

Follow-up

Homelessness in Rochester - How Can Our Faith Communities Help?

Panelists

Ryan Cardarella, Dorothy Day House

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Introduction

Ryan Cardarella is a shift volunteer and the current president of the Board of Directors at the Dorothy Day Hospitality House, a temporary shelter for those who find themselves in personal crisis and are in need of the basic requirements of life, including food, clothing, and shelter. The Dorothy Day House is fully volunteer-led and volunteer-run and has served the Rochester community since 1984.

Ryan has served as a shift volunteer at the House since 2017 and previously volunteered at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission prior to moving to Rochester in 2016.

Information about Dorothy Day Hospitality House

Has existed since 1984. They are fully volunteer run and led. Runs on support of community volunteers. This is a temporary shelter so folks can stay for 14 consecutive days. Open from 4 p.m. until 9 a.m. daily and closed during the day. It is primarily a shelter, so a place for folks to sleep. But they are a hospitality house, so they try to focus on that and have the volunteers engage with the guests, building relationships with guests and learning where they came from, what resources the guests need and try to connect them to resources. They provide clothing, toiletries, personal care items, serve nightly dinner at 6 p.m. and breakfast in the morning. They have cooks, churches, groups and individuals who bring in meals and serve the guests the 6 p.m. meal. It's important to the guests to have this family style home cooked meal and especially the relationship building. Building relationships is essential. Connecting them to resources is essential. The homeless they serve are veterans, moms, dads, sons, daughters, colleagues, they have children, they have cars, they have cellphones, there is no one situation that describes the people that come here. It's easy to forget that. We are all just one unfortunate event away from facing homelessness, one medical issue, one unexpected job loss. Especially during COVID and the economic impact that it had. Many people were furloughed, many people lost their jobs. During COVID, they saw many people they've never seen before. Impacted community. One guest was a veteran whose daughter was graduating from high school. He hit a rough patch financially and found himself homeless.

Not the kind of person you would identify with as being homeless. He's like someone you would have a conversation with on the bus or at a coffee shop.

Important to remember. They are just like us.

Practical needs volunteers can fill:

1. Volunteers are needed to provide time and talents.
2. Talents-home repairs for the house, organizers, finance help, whatever talent you have can be used. Medical backgrounds are invaluable.
3. Bringing a home cooked meal, serving the meal, eating with the guests, building a relationship with them.
4. Keep momentum going-Talk with neighbors, with friends, let them know you attended this forum. Dig deeper. Let your city councilors know you attended the forum.
5. Engage politically – contact your city councilors, advocate for affordable housing. Problem everywhere. Look around you in Rochester, multi-unit, multi-story complexes going up with extremely high rent. Very hard for people who work in service industries and some other jobs to afford this kind of rent.
6. Advocate for mental health resources- recently someone from Zumbro Valley Health was able to come for face-to-face meetings some evenings. This had been cut for a time because of budget cuts. It's critically important to connect the guests with resources they need.

Q & A

1. Hours of operation

Open from 4 p.m. until 9 a.m. daily and closed during the day.

2. Age requirements for volunteers, i.e. is there a way for family with 8-year old to get involved?

Families can serve meals but children must be accompanied by an adult.

Anyone can donate. Shift volunteers must be over 18.

3. Estimate on number of people unhoused in Rochester or at Dorothy Day?

No estimate right now because things have changed so much during Covid.

4. Please explain the job requirements for the volunteer on night duty, for all shifts?

Evening duty can include checking in guests, helping with laundry, serving snacks and coffee, chatting with guests, and helping to clean and tidy the house for the morning.

Tim Geisler, Society of St Vincent DePaul

Tim Geisler, Rochester district chapter president of Society of Saint Vincent DePaul;
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9 conferences in Southern MN with 6 in Rochester. Each conference can be 1 or more parishes.
507-216-7370 is the central intake number

Introduction

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a Catholic lay organization whose members strive to grow in holiness and to build a more just world through personal relationships with, and service to, people in need. Organized locally, Vincentians are part of an international society of 800,000 members in over 150 countries that collaborates with other people of goodwill in relieving need and addressing its systemic causes. There are nine local SVdP conferences in Southern MN with 6 in Rochester as well as in Owatonna, Fairmont and Waseca. Tim Geisler is president of the Rochester District Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He has been a resident of Rochester since 1984 and retired after a 29-year career at Mayo Clinic. Tim has been active in a variety of community volunteer organizations, and is a member of Resurrection Catholic Church. He has been a member of St. Vincent de Paul since 2010. He and his wife of 38 years, Kathy have two daughters and three grandchildren with another due in July.

Information about Saint Vincent DePaul

When Bishop Quinn came to Winona Diocese in 2008, he had been serving as the national spiritual advisor for SVDP. Bishop Quinn wondered where the Vincentians were in Rochester. There were none. So he challenged Rochester parishes to create a conference. Each conference could be 1 parish or multiple parishes. There are currently 9 conferences in the Winona diocese and Tim is a resource for the 9 conferences, who work together.

SVDP helps the poor and homeless. Volunteers are ordinary people who care about others and have a desire to help those in need. It does not take any skills. Volunteering with SVDP offers volunteers an opportunity to join together and grow spiritually. They meet twice a month and are nourished by prayer and reflection in these mutually supported gatherings. They come to know their faith and come to know the person of Jesus Christ and their spirituality grows. They do as Jesus did and go out to serve the poor. Three basic principles, Spiritual growth in friendship with others, which leads to service to those in need. Service to others is done out of love that Jesus showed us. They see the face of Christ in those they serve and try to act in a way that those they serve will see the face of Christ in them. Service done out of love for others is much more effective than service done out of a sense of duty or guilt. They serve because they have been saved, not in order to be saved.

When you love someone, you want to know as much about them as you can, so SVDP offers programs to volunteers so they can learn about the causes of poverty. They understand that poverty and homelessness are not a choice. Each and every one of us is just one tragic event away from poverty and homelessness. A fire, a flood, a job loss, a major illness. 53% suffer from some sort of traumatic brain injury. Most choices that are bad choices are because a person didn't have the resources or experience needed to make a better choice. Addiction and mental illness can also be key factors in homelessness.

Society separates poor people into two groups. The deserving poor and the undeserving poor. Society thinks of the deserving poor as children, the abused, the chronically ill, the elderly and society says the deserving poor deserve our help. Society thinks of the undeserving poor as someone who did something to contribute like drugs or alcohol or no desire to help themselves. But there is no such thing as undeserving poor. Society ignores systemic factors that contribute to poverty and homelessness. Everybody makes mistakes and some mistakes have larger consequences and some people don't know how to deal with those consequences. We must learn

more about the causes of poverty and homelessness. Generational poverty makes it extremely difficult for someone to move forward. SVDP offers members a variety of training, so members know what it means to be homeless, even though they have never been homeless. Central to the SVDP mission is face-to-face visits. They try to understand the immediate needs and also the needs that may be contributing to the poverty or homeless situation. Some needs that even the person they are visiting may not be aware of. Most often they can't help with everything so they work with other organizations to help with resources. No volunteer does this alone. Everyone works together. Take the time to get to know the stories of those in need. Everyone has a story.

Too often the homeless are judged and made to feel worthless, with no other criteria except how they look and how they live. When you encounter someone in need, listen to their story, ask how you can help, let them know you care about them as an individual who deserves to be loved. Use the knowledge that you gain to try to understand their situation. People do not care what you know until they know you care. Each of the SVDP conferences receives donations from parishioners. There is a central intake process that rotates referrals through all conferences. They really appreciate the ability to coordinate with other community agencies.

Specific needs for volunteers

1. Any volunteer who wants to grow spiritually in friendship with others and who wants to help others in need. No specific talents or skills are needed to be a Vincentian other than a desire to help others.
2. Donations are accepted at <https://www.svdp-rochmn.org/donate>

Q & A:

1. Hours of operation

The SVdP Central Intake phone line (507-216-7370) takes calls on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between the hours of 10:00 & 2:00PM. Central Intake will take some basic information and pass this along to a home visit team. The home visit team will contact the Friend in Need within 48 hours to determine how best we can help.

2. Are there specific services you offer?

We offer financial assistance with rent, utilities, transportation and household goods. Some members help with repairs to houses and cars. We connect folks to resources or help folks help themselves. SVdP will attempt to help with whatever is needed. There is no form of charity that is foreign to our society. If we cannot help directly, we will attempt to connect our Friends in Need with other resources available through other organizations or programs.

3. How many people has SVDP helped?

They have 197 volunteers. Last fiscal year before Covid, they made 2,403 home visits and helped 4,139 people.

Dan Fifield founder of The Landing MN

Dan Fifield, founder of [The Landing MN](#);
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Introduction

Dan Fifield and his wife Holly founded The Landing MN in November of 2018 to serve those that are experiencing homelessness. Their initial goal was to develop a street outreach, building relationships and learning what the needs are on the street. In early 2020 The Landing MN launched their MOU (mobile outreach unit) to further provide their friends with much needed clothing, food, personal care items and connecting individuals with much needed services. With the onset of Covid 19 they have taken on the role of operating The Landing at Silver Lake Day Center under a contract with the City of Rochester and funded by state and federal CARE Acts funding and state grants. They are now looking to the future and planning on what their next steps will be

Information about The Landing MN

He works with all other panelists almost every day as they partner in helping the homeless. We share a lot of the same clients.

The Landing started in Nov 2018 as an outreach ministry for folks experiencing homelessness. Dan was an ER nurse who was suspended, so he and his wife started the Landing. Early on they were working out of the back of their car, providing food and clothing. They found out that there are many resources in Rochester, but the homeless folks don't know how to get connected. So they help people connect the dots. The homeless are the spokes of the wheel and the outside of the wheel are the organizations. The Landing is the hub. The homeless don't have computer access and many times no working cell phone and no contact numbers. Dan and Holly wanted a day center, and found a building and tried to raise \$ to buy it, but that didn't work out, so they started a mobile outreach until, "MOU", to go to streets and serve individuals who are in remote locations. 3 weeks later, covid hit, so God had His plan because if the building sale had gone through, they would have been sitting with an empty building not being able to serve anybody. So they stayed on the street and helped at the day center that the city established, out on the streets with clothing, food, sleeping bags, tents. Some individuals are service resistant and didn't want to stay in a shelter, so Dan and Holly made sure they were at least dry and warm.

In the summer of 2020, Mayo Civic Center site was being shut down, the warming center went back to the 4th street location, day center activities were going to the Salvation Army building, so they took over day center activities from 3:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. after Salvation army had shut down for the day and they did that evenings and weekends. In October they opened up the Silver Lake station and are still operating there now. There are showers, laundry, a get your stuff together room with 42 lockers where their belongings can be locked. One of the big problems the homeless have is you keep all your stuff in a backpack and often end up with your backpack stolen. So Social security cards, ID's and birth certificates are gone. They provide personal care items, clothing and 3 meals a day. Due to COVID, the salvation army provides lunches that volunteers retrieve, and one of the local restaurants provides dinners. Lunch is dry cereal sometimes. They work with Mayo Clinic for volunteers with Mayo's para medicine program to get appointments, check blood sugar, blood pressure, do wound care, etc. Helps to head off major medical problems by seeing docs and getting meds. Through the CARE ACT, SE MN Legal aid, there is a legal aid kiosk so clients can come in and do court appearances, print documents for court appearances and get access to online job applications and help them facilitate those steps. Winona State University School of nursing students came January through April once a week, so more help was available that would not be available on the street. The majority of time, the homeless are not treated very well, are shunned and looked down upon. It's about building relationships. People ask us how we minister? It's simple, we love them, we show them the love of Christ, we let them experience someone

who cares, have that regular contact. We buy birthday cakes. For a man going to Colorado, we bought a going away cake and had a going away party and played bingo. There's a lot of things we do just to make it more of a human situation. The number of homeless people since Feb 1- over 380 individuals came through The Landing store, some are not homeless, but on the cusp of homelessness.

Practical needs volunteers can fill

1. Volunteers can bring in cases of water
2. Volunteers can bring in gallons of milk
3. Donations of men's jeans and camping equipment
4. Call to speak with Dan about volunteer opportunities

Q & A

1. Can families volunteer?

Yes, volunteers under 18 are encouraged, but must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. It's important for young people to see what the homeless experience.

We offer a wide arrange of volunteer opportunities.

Individuals can go to our website, thelandingmn.org to sign up.

2. What hours and days is The Landing open?

7 days a week, 8 until 7 p.m.

3. Needs to pinpoint right now?

With summer coming, they need water to drink, they go through cases of it, they need milk to drink, gallons of it, men's jeans, camping equipment. We offer a wide arrange of volunteer opportunities. Individuals can go to our website, thelandingmn.org to sign up.

4. Has the old Kmart been considered as a site for shelter?

It has been discussed, but due to Mayo having the lot for employee parking, it is not a good option.

5. Can anyone come to bring food?

I hope that we can once again start accepting home-made items. Covid put a big hold on that but I think that we are getting close to being able to accept them again. Please check with us or watch our Facebook page for future details.

6. For those that are homeless, would you say that some of them are capable of working jobs? If so, would you say that the local workforce center is helpful and would it be helpful to have workforce be more mobile setting up a mobile location traveling between churches and such to help people get jobs?

Yes, some are very capable of working, but there are a lot of reasons that make it hard for them to obtain jobs. Criminal history is the main one but there are many. We do help clients in job searches and filling out applications.

7. I believe I saw on the news that the Silver Lake fire station where The Landing is currently located during the daytime hours will be running out of pandemic funding this fall. If that is true, where will the homeless go during the daytime hours after that?

There is a contract with the City through August 31 and at this time, no extension is being discussed.

We are presently exploring other building options to relocate our facility. Salvation Army does offer a day center environment form 8 am until 4 pm Monday through Friday.

Brie Bednar, Family Promise Rochester

Bri Bednar, executive director of Family Promise;
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Introduction

"Family Promise Rochester provides shelter, case management services, and on-going support to families in the Rochester area who are experiencing homelessness. They collaborate with families to identify the obstacles and barriers that have led them to their current situation. They do this by building a strong relationship with the family, accessing resources, creating goals and providing skill-based trainings that are individualized to the family's specific needs. These skills include employment seeking, financial literacy, effective parenting, goal setting, professionalism, self-sustaining problem solving and personal empowerment.

Brie Bednar has been the Executive Director for Family Promise Rochester since 2019. She lives in Austin with her family but absolutely loves working in the Rochester community and meeting so many other like-minded people. She is passionate about the mission of Family Promise and is eager to continue leading the organization toward progressive growth and expansion."

Kai Miller, a graduate of Family Promise was scheduled to speak. Unfortunately, Ms. Miller unexpectedly could not join us this evening, but we wanted to honor her voice as someone who previously experienced homelessness and include her story as shown in a short video program. Ms. Miller and her family are graduates of the Family Promise Program. Kai, her husband and two children are now successfully housed and Kai is a member of the board of director of Family Promise.

Information about Family Promise

We exist to provide help and hope to families experiencing homelessness through shelter, case management, shelter diversion and follow-along services. We are a goal-oriented program and the stay is anywhere from 30-120 days. 20 years ago, we made an important promise that we would do all we could to help families experiencing homelessness. We are proud of the work we have done and of our families who have moved up and out of the vicious cycle of poverty. Prior to the pandemic, families were receiving integral care, meals, overnight shelter at partner congregations throughout the community. That is the model we were founded on. Before churches were shuttered, we had 1400 volunteers and 40 partner congregations. We could not have done the work we do without our partner congregations. For the past 1 ½ years when churches were not an option, we had to think of new ways to provide shelter. We considered various options and attempted various options. Our partner congregations continued dropping off meals and donations to the Day Center, but the board of directors ultimately decided the most logical path was a relocation to a site where we would be able to provide overnight shelter. The old day center was not large enough for overnight shelter, so we decided to move forward with relocation. After a lot of planning, this quickly happened and became a reality in late 2020, and in February of 2021 we opened the doors to families in our new static site shelter which we call the NorthStar House. In just over three months that we have been open, we have already seen two families graduate successfully into stable housing and two more families will be graduating within the next week or two. We are committed to the continued success of the families that we are honored to work with. We believe that in the face of uncertainty and major programmatic and organizational changes, that the community will continue to support our mission and the families and children that we serve. We've been limping by since Feb with very little volunteer involvement. There are only two of us full-time staff. In that time we recognize that having volunteers on site is a core component of our program and we are missing that piece right now and we can't wait to welcome volunteers back from all walks of life who want the best for the disadvantaged among us.

Practical things volunteers can do or provide

1. We need meals delivered at 6 p.m. leave in the cooler on front porch.
2. Now that people are getting vaccinated, you will soon be able to share meals with the families.
3. There is a food pantry at the shelter and we need donations to help stock the pantry. There is sign up created for those donations on the website.
4. We need volunteers to join our lively and active committees. We are now meeting virtually. There are 9 committees and amazing things are happening. This info is on the website.
5. We hold life skills classes twice a month, for shelter families and families who have graduated, at the Northrup Education center. We are looking for volunteers to come in and present a topic and teach a hobby or skill or just come and volunteer for the evening. Bri presented a class on meditation. If you have a hobby you want to share, like budgeting, it's wide-open topics. Classes start up again in the fall.
6. They are looking forward to bringing overnight volunteers back. Did have two temp overnight staff, but it is impossible to fill that position. They are hiring a volunteer coordinator. Need volunteers back on site, and is a sleeping position, and volunteer has own shower, bed and their own space. Really needed.

Questions and Answers

1. Hours of operation

We are in operation 24/7, but our office hours are M-F, 9-4. People can call anytime during those hours to speak to staff. We also have a waiting list sign up form for people looking for shelter--they can find that on our website here <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdPnX0hvSgX1kr8qKBZeJ3lKzBdsMvRbTwUZPrOHEPucTs3mg/viewform>. Our after hours number is the same as during business hours: (507) 281-3122. Staff will return calls, if voicemails are left, within 24 business hours.

2. Are there age requirements?

There are no age requirements and they highly encourage families to volunteer together. Evening hospitality, read, kids volunteering would never be alone with families. Kids can hang out with the kids from shelter families, play video games and board games.

3. How many homeless families are there in Rochester?

Pre-covid, the Rochester public school district had identified over 400 families in the Rochester area who were experiencing homelessness and that number has grown since then.

4. How many families can you serve?

We are not at full capacity due to Covid, but we can serve about 5 families at a time or about 18 people. There are 11 to 15 families on our waiting list. Because our program is a longer program, 30-100 days, we have had families waiting since March.

5. How does someone get referred to Family Promise?

These partner organizations refer the families, also referred by social workers, the schools, Mayo Clinic. But the major way people hear about us is word of mouth. We have had people relocate to Rochester specifically for our shelter services.

6. Where are the families on the Family Promise waiting list living while they wait?

Some families are at Dorothy Day House during the day and at the warming center at night. Some families stay with family and friends. Some families stay in hotels. Folks may call the HRA 24-hour housing stability line at 507.328.7150 and staff will help them resolve the homeless situation as quickly as possible.

Kai Miller, Graduate of Family Promise

Kai Miller and her family are graduates of the Family Promise Rochester shelter program. She, her husband, and two young daughters participated in the program 2 years ago after finding themselves with no place to call home after relocating to Rochester from another state. Today, they are successfully housed and Kai is a very valued member of the Family Support committee and Board of Directors at Family Promise. Her perspective as a person with lived experience helps shape their programs and decisions with empathy and understanding.

Kai-we were homeless for 3 years and lived in a hotel and it was a struggle doing everything by ourselves and Family Promise had our backs, to keep from feeling we didn't have anyone. We had a support system. It meant a lot. The life skills classes brought everybody together to talk about experiences.

Bri – Many families come from out of the country, but each family meets with the staff and their story helps Family Promise know their needs and where they are coming from and how to structure that family's individualized plan and helps Family Promise to help them to integrate into a new community. It helps Family Promise to know how the family feels about the services they are receiving. It helps understand what their expectations and needs are. We created a culturally relevant meal exchange program between our participants and our volunteers who are providing meals.

Trent Fluegel, Housing Stability Team, Olmsted County

Trent Fluegel-Olmsted County's housing resource coordinator
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Introduction

Trent has worked and volunteered in the areas of Housing since 1993 when the LINK program for teens experiencing homelessness was launched and was the first staff member. Later, he served as Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity while serving nine years on the board of First Homes. Trent also served as Executive Director at Family Promise Rochester and has worked as a Housing advocate with ARC and, as the Site Director for both the Francis and Sver Creek Corner permanent supportive Housing programs. Trent has served as Board Chair/President of First Homes, Recovery is Happening and several Civic organizations. His current role is Housing Resource Coordinator with Olmsted County's Housing Stability Team. He's most interested in developing a "Whole Community" approach to Housing instability.

Information about the HRA

He is proud of the work he has done in the last couple of years, since joining Olmsted county, especially as part of the Housing Stability Team. This was formed about the same time as Dan from The Landing MN rolled out the MOU at the beginning of Covid, in February of 2020. The Housing Stability Team is a new team developed at Olmsted County. During tonight's forum, Trent's views are his own and he is not representing Olmsted

County or management or administration or elected officials. What we have learned over the past year was a result of this crisis, and was about the whole community coming together to address the issues. There are four on the team, housing research coordinators or social workers for the county. They are embedded within the Housing Redevelopment Authority, the Housing Division at the county. They have a unique opportunity to work closely with both our federally funded programs, housing choice vouchers, publicly owned housing, our voucher program through other areas that they operate as well as the development arm of the organization. We have had bold leadership at Olmsted County during these past 15 months. One of the things that the housing Stability Team was able to be a part of was the Olmsted County HRA leased a couple of buildings. A 12 unit building in the SE and an 18 unit building on North Broadway. Single room occupancy types of residences and to make those available to folks in our community who would otherwise be unsheltered. People wonder what causes homelessness. The number one cause of homelessness is a lack of homes. It's not necessarily that one individual does not have a home, it's that we simply do not have enough homes in our communities to house everyone who needs a home. When shortages occur, it's folks at the bottom who are the first to be squeezed out. A lack of affordable housing and artificially low wages really are some of the key causes of homelessness. We think about mental health issues or addiction or people who are fleeing domestic violence or other types of violence, and these have their place as well, but at its root, if we don't have enough housing and if people can't earn enough to pay for that housing, we will continue to deal with the homelessness issue. It was a great thing that the county was able to get long-term leases on those two buildings. We've been able to move people in and recently, been able to move some people out who were able to get into their own housing that was not supported by the county in any way. In the past year, while we were working with our partners down at the Mayo Civic Center, two of us went there every day, all day long. We were there to do whatever folks needed help with. It wasn't our job in the past to help someone fill out a food stamp application, but we did that. It wasn't necessarily our job to help folks track down their stimulus check, but we did that. Simply being there every day helped build trust. Folks knew if they saw us on Monday, they would see us and we would be the same people on Thursday and we would be people who cared. We wouldn't just rally around, we had motivation to help someone else. We just made it part of our day every day to be amongst folks we could serve. I'm part of an organization here and our golden words are, "We can do what I can't do." It's an important part of my life, but I think it's been an important part of our community these past 15 months as well. When we looked at what are we going to do when suddenly there is an extra 100 people homeless in our community, because of the pandemic, what are we going to do when we can't have volunteers come in, what are we going to do when we face these kind of shortages, and what this community learned is that we can do anything if our we is large enough. If we included just Dan and I, we'd only get a little bit done, but if our we included Dan and Rudy and Bri and the police department and the parks department and public health, the carpenter's union, whoever it might be, the larger we make our we, the greater the problems that we can overcome. I really think that's been a major lesson we had over this past year. People talked about how many people are homeless in Rochester, 180 – 300 came through the warming center. The majority of people who have been homeless over the past year have not met any one of us and have not worked with any of our organizations. They have depended on family and friends, they might have moved into an abandoned house for 3 weeks while trying to find other resources, but the number of people experiencing homelessness is much greater than we have ever counted. The folks we end up counting when we do our Jan point in time count and the folks that most of us see each day, are probably the folks who tend to be the longer term homeless. They are not able to get back on their feet as quickly or don't have the same resiliency that others have. Many of us work primarily with single adults or adult couples, except for Bri at Family Promise. More than half the people that are homeless in our state and our communities are children and families. They are the invisible homeless. The Rochester Public Schools do great work with those families but Family Promise and the school district are still are not able to address the needs of all those families who are without shelter here in the community.

Volunteer opportunities

- 1. Can people volunteer to help with the point in time counts? Shanna has worked with student volunteers from UMR in the past.**

Yes, this is typically run with staff from the partners that are part of tonight's panel, but it would be great to have volunteers in the planning and implementing of the count.

Q & A

1. Hours of operation

The office at 2117 is open from 8AM until 5:00PM

We do have a 24-hour Housing Stability Line. The number is 507-328-7150.

The HRA's Housing Stability program is working to reduce the homeless population in the area.

"The more quickly we can engage with someone who has been identified as homeless the more quickly we can help them resolve that and that doesn't necessarily mean getting them into permanent housing."

"We know there's not enough affordable housing in town and there's not enough permanent supportive housing in town so we have to be creative and think how can we get folks, maybe not permanently housed, but at least out of the homeless system." An alternative to permanent housing can be staying with family or friends during a down period or coordinating a hotel stay.

What resources are available for people who have been convicted of felonies and who are trying to return to their family home?

There are two legal aid associations in Rochester, Legal Assistance of Olmsted County and Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services(SMRLS) who can help get those felony convictions expunged. One thing I've learned when there are two parents in the household, and the father may have a felony conviction, but because he wants to be a part of his family's life, he's going to live there but without being on the lease. But that's grounds for termination of the lease and eviction. Sometimes we find families with eviction on their record, simply because dad was trying to be a part of his family and help to raise his kids and that violated the terms of the lease. As a society, we need to recognize that we need to house and employ people, even if they have a criminal background. We have to address the fact that the majority of families in that situation, who came to Family Promise, the males in the family were African American and behaved in exactly the same way Trent behaved when he was 18-22 years old, but Trent does not have a felony background. It's the impact of our policing issues. It's still a barrier for many folks, but there are services to try to help to get those records expunged. There are some landlords, this is what they do. That's why they are in the business. Sure they need to make a profit and they are hoping to build a real estate empire, but want to help people who are struggling to get back so probably would rent to felons. But it continues to be a struggle for folks.

Rudy Naul, Rochester Community Warming Center

Rudy Naul, coordinator of the [Rochester Community Warming Center](#).

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Introduction

Rudy Naul is the Rochester Community Warming Center coordinator. The Rochester Community Warming Center(RCWC) provides emergency shelter for Rochester Area adults, 18 and older, experiencing

homelessness. Each individual served at the RCWC has a safe and warm place to sleep, access to a shower, laundry facilities, healthy snacks and beverages, fellowship, and referrals for additional help and assistance. The RCWC is a low-barrier shelter that serves its guests in a non-judgmental manner and affirms their human dignity.

Information about the Warming Center

Really fortunate to be a part of this community who wants to help those who are struggling with homelessness. His path began 3 or 4 years ago when he was fortunate enough to be introduced to an amazing organization represented here, Family Promise. Like a lot of people in Rochester, he didn't realize that homelessness was such a big thing. He found out his church was a host site and he wanted to learn more, so he became a volunteer and then he became a volunteer coordinator. He loved doing that, his family volunteered as a family together and that was really important. Time spent at Family Promise was where he grew that passion to want to help families who were struggling. It was hard for him to imagine, especially since he has kids, families sleeping in their car with kids. They don't have any choice in the matter. He feels blessed to still be a part of Family Promise and currently is on the Board of Directors and he is excited for what they do. The NorthStar House is amazing and the work that Bri and Nicolette do there is amazing. He always felt passionate towards families and one day he was invited to training at the Civic Center that happened in 2019. He sat next to Bri and the three hours went by so quickly and he really truly understood the why of some of the behaviors that the homeless folks do and it clicked for him and made him want to do more and inspired him. He left a career in insurance for something that he felt was his calling in life. He is blessed to say that he has been with Catholic Charities for a year and a half, and we've gone through a lot of changes. Our first season we were scheduled to close March 31 and then the pandemic hit and then we moved to the Civic Center. A lot of changes have happened since then. Now they are sitting in a warming center that is twice the size, we have capacity to hold 42 people currently. When the pandemic is done, we will be able to house 56. Several people on this panel have volunteered and been there and seen it and know how tight it is. We are a low-barrier shelter, so guests may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, some have mental health issues that are untreated or no diagnosis, but as long as they are calm and get along with everyone else, they are welcome to stay there. There is no limit as to how many times they use us. Open from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., do a 2-hour intake period. With Covid we have had to adjust the intake and what they do, allow 5 guests at a time, ask that they wear a mask, ask the covid questions and if anyone is having symptoms, they stay in the isolation room until they can be tested. At the warming center, they are ordinary people. There is a team of 16 people who really care about people who are experiencing homelessness. We be there, be understanding, don't judge. We want them to feel safe and we want to build a relationship and want to build trust so that when they are ready to get help, they can trust and know that we are going to do what's right for them, when they are ready, on their time schedule. One thing, if guests leave after the doors are locked, they can't come back until the next night.

What can volunteers do

1. Get involved- don't be afraid of guests served at the Warming Center.
He gets asked, "Is there really that big of a problem of homelessness in Rochester?" There is. Volunteers get worried about something happening. A lot of these folks have gone through so many traumatic things in their lives. So many challenges that he has a lot of respect for them. This group of people are some of the kindest, most caring, bravest people he has ever met, and they encourage him to want to do better. He is inspired by their strength and by their ability to survive a lot of different things. If he had to walk in their shoes for a day, he would not be able to do. Give these folks a chance to be human and be heard and be seen.
2. Volunteer opportunities. In the last month volunteers are coming back, hang out, play cards, play cribbage, volunteers played musical bingo which was amazing. Now guests are asking for bingo. Be compassionate and understand that everyone walks a different path in life and you don't understand what someone has had to go through. So much pain that they are trying to deal with so we try to be there and support them.
3. Guests like to see other faces.
4. Donate toiletry items for guests to shower,

5. Donate laundry soap for guests to do laundry.

Questions and answers

1. Hours of operation

Open from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

2. Most facilities are only open at night, where do homeless people go during the day?

Many are at the Landing if there are no children, or the Salvation Army. Some guests work. Some hang out at the park now that it is warm.

3. Will you be open all year? Will it ever close?

We are fully funded through 2021. Heat and humidity are just as dangerous as wind chill. We are still waiting on word of funding for after that.

Lisa Mueller, Salvation Army

Lisa.mueller@usc.salvationarmy.org

115 1st avenue NE

Rochester, MN 55906

507-288-3663

Introduction

The Salvation Army has been active in the Rochester community for 125 years. They provide holistic support for human needs through our many programs and services, as well as health services and seasonal services. Providing stable housing and preventing homelessness remains one of the hallmarks of The Salvation Army. Our programs serve singles, families, seniors and youth.

Information about the Salvation Army

The primary role is preventing homelessness or once people are housed, keeping them housed. We do that through our active home program, which is supportive housing for families. Active home has one case manager and she supports a case load of up to 12 families. She has 10 families right now and this is intense case management, financial support, working with the landlords and coming alongside of families to maintain their housing for up to two years. For single people experiencing homelessness, we have permanent supportive housing, which is also intense case management, financial support, and other supports to keep people housed. The last resort for any of their clients would be people losing their housing so they work with landlords and work with clients, to keep people housed. Other ways they help prevent homelessness is utility support, rent support, rent assistance and many food service programs, so that people don't have to choose between paying the rent and buying food. They have a food shelf and provide a hot meal every day, they have a bread shelf open for free food all day long, they help people with their transportation needs. For people already experiencing homelessness, they are a day center, so people can come and spend their day with them. In the morning and have a cup of coffee and a hot lunch, and have a shower and meet with a case manager. They provide emergency hotel vouchers. They have a coordinated entry system, which is the primary method of getting people housed in this community. They provide the assessment for people to get into the system to get housed.

They meet with case workers, get hygiene supplies, take showers, and there is a resource room for a change of clothing. They meet basic human needs. They also have health services, so under or uninsured people receive medical, emergency dental and pharmaceutical care. So people don't need to make choices between medical and other bills. With all of the programs, they work really hard to enoble people, rather than enable people. We consider all the services we give more than handouts and more than donations. There are so many contributing factors to being unsheltered. The approach needs to be multi-faceted. So many of these organizations are all different pieces of the puzzle. At the Salvation Army, we see dignity in everybody we serve and we want people to see dignity in themselves.

Practical things volunteers can do

1. Cooking meals
2. Sorting food in the food pantry
3. Help with check in, Help in the resource room, Help with coffee, Help with cleaning
4. Donations of good quality backpacks, jeans, sweats, leggings, new men's boxers

Questions and Answers

- 1. What are your hours of operation**
Open Monday through Friday 8-4

Questions and answers for all panelists

- 1. Is there a specific faith requirement for volunteers?**

No for all organizations.

SVdP offers volunteers an opportunity to join together and grow spiritually.

- 2. Do any of your organizations work closely with teens or runaways?**

a. Dorothy Day House -We serve families as well as adults at the Dorothy Day House.

b. SVdP will visit with and try to help whoever calls us for help at our central intake number at 507-216-7370.

c. The Landing - We currently refer families to Family Promise and individuals under the age of 18 to LINK. We do assist this population in immediate needs when they present to our facility.

d. The Warming Center -Anyone less than 18 is not allowed to stay except with a parent.

e. The Salvation Army deals with teens, singles and families. Lutheran social services has the Link program who work with teenagers, the social workers at the Rochester school district also help teenagers.

f. St. Luke's - The Von Wald Youth Shelter by 180 Degrees is Southeastern Minnesota's only 24-hour 7 day a week emergency shelter for youth seeking safety from domestic violence, sexual abuse or wanting to work through emotional, social or chemical use issues. The Von Wald Shelter is a temporary 12 bed co-educational residence for youth ages 14 to 19 offering meals, group and mentor support, safety, accredited education, recreation and social activities. Services are free of charge and available on a walk-in basis. Located in Rochester, Minnesota at 4435 Bamber Valley Road SW. For immediate assistance, contact: Christina McCormick, Associate Director at (507) 280- 0110.

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3. Do any of you work with Ability Building Center or Possibilities?

- a. Dorothy Day House – **Not at this time**
- b. SVDP worked with them to get resources for their Friends in Need. Sometimes they get donations of items that they can use with ABC or Possibilities.
- c. The Landing – Not at this time.
- d. Family Promise had ABC coming in to volunteer before Covid and they will be coming back soon and we are so excited.
- e. Warming Center -Not at this time
- f. Salvation Army- We used to have volunteers from ABC/Poss before pandemic.

4. Should we consider the unhoused to be rising are if so, is there enough funding to support the rise?

- a. SVDP has a concern about the fear from undocumented immigrants to come forward to ask for help. They are also very concerned that after the government programs to bar rent evictions and utility shutoffs expire, there will be an onslaught of people asking for help. For SVdP, the number of calls they are getting is fewer, but their needs are greater.
- b. HRA is preparing to do another 3-day survey, which was last done in 2020, and which is normally done on the same night every year in January on a national basis. Now they will do one in July and every six months. The homeless population is constantly changing but it now seems to be increasing.

5. Are there other places in town that could be used for shelter, like the old K-mart ?

Mayo clinic has a long-term lease for the parking lot so not an option.

he Landing has a lease through the end of August with the City for the Silver Lake Fire Station, and they are currently looking at other locations.

6. Does the work force center help to provide jobs to the unhoused or are there other needs to help homeless to join the work force?

- a. Family Promise – we are a goal-oriented program and a goal is getting employment and so the case manager works very closely with the families to help them build resumes, prepare for interviews, practice and be able to get to interviews. Family Promise works with the work force center.

7. What organizations are these 3 panelists representing (their screen names do not have org listed): Trent Fluegel, Beth Royalty, Diane O'Mara.

Trent is from the Olmsted County Housing Stability Team.

Beth is the Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church (one of the host orgs)

Diane is one of the organizers from St. Luke's Episcopal Church

8. Will the transcript be made available after this seminar? -- Sheila Walsh, WHOW (Women Helping Other Women). A transcript is on this document.

9. Do all of your organizations work close enough together to refer back and forth easily for different services?

T. Geisler - SVdP

I believe we have been very blessed in this community at how well all the various social service agencies, nonprofits and government entities work together. We often work together and refer Friends in Need to each other. None of us can meet all the needs ourselves so it is imperative that we work closely together and share resources.

10. Any stats on the number of homelessness people in Rochester?

Trent from HRA

There are a number of different methods used to try to gauge the number of individuals experiencing homelessness, and unfortunately none of them are comprehensive or complete.

Different levels of Government and various organizations use different definitions of homelessness. Some of the sub-populations of PEH (People Experiencing Homelessness) are notoriously harder to count than others. We know that homeless families and unaccompanied youth often go uncounted.

In each of the last two years, community partners in Rochester have collaborated to conduct a three-day count of those who are homeless. In October of 2020, we were able to count 206 households experiencing homelessness. These households were comprised of 251 individuals.

11. What background checks are required to volunteer?

- a. Dorothy Day House – not on volunteers who bring or serve meals, but all volunteers who stay overnight must consent to background checks.
- b. SVdP - All volunteers must complete "VIRTUS: Protecting God’s Children® for Adults" training and agree to a background check prior to volunteering. Recertification training is to be completed every five-years.
- c. The Landing – currently none are required.
- d. The Warming Center- We do run background checks on volunteers after they've completed a volunteer application and consented to our checking their background.
- e. Family Promise - We do run background checks on volunteers after they've completed a volunteer application and consented to our checking their background.
- f. Salvation Army - Adults need background check to volunteer

12. Regarding felons coming home to families that can’t stay in their current homes. Has this changed to allow felons to join their families?

- a. Salvation Army – Unknown
- b. SVdP – Unknown
- c. The Landing - Unknown

13. Where can we get a list of landlords who accept felon families?

- a. Tim from SVdP provided this list, but it is not current and may no longer be correct.
- b. All other panelists are unaware of such a list.

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|--|--|
| John Stadheim | (507) 398-7070 (will rent to anybody) by Meadow Park |
| Walter Bush | (507) 202-2784 |
| Steve Brooks | (507) 260-7066 |
| Andy Goemat | (507) 951-8876 |
| Gloria Schultz | (507) 282-3226 |
| Ken Lechner | (507) 288-6773, (507) 251-4267 |
| Julie Walters <i>Bill Alward</i> | (507) 272-9595 <i>(507) 250-3680</i> |
| Brit Noser | (507) 990-3920 |
| Renee Hess | (507) 254-0360 |
| Tim Van Riper | (507) 271-2627 |
| Jan Slavin - Paragon/Weiss | (507) 280-0437, (507) 272-9620, 1-888-356-0077 |
| Craig Haakenstad | (507) 990-3502 |
| J & L | (507) 282-2494 |
| Tim Malone - All Star Properties | (507) 252-9143 |
| Dan Westendorf - RGI | (507) 289-8000 |
| Fawn - Landmark Properties | (507) 285-5082 |
| Med City Management | (507) 272-9595 |
| Hunters Ridge (2-3 Bdrms) Contact Laurie | (507) 288-1376 |
| Jill O'Neill Hillcrest Apartments | (507) 696-4174 |
| Park Place Apartments | (507) 281-2929, 1-888-440-5041 |
| Homestead Village Apartments | (507) 289-4446 |
| Heritage Manor Apartments | (507) 288-1322, 1-888-827-8736 |
| Meadow Park Apartments | (507) 282-0495 |
| Bear Creek Apartments | (507) 252-8900 |
| Mile Manor Apartments | 1-866-521-7806 ext (2508) |
| 3rd Ave Loft | 1-866-454-4907 ext (2413) |

14. Because of so much money apparently being used for bringing in migrants into the US, will there, in your opinion, be enough funds to support the rising homeless population in Rochester and other US towns and cities?

- a. Salvation Army – Unknown
- b. SVdP - the need to support the homeless is great and there will always be a need for additional funding to provide the services and help they need.
- c. The Landing - There is currently not enough funding for the support of the homeless population in the US.

15. Approximately how much money is being used to support the settlement and rehabilitation of homeless people in Rochester, around the Midwest region, and around the nation?

- a. Unknown

16. People that have been homeless for weeks or months have gotten the message repeatedly from the community they are unwanted and second-class citizens. Beyond their immediate needs for housing and food, how can churches and families regain their trust to minister to them emotionally and spiritually?

- a. Salvation Army - rebuild trust through time spent volunteering, serving and listening
- b. SVdP - Educating yourself on the issues of homelessness and its causes will prepare you to deal with the homeless in a loving and caring way. When you encounter a homeless person, acknowledge them, give them a smile and treat them as an individual who deserves to be loved. Listen to their stories with an empathetic heart. Too often, the homeless feel invisible, ignored or judged without any basis other than how they look or how they live. Only by taking the time to get to know someone, can you gain the trust to effectively minister to them.
- c. The Landing - The single biggest way to help this population is to become involved with an existing organization and help to build trusting relationships with these individuals.

17. Which organizations work closely with runaway/homeless teens in Rochester? Which one has the most resources for teenagers? What about the VanWald organization?

- a. Salvation Army – Lutheran Social Services the Link program
- b. SVdP - Lutheran Social Services, the Link program
- c. St. Lukes - The Von Wald Youth Shelter by 180 Degrees is Southeastern Minnesota's only 24-hour 7 day a week emergency shelter for youth seeking safety from domestic violence, sexual abuse or wanting to work through emotional, social or chemical use issues. The Von Wald Shelter is a temporary 12 bed co-educational residence for youth ages 14 to 19 offering meals, group and mentor support, safety, accredited education, recreation and social activities. Services are free of charge and available on a walk-in basis. Located in Rochester, Minnesota at 4435 Bamber Valley Road SW. For immediate assistance, contact: Christina McCormick, Associate Director at (507) 280- 0110.
<https://www.180degrees.org/>

18. Can teenagers and younger volunteer? Call each organization for more information.

- a. Dorothy Day– yes for bringing and serving food, but shift work requires a volunteer 18 and over.
- b. The Landing – yes with a parent or guardian
- c. Salvation Army – yes with an adult
- d. SVdP - yes with an adult
- e. Warming Center - yes with an adult. Also, there are volunteer jobs that can be done outside of being in the shelter, but still need to be with an adult.
- f. Family promise - There are no age requirements and they highly encourage families to volunteer together. Evening hospitality, read, kids volunteering would never be alone with families. Kids can hang out with the kids from shelter families, play video games and board games.

19. Do you know what services, facilities, care, etc. the cities of Winona, Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna, Faribault, Northfield and Mankato offer to this population?

- a. Unknown

20. Where can unhoused people spend their days?

- a. SVdP - Many of the homeless utilize the Landings during the day. Others spend time downtown, at the Library (when it is open), visit Salvation Army Day Center, at the mall or spend time in parks. There are times in extremely cold or hot temperatures when other facilities are open.
- b. Salvation Army - Unsheltered can spend their days with us, eat breakfast, receive services, take showers, get clothing, eat lunch, and stay safe and warm/cool.

21. Can anyone speak about Home Again, the Damascus program and the VonWald organization as other nonprofit partners.

- a. The Landing - Home Again provides home furnishings and household goods to individuals and families that are transitioning from homelessness to housed.
- b. St. Lukes - The Von Wald Youth Shelter by 180 Degrees is Southeastern Minnesota's only 24-hour 7 day a week emergency shelter for youth seeking safety from domestic violence, sexual abuse or wanting to work through emotional, social or chemical use issues. The Von Wald Shelter is a temporary 12 bed co-educational residence for youth ages 14 to 19 offering meals, group and mentor support, safety, accredited education, recreation and social activities. Services are free of charge and available on a walk-in basis. Located in Rochester, Minnesota at 4435 Bamber Valley Road SW. For immediate assistance, contact: Christina McCormick, Associate Director at (507) 280- 0110.
<https://www.180degrees.org/>
- c. St.Lukes – The Damascus Way is a halfway house program serving men with criminal histories. Assistance in finding employment, permanent housing, and a support community is offered. But more than that, we provide opportunities for our residents to consider the deeper issues of their lives. Those who come to Damascus Way are here because they have lost their freedom. The misuse of freedom results in being locked up in addictions, destructive behaviors, and ultimately, behind iron bars. The Rochester program, serving the Tri-County area of Dodge-Fillmore-Olmsted and all of southeastern MN, has 55 beds in two locations. Men involved with the Minnesota Department of Corrections on Work Release and DFO Community Corrections referrals are all eligible along with those who have a criminal past. We also accept those who are seeking a sober living environment. (763) 545-6558.
Email: <https://damascusway.com/contact/> Website: <https://damascusway.com/>