3.22.2020

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Re: Serving the Homeless in La Crosse during this Co-Vid 19 Pandemic

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse and The Salvation Army of La Crosse, in coordination with the Coulee Collaborative to End Homelessness (CCEH) and all of its community partners, have been working together to provide a comprehensive plan to provide healthy, safe shelter with basic necessities for all members of our community who are experiencing homelessness.

Beginning at 4 pm on Monday, March 23, this plan will become active.

On March 23, all homeless adult community members who are seeking shelter, that are not already residents of The Salvation Army, will be directed and asked to check in to the current La Crosse Warming Center located at 413 3rd Street South. At this location, community members will be assessed and assigned a location for shelter.

The current La Crosse Warming center will be transitioning to an Isolation Shelter for the homeless. Gundersen Health System and the St. Clare Health Mission will be coordinating all services to be provided to the homeless displaying symptoms, including medical care.

All those who are assessed and do not display any symptoms of Co-Vid 19 will be transported to a new location. Thanks to the generosity of the Diocese of La Crosse, Cathedral School, located at 1319 Ferry Street, will become the new home to the Catholic Charities Warming Center. Shower services and meals will continue to be available.

Until further notice, all three emergency homeless center locations, the Cathedral School, the Isolation Homeless Shelter, and The Salvation Army will become 24-hour facilities.

After March 23, the Salvation Army will become the primary point of contact for all homeless in the community needing shelter. Anyone needing shelter services will be directed to contact The Salvation Army and be directed to a facility. As of Wednesday, March 25, The Salvation Army will begin providing meals to residents only. Individuals needing assistance may contact the Salvation Army by calling 608-782-6126.

Shelter residents at all locations will receive ongoing health assessments to prevent the spread of infection. The shelters will be working together to make the best use of current available space, allowing them to follow the recommended CDC and La Crosse County Health Department guidelines regarding Co-Vid 19. Anyone who becomes ill will be offered compassionate and appropriate care.

All of the CCEH Service Agency Partners, including Catholic Charities and The Salvation Army, are working hard to continue providing their usual services to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Most services will be provided via telephone consultations for the time being. Please contact the
individual agencies via phone or email for details, and please be patient as there continues to be an increase in requests for assistance. All agencies continue to assess programs and procedures daily as new Co-Vid 19 guidelines are communicated.

We are in need of volunteers to help provide services in the shelters, but we also need volunteers who could assist with laundry, cook at an off-site kitchen location, and/or provide other supports as needed. If you would like to volunteer or learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Alex Riley at alex.riley@usc.salvationarmy.org or Jim Horman at jhorman@cclse.org.

We are also seeking assistance with

- Masks and latex gloves for use in shelters
- Individual wrapped snacks, granola bars, breakfast items to go
- New pillows
- Clean and gently used blankets and towels
- Laundry supplies
- Books, cards, puzzles, and board games

Please drop off all supplies at The Salvation Army at 223 North 8th Street Emergency Shelter side. Feel free to call 608-782-6126 first to make sure someone is available to receive your donation or drop off at the Emergency Shelter Side.

This comprehensive plan could not have been accomplished without the partnership and support of La Crosse County, the City of La Crosse, numerous local businesses, churches, and dozens of hours of labor already provided by many kind and generous individuals. Catholic Charities, The Salvation Army, and the CCEH would like to thank all of those who have contributed so far. The support given has been humbling and tremendous.

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