about 30 people each night. We are able to use that space Sunday-Thursday for the months of April-October. Even with this, the number of families needing a safe place to sleep at night is alarming and greatly exceeds both shelters' capacities. Families continue to be denied shelter each night left with nowhere else to go. For many families, there is no other option than to sleep on the streets. We simply cannot keep up with the growing need of families needing shelter each night.

In our Family Shelter, there are 18 rooms available where up to 18 families have their own private space for 90 days. The capacity is around 60 people. Many times, families struggle to find affordable housing in Madison and at the end of their stay are forced back to staying in our Emergency Family Shelter.

We have taken a deep look at how we operate our shelters and how we can help end the cycle of homelessness. We cannot accept that families are sleeping on the streets each night and as a result, have made the decision to shift towards providing drop-in shelter only at our 630 East Washington Avenue location. This way we can better meet the short-term, immediate needs of families by providing a safe place to sleep each night.

Effective November 1, 2016, we will operate a nightly, drop-in shelter for women and for families only. We will no longer operate a 90-day family shelter and will be starting an expansive rapid-rehousing program, placing families from the housing list in their own home with extensive case management. We firmly believe that for the long-term, families need to be in their own home instead of a 90-day stay in shelter. This will better allow them stability to focus on getting their needs met and the ability to take the necessary steps to prevent them from becoming homeless again.

Our building's second floor will be the Emergency Family Shelter and the first floor will be the Women's Shelter. By doing this, we will be able to accommodate more families and women on a nightly basis and provide more privacy by separating the shelters. By expanding the Women's Shelter to be where the current Emergency Family Shelter is on the first floor will allow us to better serve women who, for example, have a difficult time sleeping in a large space, have a disability, or are transgender.

Families will continue to be placed in Family Shelter until the end of October to not have empty rooms but have been given notice that as of November 1 it will be a drop-in shelter only.

Information on our new rapid-rehousing program soon to come.

Any questions or concerns feel free to contact me,

Carly Soby
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