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NEWSLETTER

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An Open Door

“They’ve experienced being stuck outside and nobody letting them in since March.”

YSS Winter Freeze Shelter longtime employee Kate Marshall works two overnight shifts a week at the YSS Winter Freeze Shelter and says there’s a definite attitude of gratitude permeating the atmosphere this season.



Kate Marshall

“The guests are super grateful,” she said.

The new location at the former Ohio Valley Medical Center, owned by the City of Wheeling, has a lot to do with it — especially the showers and sleep-

ing arrangements. Instead of dormitories with multiple beds and no showers, the shelter now has two guests to a room with an adjoining bathroom.

In addition, she said, “people have been generally respectful of the fact it’s not our building.”

But mostly, Marshall said, the people at the shelter are grateful for an open door.

“They’ve experienced being stuck outside and nobody letting them in since March,” she said, referring to closures of various venues because of COVID-19.

“They’re shell shocked, I think, you know? They’re so grateful. I think they



know: Let’s not ruin this.”

Marshall said with the recent spate of colder weather, more people have been finding their way to the shelter from their tents or the recently opened daytime warming shelter operated by Catholic Charities at the former Chase Bank on Market Street. There is a span of five hours after the warming

shelter closes and the YSS Winter Freeze Shelter opens, however.

“By that time, they’re pretty cold and hungry. The first thing talked about when they come in is what’s for dinner.”

Dinners have ranged from stuffed shells to subs to pizza, provided by local restaurants, churches and volunteers.

“They’ve got plenty of food, and everyone goes to bed with a full belly.”

What they do need, Marshall said, is men’s underwear (boxer-briefs are the favorite), body wash, and cold-weather gear, such as thick socks, long-johns, jeans, gloves and hats. About three-quarters of the guests are men, so men’s items are the most needed.

“John Moses has helped many of the women get into apartments or stay in their apartments, preventing them having to come to the shelter, thank God,” Marshall said.

Moses, YSS CEO, noted the community’s response to the need this year is remarkable and very much appreciated.

“We live in a generous community. From the faith congregations to the city leaders to the local foundation trustees to the individuals who decide to act on the needs they see instead of turning a blind eye — you all make it possible for us to have an open door.”

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MLK Day Project Inspires Donors

Local donors responded to an MLK Day of Service project in January, donating 65 coats and a variety of other cold-weather items for kids and adults, some of which will be used by our Winter Freeze Shelter guests. Statewide, more than 3,000 items were collected through the Coats4Kids campaign. Chelsea Freshwater, left, and Ashton Carroll, who are West Virginia's Promise AmeriCorps VISTAs at YSS, coordinated local efforts and drop-off locations for the Education Alliance AmeriCorps drive. Those locations included Touch of Amish, Noah's Ark Childcare, Hinebaugh Athletics, Chambers YMCA, Generations and Wheeling Coffee Shoppe.



'Sent with Love, Joy and Hugs from S.C.'



Wheeling native Marcie McGrath and 7-year-old Zoey packed all of these items into two boxes and shipped them from Prosperity, S.C., for the YSS Winter Freeze Shelter. Marcie is a client of Thrivent, a financial services company that provides clients with money to donate to the charities of their choice. Marcie's handwritten note in one of the boxes read, in part:

"Sent with joy, love and hugs from South Carolina."



Vineyard Church Serves Neighborhood

Youth Services System has partnered with Vineyard Church in Wheeling to offer physical, emotional and spiritual comfort to people experiencing homelessness and other challenges in our community. Vineyard holds services at the YSS Hazel Atlas building in East Wheeling (87 15th St.) on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings, offering food, fellowship, clothing, hygiene items and more to those who attend.

CLEANING HOUSE



YSS Winter Freeze Shelter employee Savannah Hudson makes a bed at the shelter, near right, and sprays a door handle with a sanitizing gun, far right. Cleaning has been a top priority at the shelter this season in order to prevent illnesses — including COVID-19 — among guests and staff. So far, so good. YSS wants to thank Project HOPE street medicine and Dr. Thomas Wack for coming every Friday to address guests' medical needs. We also thank Wheeling Linen, which donates 100% of its laundering services to the shelter every year. Most of the cleaning supplies, as well as Personal Protective Equipment and the space used for the shelter, were made possible through a special COVID Community Development Block Grant funding from the City of Wheeling. Cleaning supplies also were donated by local businesses. Thank you!

WISH LIST

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Gloves | Jeans | Packets of nuts |
| Hats | Thermal shirts | PB crackers |
| Body wash | Sweatshirts | Encouraging notes/cards |
| Hand warmers | Sweatpants | Hot chocolate |
| Thick socks | Boots | Coffee |
| Long underwear | Granola bars | |

Please designate Youth Services System as your beneficiary for:



Thank You!

The Winter Freeze Shelter is a ministry supported by the community through Youth Services System Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Your tax-deductible donation helps your neighbors in need. Send checks — payable to Youth Services System with Homeless in the memo — to:

Youth Services System, Inc.
P.O. Box 6041
Wheeling, WV 26003

Online donations may be made by texting YSSFREEZE to 44-321 or donating through our website or Facebook page.

Youth Services System is a United Way agency.

Where to Drop Off Donations

Winter Freeze Shelter donations are being collected at the YSS Hazel Atlas Building, 87 15th St., Wheeling. They are not being taken at the new facility at the former Hillcrest/OVMC. The shipping address is Youth Services System, 87 15th St., Wheeling, WV 26003. Questions? Please call 304-233-9627.



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