

SHELTER: Guests may receive socks and hats and hand-warmers

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of their time and resources, the Sisters Cold Weather Shelter has quickly become a reality,” said co-chair of the shelter project, Lois Kaping of Westside Church, which is hosting the shelter for the month of January.

Julie Prather, owner of Martolli’s Pizza, is an example of support from the business community. She has offered to donate pizza for shelter guests on those nights that aren’t covered by volunteers providing food. The first pizza night will be Friday, January 6.

“The shelter probably wouldn’t even be close to opening if it weren’t for the help of the Shepherd’s House in Bend,” Kaping explained. “They came to meetings to answer questions and give input, train volunteers, donated supplies, and we are contracting with them to fill the majority of our midnight-to-7 a.m. shifts.”

Until the shelter has its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, Shepherd’s House is accepting any monetary donations for SCWS and passing it on to Sisters. Tax-deductible monetary donations can be made to Shepherd’s House Ministries, designated for Sisters’ shelter, and mailed to Westside Church, P.O. Box 1045, Sisters 97759. A receipt will be sent to the donor.

The shelter update phone number for guests and volunteers is 541-639-7321. The message will be updated every day, seven days a week, by 2 p.m. Updates will include if the nighttime temperature is forecast to drop below 32 degrees, if the shelter will be open that night, the

shelter location, and hours of operation. Updates will also be posted on the Sisters Cold Weather Shelter Facebook page. For the month of January, the shelter is housed at Westside Church, 442 Trinity Way, Sisters.

Shelter guests may check in between 6 and 10 p.m., and will be asked to complete a simple registration form on their first visit to the shelter. After checking in and before the lights are dimmed at 10 p.m., guests will be offered a simple evening meal, coffee, and snacks, and have the opportunity to watch movies, play board games, read, work on puzzles, and socialize. Between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., any conversations need to be conducted by whispering so guests who are sleeping will not be disturbed.

When checking in, guests may receive a new pair of socks, a knitted hat, hand warmer packets, or other items needed by those who are living in the elements.

At the request of the fire marshal, when checking in, guests will be asked to put any lighters and matches into a plastic bag with their name on it to be kept by the volunteers on duty for safe keeping until guests leave in the morning. There is a designated smoking area outside, and guests may retrieve their lighter or matches when going out for a smoke.

Guests are asked not to bring any weapons into the shelter, for the safety of everyone there. If a guest has the appropriate papers indicating that a pet is a certified service/therapy dog, the animal may come into the shelter. Again, for the safety and comfort of all guests and volunteers, the shelter is unable to accommodate other dogs.

Guests and volunteers will work together in the morning to clean up the shelter and put

all materials away to be ready to leave no later than 7 a.m. This is a shared facility, graciously offered by Westside Church, and it is important that everyone respect the space. Before leaving, guests will be offered breakfast and may take food for lunch with them.

Donated items for the shelter may be dropped off at the church between 5 and 6 p.m. or at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore and marked for the shelter. Money is always welcome and will help pay for the men from Shepherd’s House who will be monitoring many of the late-night shifts. Another much appreciated item is a Tracfone card available at Bi-Mart, for the shelter cell phone.

The pantry was well stocked when the shelter opened for its first night, due to the generosity of businesses and individuals in the community. Prior to opening Sunday night, community members were arriving with bags of groceries and paper products. One woman put together personal hygiene kits in plastic bags containing everything from toothpaste and toilet paper to a few dollars. Heartwarmers provided handmade fleece blankets, Best Western Ponderosa Lodge donated bedding and toiletries, and oral hygiene products came from Deschutes Endodontics and Dr. Thomas Rheuben.

To sign up to volunteer, go to the SCWS Facebook page and look for the post with the big blue note that says “Sign up today, it’s easy” and click on it. No login or password



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Volunteers and donors have packed a fully stocked pantry at the shelter.

is needed, and a reminder for assigned shifts or meals will automatically be sent to you.

The need for volunteers to sign up for shifts and to provide meals will continue through March 2017. As supplies are used up, there will be a need to replenish them — personal hygiene products, laundry detergent for washing the bedding, snacks and other food items, warm clothing,

and paper products.

Any questions or need for more information can be posted on the Facebook page, and a timely response will be forthcoming.

Family Access Network representative Dawn Cooper was working the first shift Sunday evening.

“I’ve been wanting to see this happen for years. I have been excited all day to come work tonight.”



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