

For immediate release
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*"Creating a better world
by serving people in need"*

For more information, contact:

Sue Villilo, Faith Mission
614.224.6617 ext. 2172

Michelle Heritage Ward, Community Shelter Board
614.221.9195 ext. 105



New Intake Process for Single Adult Emergency Shelter *Federal stimulus dollars support system re-design*

(COLUMBUS, OH) - A new centralized access point is being implemented for single adults seeking emergency shelter. Effective Wednesday, April 21, all single adults in need of shelter should go to Faith Mission's intake center at 315 East Long Street or call 1-888-4SHELTR (1-888-474-3580).

This marks a change in process for those in crises, as well as for community agencies that refer people to homeless service providers. With the goals of excellent service and meaningful engagement, the new system will reduce the need for clients to visit multiple shelters in search of a bed. The new process, referred to as the 'Centralized Point of Access', creates a single voice for availability of shelter beds and will considerably improve a person's experience when in need of shelter. Shelter staff will be better able to provide high quality services to those in need. It is also expected to reduce entry to shelter, by improving linkages to other available community resources.

The Community Shelter Board allocated federal stimulus dollars from the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program to implement this new program. The Rebuilding Lives plan, approved by community leaders in 2008, recommended a central access point to improve links to community resources and reduce the need for emergency shelter when other resources are available. A similar system for families reduced family homelessness by 40 percent. Faith Mission, a member of the Lutheran Social Service family, is implementing the two year pilot.

"By referring people to the right service at the right time, we can reduce the number of people entering shelter and the number of days someone is in shelter and help that person end the cycle of homelessness," said Michelle Heritage Ward, CSB's Executive Director. "That opens up a shelter bed for someone in a short-term emergency and reduces the need for overflow services."

CSB chose Faith Mission to design and implement this pilot program based on its long track record of providing emergency shelter services. \$696,963 was allocated by CSB in March 2010 for the pilot phase of this program. Faith Mission used the grant to hire additional personnel and install and maintain the community crisis hotline.

Susan Villilo, Executive Director of Faith Mission, said, "We're looking forward to applying our expertise in adult shelter intake to quickly link people with resources to prevent homelessness or assist them in accessing the most appropriate placement available."

Historically, there has been no coordinated system for adult services that has proven so effective for the family system. Noting that more than 4,800 men and women enter the emergency shelter system each year, Heritage Ward said that the program has the potential to reduce adult homelessness. "It's a front door to match people quickly and effectively with other services, so they can get back on their feet," she said.

Faith Mission, a member of the Lutheran Social Service family, has been providing shelter services to people experiencing homelessness since 1966. Today, Faith Mission operates three emergency shelters for homeless adults. Services are offered to assist individuals with obtaining and maintaining housing through case management, employment services, medical, vision and dental care and linkage to other community organizations. The Community Kitchen at Faith Mission, located at 151 North 6th Street, serves three meals every day of the year to anyone in need.

The Community Shelter Board, established in 1986, is a public-private partnership organization that creates collaborations, innovates solutions, and invests in quality programs in order to end homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County. The Community Shelter Board allocates over \$12 million annually to support homeless programs and services. Last year, these programs served more than 8,000 individuals. The Community Shelter Board is funded by the City of Columbus, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the United Way of Central Ohio, The Columbus Foundation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the State of Ohio, and private donors.

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