

HUMAN CONCERNS COMMISSION  
THE MARY AND JOSEPH SHELTER  
OUTREACH TO THE HOMELESS

WHAT (and Where) IS THE MARY AND JOSEPH SHELTER?

Do you wonder where they go on these brutally cold nights, the too numerous homeless men and women you pass on Chicago's streets? The Franciscan House of Mary and Joseph Shelter at Harrison and California on Chicago's near west side welcomes 246 of them as guests every night of the year. In the spirit of St. Francis they offer supper, breakfast, showers, a weekly medical clinic, some case management services and unconditional acceptance. The primary focus of this emergency shelter which provides 8,700 warm beds per year, is to provide services that preserve the lives and dignity of this, often desperate, population while engaging them in efforts to improve their lives.

The Franciscan Outreach Association, which serves the homeless at yet a second location, the Marquardt Center at 1645 West LeMoyné in Chicago, relies in large part on 10 to 12 full-time, live-in volunteers, 2,500 part time volunteers and the generosity of private donors to sustain its life-giving ministry each year.

HOW DID ST. JOSEPH PARISH BECOME INVOLVED?

In accord with our mission to respond to the needs of God's people both physically and emotionally, St. Joseph parish has been supporting this ministry since the early 1990's when parishioners Bert and Nancy Schroeder, sold their Libertyville home and business and moved into the Mary and Joseph Shelter where they lived as supervisors for several years. Inspired by their selfless commitment, the parish has been sending volunteers and food to the FOA Mary and Joseph Shelter on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month to greet and serve supper to the 246 homeless men and women who find shelter there each night. Money to purchase the food is raised at the Bake Sale held each October. The parish Giving Tree and Lenten Almsgiving Project always include the needs of the Mary and Joseph Shelter and the Human Concerns Commission funds are also shared.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Yes, you can share your blessings with the "least of our brethren." St. Joseph Parish is ALWAYS seeking volunteers, two to four people, high school age and above, to greet, serve and bring food to the homeless guests at the Mary and Joseph Shelter on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of every month. The volunteers leave Libertyville at 5:00pm from December through March and 6:00pm for the remainder of the year and return to Libertyville by 9:00 or 10:00pm. It is our goal to show some respect, courtesy and compassion to these marginalized people who are ignored, or worse, throughout the day. Their good-natured gratitude for our efforts is humbling.

If you can help, please contact Randy Nipper, 847-573-1763, [rtnipper@aol.com](mailto:rtnipper@aol.com).

If you wish to learn more about how you can help the Franciscan Outreach Association serve the homeless in Chicago with your talents or treasure, check out their website, [franoutreach.org](http://franoutreach.org) which describes their mission, services and their need for volunteers AND donations. Click on "What's New" to sign up for continuing e-mails and links to testimonials offered by guests who have been "rescued."