

Sanctuary shelter needs volunteers, donations

By Colette Cowman
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BOISE — Sanctuary, an interfaith emergency shelter for the homeless, is now open in a building at 1317 West Jefferson, Boise, and is sheltering 60 people each night, according to Will Rainford, Diocese of Boise legislative liaison, who was involved in organizing Sanctuary.

Boise-area faith leaders who are members of Interfaith Alliance decided they needed to act immediately when nighttime temperatures dipped close to zero in November and they recognized that there was not enough shelter available to meet the needs of Boise homeless. They first opened Sanctuary in the First Congregational United Church of Christ, all the while looking for a permanent building in the downtown area.

After Bishop Michael Driscoll had a letter read at Masses in Boise-area churches before Christmas urging people to support the effort with financial contributions, food and volunteers,

to Corpus Christi Day Shelter in the mornings for breakfast and showers.

Currently, families who are sheltered at Sanctuary are sleeping on cots that were donated by Corpus Christi Parish, Payette. The men at the shelter are sleeping on the cement floor in sleeping bags with blankets donated by the LDS Church.

"We desperately need more cots, and we need more volunteers," Rainford said. "We need 74 volunteers a week, and we have only one third of those right now.

Volunteers are needed to serve food or walk the neighborhood in teams between 4:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. to maintain safety. Other volunteers are needed for two shifts in the shelter to maintain safety and attend to needs of residents. The shifts are 4:30 to 11 p.m. and 10:45 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Other needs at Sanctuary are a bike rack, one or two microwave ovens, hot choco-

late and cough drops in bulk and money for day-to-day operations.

"We are trying to hire a shelter supervisor so that the faith leader representatives don't have to work overnight shifts," Rainford said.

To volunteer call Majajane (ma-ha-jane) at 409-0333. To donate resources or money for Sanctuary call Rainford 890-0048 and leave a message or send an email to: willrainford@boisestate.edu.

The Sanctuary shelter, Rainford said, is "a Christmas miracle you can actually witness in the eyes of the residents."

"It is not easy from the staffing, resourcing and funding point of view, but it is absolutely worthwhile," he said.

Rainford said Boise-area faith leaders plan to gather Jan. 13 to talk about the continuum of services for the homeless in Boise and permanent solutions to homelessness. They are planning an Interfaith Homeless Summit for late spring.

Sanctuary

to drugs or alcohol or have mental health problems. All have remained appropriate. We have had no incidents. Trained staff members are awake and alert all night long at the shelter."

He said residents can go to Sanctuary at 6 p.m. each day and must be out by 8 a.m. St. Paul's Baptist Church, which is near the Jefferson building, has provided space to feed Sanctuary residents. The Hari Krishnas provide food four nights a week there. Methodists from Cathedral of the Rockies do a dinner each Sunday night. Residents can go

Nick Guho of Holy Apostles Parish, Meridian, volunteered his building on Jefferson to house Sanctuary. He is currently renting the building to Interfaith Alliance for \$1 per month. Interfaith Alliance is paying the insurance and utilities. The Alliance has filed for a conditional use permit from Boise City. A conditional use permit hearing is scheduled for mid-January.

"We are currently sheltering 60 people, which is the capacity," said Rainford. "Roughly a quarter of the residents are women and children. Families and children live separately from single men. About a fifth of the residence are addicted