

# Interim Report on Winter Expansion

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February 27, 2015

Winter this year has produced less snow but has given us a large quantity of cold. This report is intended to give you the highlights of what has been accomplished and a few of the challenges. Overall I would say it has gone well and the stress level for clients and staff is down from last year due to less crowding and confinement to one place.

**Referrals:** This year we have required everyone to enter the system through Housing Access of Washtenaw County. (HAWC) This process was expedited by the Shelter Association providing HAWC screeners in person at the Delonis Center 6 days per week for 4 hours. This process provided for data collection as well as shelter deferral.

To date 488 unduplicated individuals have been screened and have a referral to the Warming Center. 367 people have utilized WC1; WC2 or Rotating Shelter.

## **Warming Center 1 , 2 and Rotating Shelter:**

**Warming Center 1** at the Delonis Center opened on 11/18/2014. This program provides an overnight stay on a mat on the floor of the dining room. We opened this year 2 hours early so people could stay after dinner until beds were ready.

**Warming Center 2** same as WC1 but at the partner churches opened on January 5<sup>th</sup> at Bethlehem United Church of Christ. This program moved to Crossroads Community Baptist Church on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. This was one day late due to the February 2<sup>nd</sup> snow storm. It will move to Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. It will end on March 30, 2015.

**Rotating Shelter** is a regular winter program for up to 25 sober individuals who stay at local churches for one week each. The churches provide staffing for overnight, and transportation to the church at night and to the breakfast program in the morning. The Shelter Association provides staff coordinator and back up. About 18 churches participate.

Warming Center 1 from 11/18 until 1/4/2015 averaged 44 people per night  
Warming Center 1 and 2 from 1/5/2015 until 2/16/2015 averaged 69 people per night.  
Rotation has averaged 24 people per night.

The warming center low number was 30 on the first night and 90 on 2/5 (the night after the snow storm).

## **Daytime Shelter:**

The combined MISSION and Delonis Day Shelters opened on 1/5/2015 with MISSION providing day shelter at local congregations from 9am to 3 or 4pm Monday through Friday. The Delonis Center provides day shelter from 8am to 7pm Saturday and Sunday.

**Day Warming Shelter:** 353 persons have utilized the day shelter services since beginning on 1/5/2015. Day Shelter has served between 50-80 persons per day. Some folks utilizing the Day Shelter are not in service point and have not been recorded. As winter has gone on and it has been colder in February, the numbers at the day sites has grown with the nighttime warming center numbers. The congregation partners have been fabulous and provided all of the necessary snacks, drinks and lunch items. MISSION Staff (Sheri Wander) and volunteers have been great at managing the day site with the congregations. Participant meetings established rules and "time out" limits for infractions. Congregations are eager to sign on for next year and have so far found it a rewarding experience.

## **Other Program fillers:**

We began a **pre-winter warming center** one week before the official opening due to an extreme and unseasonal dip in temperatures. We were open for 5 nights with marginal staffing.

We also had 21 days with **Weather Amnesty day shelter** in November and December. 14 were whole days and 7 were partial days. We called amnesty at 20 degrees and checked the temp/wind-chill every 2 hours. We had 2 days for severe weather precipitation and 2 that were holidays were places to go were thin, i.e. Christmas day.

Since the opening of the Day Shelter we have limited Weather Amnesty to fill small gaps; such as when day shelter ends at 3pm and dinner does not open until 5pm.

## **Challenges:**

- There was about a one half hour gap on both ends of the spectrum for when breakfast ends at 8:30am and Day Shelter begins at 9am. People arrive early and are cold causing pressure at the day site church. The Saint Andrew's Breakfast Program deserves kudos for opening early when the shelter folks arrive.

In the afternoon some of the church facilities could not cover until 4. Even if they did we still had a gap as the dinner room does not open until 5. People arrive early and we have the same problem. We began opening at 3 when the churches needed to close.

- Transportation to breakfast from the Delonis Center on bad days was a problem in extreme weather. Normally people walk but with the extreme cold it was difficult and many people wanted to skip breakfast and stay inside. On the day of the snow storm

we were able to provide coffee and some food here at Delonis but we were not equipped to do this every time it was extreme.

- We had resistance on the part of several people to not going to the WC2 site. This caused difficulty in balancing numbers between the two sites sometimes causing overcrowding at Delonis when we had room at the church. Since the bus picked up at 8:30pm people learned if they came in later they would not have to go to the church. It is unclear why this was problematic for people except that they would have to arrive before they wanted to arrive. We were reluctant to refuse service so we crowded people more than necessary and sometimes had empty beds since we never know how many we would need. The WC 2 usually had 20-30 people while we had 40-60 at Delonis. Some people were not allowed to go to the church due to behavior issues.
- We also had a handful of people refuse to give data and get a HAWC screening. The number was not significant and we have no real recourse. A couple of people were mistakenly trespassed from WC for refusing, but this was rectified, it was not our policy to do so, just confusion on the part of staff members.
- For Day Warming Center for the future we should plan on two part time folks instead of one full time person to alleviate the stress on one person, especially considering illness or personal emergencies that can be challenging when there is no back up.
- Out of County: I believe our strategies for screening and the letters we sent early in the season did impact the dumping problem, it was by no means 100% successful. I believe the Hospital and church that were dumping last year have stopped. However, we know a few others were “sent” from other hospitals or CMH’s in other counties, but we do not know the entirety of the circumstances. We also had people arrive on their own, without a clear idea of why. There was a lot of this, especially in the beginning of WC1 and it appeared, people were just opting to come here on their own for the winter. As of now our out of county % is 38% which is where we ended up last year and about 10% less than were we were at this time last year. These % are on Warming Center numbers only.

**Some applauds:**

- **ALL** participating congregations have been outstanding in providing space; volunteers; caring; and food. It is amazing to work in this community.

- I would like to give applause for Deputy Chief James Baird who contacted Canton Police after an incident where they dropped someone at our shelter. This community support means a great deal to this organization and the people we serve.
- Ann Arbor Transportation – The Ride has been super fantastic in providing transportation Monday thru Friday Nights from Delonis to WC2 congregations. Special thanks to Chris White.
- Golden Limousine Ltd. Has been very professional and efficient in providing transportation for WC 2 all weekend and mornings Monday thru Friday. Their courtesy and communication has been outstanding. Special thanks to Sean Duval for participating in this endeavor.
- And of Course; Thanks to Office of Community Economic Development; the City Council and County Commission for making this whole winter expansion possible.