



GRACE HOUSE
GAZETTE

November 4, 2013

Volume II: Issue 1

Dear Friends,

While many of us are busily making plans for Thanksgiving, countless individuals and families in our community are facing the very real possibility of spending the holidays without a roof over their heads or warm place to escape the cold and snow.

The most difficult aspect of working at a homeless shelter is having to turn someone away because there are no available beds. Sadly, this has become our new reality. Over the past three years, the number of people seeking shelter at Grace House has skyrocketed with no slow down in sight. Last year, we served 211 individuals, but had to turn away 368 more. We have already turned 430 people away from our shelter this year, and it's quite likely that number may top 500 by the end of December!

Low paying jobs and a severe shortage of affordable housing continue to drive homeless in Itasca County. Over the past few months, I've met with leaders within the Grand Rapids faith community to discuss the growing epidemic of homelessness in Itasca County. I proposed the development of a Winter Overflow Shelter Plan whereby churches would take turns providing overnight sleeping accommodations throughout the winter when Grace House is full.

An informational meeting regarding the development of the Winter Overflow Shelter Plan will be held at Grace House at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, November 11. Clergy, church council members, parishioners and the general public are invited to attend to hear how homeless shelters in other Minnesota communities have successfully banded together to create church-based overflow shelters during the winter.

November is national Hunger & Homeless Awareness Month. There are a number of ways you can help reduce the number of people who are at extreme risk of spending the holiday season sleeping in their cars, tents or out on the streets, while raising awareness of homelessness in Itasca County:

- Attend and encourage leaders from your church to attend the November 11 Winter Overflow Shelter Plan meeting. Bring information about the Winter Overflow Shelter Plan back to your church.
- Consider volunteering at Grace House or become an overflow shelter host site volunteer. The next Volunteer Orientation & Training Session will be held on **November 11 at 5:30 p.m.**
- Join us at Grace House on November 20 at 4:00 p.m. for the "One Night without a Home" walk. We'll walk to Old Central School and back to the shelter. Homemade soups and breads will be served immediately following the walk.

Together, we can make a difference in the lives of individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

Best Wishes,

Sherry Shadley

Executive Director

There are many important events and activities taking place at Grace House this month. Please mark the following dates on your calendars:

November 11 @ 5:30 p.m. — Volunteer Orientation & Training Session

November 11 @ 7:00 p.m.—Winter Overflow Shelter Plan informational meeting

November 14 (7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.)—"Give to the Max Day": a day of on-line philanthropy

November 18 @ 5:30 p.m. — Evening Volunteer Support Meeting

November 19 @ Noon—Afternoon Volunteer Support Meeting

November 20 @ 4:00 p.m. — "One Night without a Home" Walk & Soup Line

Give to the Max Day—November 14, 2013

As you know, Grace House is making a difference everyday by providing safe, temporary shelter for people in Itasca County who are experiencing homelessness. **November 14th is "Give to the Max Day"**, which gives supporters like you the opportunity to donate online through www.GiveMN.org. Grace House will also staff a booth from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation to answer questions and inform donors of future plans throughout the day. Thank you for supporting Itasca County's only homeless shelter!

Top 5 Critical Needs List:

1. Zippered Mattress Covers (Twin-size only)
2. Men's Long Underwear & Flannel Pajama Pants (Sizes M, L & XL)
3. Mattress Pad Covers (Twin-size only)
4. Ground Coffee
5. Ground Venison, Beef or Turkey

Volunteer Spotlight

Every month, it becomes increasingly difficult to decide which of Grace House's 120 + volunteers should be highlighted in the newsletter. Many of our volunteers have no idea of how their actions and very presence positively impact our guests. Whether it's a delicious meal they've prepared, an empathetic ear during the middle of the night or a simple conversation; Grace House's volunteers help our guests feel at home and keep our shelter running smoothly.

I'd like to personally thank the following volunteers for their outstanding, recent contributions:

Roger Edvenson—for building shelves in our maintenance room and tool shed.

Kay Klingman—for the countless hours spent organizing our annual capital campaign letter bulk mailing and Grace House's Dinner Dance.

Al Zachman—for providing guidance and supervision to ICC engineering students who helped install our new playground.

Carol Rasmussen & Gerri Mertes—for spearheading efforts to completely re-organize our linen closet/quilt room, with help from Frances Barton, Jeff Frazier and Valerie Hughes (Carol's sister).

Greg Miller—for regularly providing transportation and moving furniture for many of our guests when they secure stable housing.

Renee Perrington & Beth Aitken—for encouraging your home-school students to actively and publicly recruit new volunteers for Grace House.

You are all so awesome!