



CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY WEEK #5: Shelter the Homeless

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29 • Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a • Luke 14:1, 7-14

This is the fifth Works of Mercy week observed in the Archdiocese where all parishes focus upon a work of mercy during the week. Thus far, we have joined other parishes in focusing upon the following: give drink to the thirsty, visit the imprisoned, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. This week's focus is shelter the homeless.

Some Questions Homeless Face (see a full listing on the website):

- How do I get a primary doctor when I don't have insurance?
- How can I obtain transportation to places outside of walking distance?
- How do I go about getting a car for work?
- Are there mentors to help me get my GED?
- Will someone teach me how to cook?
- Where can I get a bus pass?
- Where can I get hygiene supplies?
- Where can I get clothes?
- Where do I go to find family housing?
- Where can I go for help with alcohol addiction? Many places are filled.
- How can I afford vaccinations for my children?
- Where can I get my eyes tested? How will I pay for glasses?
- What address will I use as a residence if my child or I am sick?
- Will I receive a just day's pay for a just day's work?
- Will I be respected for who I am?

Local Housing Programs:

Teresa Shelter provides a safe place for all women and children who find themselves homeless due to circumstances beyond their control. The shelter's staff work with each woman to meet short-term goals and objectives by connecting them to needed resources and services.

Maria House offers transitional housing and programs designed to encourage women to make choices that are appropriate for them, to develop personal responsibility, to live independently in permanent housing and to achieve their full potential.

The Dubuque Rescue Mission (D.R.M.) is a community offering hospitality, spiritual hope, food, shelter, clothing and job development to those in need. For 81 years, the D.R.M. has served the needs of the poor offering overnight shelter for 45 men per night; providing over 230 meals a day to those seeking food and fellowship and providing clothing and other material goods to those with no means to pay. This amounts to 16,000 bed nights each year and over 80,000 meals.

Did you know there are only about 125 shelter beds available in Dubuque and they are almost always at capacity?

Almost Home is based out of St. Johns Church (1276 White Street, Dubuque). There are two specific branches: *The Guest House* provides emergency and immediate homeless shelter for men with a bed and a place to shower each night. It also functions as a seasonal, overflow shelter, open when other Dubuque agencies are full. *The Open Closet* (known as the store with no price tags) provides clothing, shoes, and essential household items to the public in need, free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis. It daily serves people who have nowhere else to meet their most basic needs such as a bed, a new outfit for an interview and/or assistance with a resume. Check out <http://www.almosthomedbq.org> for more information. They partner with local churches to try and find some volunteers to staff the shelter. Proceeds from the Ecumenical Garage Sale at the Cathedral on September 17 support this program.

Hope House is a Catholic Worker House of Hospitality which provides food, clothing and shelter. A guest's length of stay is determined when talking with one of the workers. Overnight guests share two common bathrooms with showers. Community meals are served on Sundays and Mondays and average from 25 to 30 people on those nights. Hope House is a weapon, smoke, alcohol, drug, and violence-free environment in which guests can feel safe about their person and their belongings. Ordinarily, guests are expected to be at the evening meal, to participate in weekly meetings and recreation, and to contribute to the upkeep of the house.

What can I do?

- Dubuque Catholic Churches are teaming up to build a **Habitat for Humanity house (767 University Ave.) our parish took a volunteer block on September 10, 2016 from 8AM-2PM.** You can volunteer for any hours you are available. No special skills are required. Lunch is provided. If you are interested, please RSVP to Deacon Paul Peckosh (peckosh@gmail.com).
- **Volunteer at one of the local shelters** (above).
- **Be informed** about affordable housing in Dubuque ▼

Affordable Housing in Dubuque

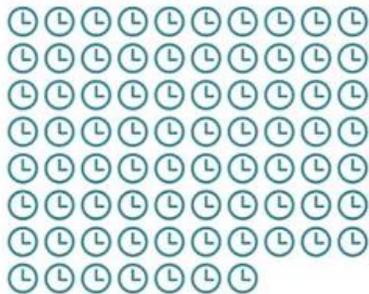
The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program is the primary way the City of Dubuque provides affordable housing. This program provides safe and affordable housing opportunities to people who can least afford them. Gone are the days when "affordable housing" meant "housing projects". Today, affordable housing looks like the home next door-- thanks to the ability of participants to choose where they want to live.

In order to afford the average 2 bedroom apartment, Dubuque renters need to work



77 HOURS PER WEEK

AT THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE



There are 325 housing units affordable to households earning less than 30% AMI.

There are 2,560 households in Dubuque earning less than 30% AMI. More than half of these households pay over 50% of their income for rent. Housing Choice Vouchers help families, the elderly, and those with disabilities afford quality housing.



AMI is Area Median Income



A person working full-time at minimum wage earns less than \$15,000 per year.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development 2008-2012 CHAS Data

27%

of households in Dubuque rent. The estimated mean renter wage in Dubuque is \$10.61 per hour. A person working full time at \$10.61 per hour earns about \$22,000 per year and would income qualify for the Housing Choice Voucher program. There is a need for more property owners to accept vouchers. The Housing Choice Voucher program allows owners to price their units competitively in-line with fair market rents and provide affordable housing opportunities for low-income households.

Source: 2016 National Low Income Housing Coalition Report on Wages and Rent

Dubuque landlords accepting housing vouchers received

\$4 million in HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

IN FISCAL YEAR 2016

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR OVER 875 HOUSEHOLDS



As of June 1, 2016 the HCV Program reports:

50% of participants are elderly and/or disabled

47% of households are families with children

678 households waiting for vouchers

630 average days spent waiting for a voucher

To learn more about the Housing Choice Voucher Program call 563-589-4230 or visit us at www.cityofdubuque.org/hcv

Prayer for Homeless People

Hear our prayer today for all women and men, boys and girls who are homeless this day. For those sleeping under bridges, on park benches, in doorways or bus stations.

For those who can only find shelter for the night but must wander in the daytime.

For families broken because they could not afford to pay the rent.

For those who have no relatives or friends who can take them in. For those who have no place to keep possessions that remind them who they are.

For those who are afraid and hopeless. For those who have been betrayed by our social safety net.

For all these people, we pray that you will provide shelter, security and hope.

We pray for those of us with warm houses and comfortable beds that we not be lulled into complacency and forgetfulness.

Jesus, help us to see your face in the eyes of every homeless person we meet so that we may be empowered through word and deed, and through the political means we have, to bring justice and peace to those who are homeless. Amen.