

Interfaith Rotational Shelter 2018

by Dan Vaughn

St Andrew's will once again be hosting the Interfaith Rotational Shelter program this January 14-28th. The parish hall is transformed into a mini-tent city, which hosts up to 12 transitionally homeless guests from 5 pm to 7 am daily. We host dinner nightly and provide food for the guests to make their own breakfasts and brown bag lunches. Most importantly, we provide a safe, supportive and loving environment for neighbors who are facing tough times. It is amazing to see how much of a difference our love and respect make in our guests well being.

We will begin soliciting volunteers this Sunday, December 17th. There are a number of guest-facing roles that we need help with. Dinner hosts bring a prepared hot meal to serve at 6pm, and sit and share that meal with our guests. Overnight hosts are encouraged to come for this shared dinner, and then spend the night and typically close up the parish hall at 7am the following morning. "Openers" open the Parish Hall at 5pm and welcome our guests back into the shelter for the evening, they may depart once the dinner hosts arrive or stay for dinner. We are also looking for experienced volunteers to serve as "Captains" of the guest-facing functions to support first-time volunteers and be available as a resource if something comes up during a shift. In addition to these guest facing roles, we are looking for volunteers to help with laundry (towels and linens as the guests are responsible for their personal items) and our portable showers.

FAQ:

Who are these homeless guests? This program hosts individuals, couples and families who are transitionally homeless, meaning that this is a relatively recent loss of housing and expected to be temporary. All of our guests are admitted to the program through the Community Resource Center, which provides ongoing case management. All guests must abstain from illegal drug use and alcohol consumption for the duration of their participation in the program.

What about the Hepatitis outbreak? San Diego County is experiencing an outbreak of Hepatitis A in 2017, with over 500 known cases and 20 deaths reported. The homeless are at particularly high risk, although in general this is due to the poor sanitary conditions when living on the street. All guests in the 2017-18 rotational shelter program are required to provide proof of vaccination to participate. As a precaution, the Health Department recommends that anyone working with the homeless be vaccinated. The network, CRC, and St Andrew's have chosen to leave this choice to the discretion of individual volunteers.