



St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter

Providing Nightly Emergency Shelter

www.StJohnHomelessShelter.org

January 2012

LOCAL BUSINESSES SUPPORT SHELTER

Top: Shelter staff receive funds from Schreiber Food's Barb Strutz, and Kay Vandenplas.



Right: Schreiber Foods employees serving breakfast to co-workers.



► Schreiber Foods and employees, once again delivered a great gift to St. John's. Through a fund raising breakfast, served by co-workers, employees raised \$901 and served 100 people. Schreiber Foods matched the donation for a total of \$1802. This donation was designated for the 'Father Guy Boot and Bus Pass Fund', as was the wonderful St. John the Evangelist Parish collection and other individual donations. Guests received warm winter boots to ward off the bitterness of the cold while out in the winter weather. Other guests received bus passes to aid in looking for work.

Schreiber also came through with a last minute appeal for some additional mattresses to accommodate our growing number of guests.

► The BayCare Foundation provided a mini-grant to St. John's to provide general medical supplies. Over-the-counter cold and flu medications, disinfectant wipes, band aids and antiseptic creams were some of the items purchased with the fund.



These are just a few examples of local companies who have helped. A big THANK YOU to all who support St. John's.

NEED GREATER THAN EVER THIS SEASON



My wish is that all reading this will have a healthy and happy 2012. How wonderful if everyone could be guaranteed that wish.

St. John's Homeless Shelter season began Nov. 1st with an accelerated start from previous years. Although each season has brought a progressively higher nightly count, this year has reached record numbers of individuals in need of emergency shelter at St. John's in a very short time.

Lack of jobs, lack of ongoing mental health services and treatment centers for

substance abuse, lack of housing options for individuals caught in a cycle of poverty and despair, leave individuals with few, if any housing options. Thanks to the support of Brown County community individuals and organizations, St. John's has been able to provide shelter to **184** individuals between Nov. 1 and Dec. 31, 2011. That compares to serving **147** guests in the same time period in 2010.

The despair and anxiety on the faces of people that arrive at our doors lessens as days progress at the shelter. Knowing that there is a mat to sleep on, warm and healthy meals served by caring volunteers, hot showers, warm clothing,

and clean fresh smelling bed linens can make the night less threatening and stressful. Realizing there are people who care enough to provide this is sometimes overwhelming to our guests. Many times in their lives, they have often felt no one cared.

Blessings to all supporters of St. John's guests. Your smile, your encouraging words, your donations of food, clothing, gift cards, and dollars are all testament to the goodness in each and every one of you... Thank you on behalf of all of the guests that reside under St. John's roof.

Mary Kelly
[Executive Director](#)

Christmas Presents Received with Delight!

Many times people who donate to charitable causes wonder, "Is my donation appreciated?" Guests at St. John's Shelter this Christmas season would give an overwhelming, "YES!" and "THANK YOU!"



On Christmas, guests were pleasantly surprised to receive gifts from none other than Santa Claus. Many became excited and jittery waiting for Santa to call their name and give them a gift that was made possible by generous families, social and student groups, parishes, organizations, and thoughtful individuals. The presents were totally unexpected, and guests were amazed that someone cared about them. For those who have little hope that anyone cares, a gift—even from those they don't know—was a precious moment.

Around the room one could hear, "I never had such a nice Christmas!" Others expressed, "I never received gifts before!" Still others exclaimed over and over again, "Thank you, thank you so much!"

The Christmas experience was enjoyed by staff and volunteers as they watched the guests' delight and reaction. As one volunteer said, "This is one of those 'priceless' moments."



Thank you to all who made this happen, especially Mike Rudd and Nadine Knight (Mr. and Mrs. Claus).

Thank You from our Annual Appeal

Many of you received an appeal letter in the mail a few weeks ago. Whether you were able to send \$5.00 or \$5,000, your support is greatly appreciated.

Your donations allow us to continue to serve a population that includes: 50% are chronically homeless, 52% live with mental illness, 35% with physical or medical disabilities, and 32% have alcohol issues. Males account for 81% of all homeless at the shelter.

Without you, our supporters, St. John's would be unable to provide these individuals with a "home" during difficult times. Our mission is to provide shelter, food, and clothing to those unable to stay anywhere else. Thank you for continuing to provide a humble home for so many.

Helping Children Understand Homelessness

Talking with children about homelessness can be a challenging topic. Yet, it is something we know they are learning about, whether through their own observations, their parents, or in other ways.

This—and the fact that St. John's receives requests for student visits to the shelter every season—prompted a volunteer initiative this past fall which resulted in the development of an education program.

Before development began, we consulted a number of experienced teachers to assure sensitivity and age-appropriateness, as well as relevance to teachers' curriculum objectives.

Visits will occur between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when shelter guests are not present. Experienced staff and volunteers will lead tours using a planned route through the shelter, select props that drive home key points, and use a script to help them touch on supporting facts.

The visit is intended to answer these questions:

- ⇒ What is a homeless shelter?
- ⇒ What causes homelessness?
- ⇒ What is life like at a homeless shelter?
- ⇒ How does the shelter help people?

The focus with students will always be a positive one. Our goal is to help children understand the struggles of homelessness and to realize that help is available.

As development continues, there will be a program version for the classroom and additional classroom materials for expanded discussion after a shelter visit.

Visits will occur on the last Wednesday of each month, on a first come-first served basis. Dates are Jan. 25, Feb. 29, Mar 28, and Apr. 25.

Interested teachers should contact the shelter at (920) 436-9344 at least two weeks before the visit.



Our Volunteers Make It Happen!

Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped to make this season possible! It has been a busy one so far, and we couldn't do this without you!

Our need for volunteers has increased as our numbers have climbed. Primarily, we need more help with hospitality roles. We also have some needs in laundry, and office/welcoming. In addition, we are looking for people willing to work an occasional overnight evening shift.

Some people leave for the winter, so I anticipate some gaps in the schedule. You can give as little as one shift a month! Volunteer descriptions are on our web site at www.stjohnhomelessshelter.org/volunteer.

For questions or an application, contact Rebecca at 436-9344 x203 or VolunteerandPromotions@StJohnHomelessShelter.org

Thanks for sharing your time and talents!

VOLUNTEER TRAINING OFFERED

Lead Volunteer training will be on Tuesday, Jan. 24 from 4 - 4:45 pm for current volunteers.

New Volunteer orientation and training will be on Tuesday, Feb. 7 from 4 - 4:45 pm for current or new volunteers.

Both trainings will be held at the shelter at 411 St. John Street (Entrance on the 400 block of S. Jefferson St., on the north side of the building)

Mike Scolare — Lead Support Staff



Helping others is a big part of Mike Scolare's life. So when he returned to Wisconsin after time overseas as a missionary, working at St. John's Homeless Shelter seemed like a natural transition for him. Mike saw news coverage of the shelter and said it seemed like a great opportunity to continue helping others, so he called the shelter to offer his services. He arrived in 2007 and is now part of the lead support staff. Mike coordinates and supervises shelter volunteers and guests, solves problems, and makes sure the needs of shelter

guests are being met. Working at the shelter has been everything he had hoped for.

"There's been some guests, who four years ago, their lives were wrecks. Everything was going wrong for them," Mike said. "Now, they're on the rebound. They seem to be doing better. They're in their own apartments. People just gathered around them and gave them the support system they needed. When I see something like that, it just makes me want to keep going because I

know it's not hopeless."

Mike is entering another new chapter in his life. He was just ordained an Episcopalian priest on December 3rd and is assisting at St. Anne's Episcopal Church in De Pere. That means he'll be cutting back his responsibilities at St. John's shelter and becoming part of the regular support staff, but he says still continuing with the effort to help people, who've reached rock bottom, to find their way back up.



Boots purchased from the Father Guy Boot and Bus Pass Fund

"I found out from talking to other people that St. John's is someplace where you can get back on your feet faster cause the people are more helpful and dedicated and they really understand where the resources are. They give you a lot of respect and a lot of understanding and the thing is, as long as you're helping yourself, the more help they'll give." - a guest

Friends and Family Remembered at Memorial Service for the Homeless

For a third year, people gathered at St. John the Evangelist Church to remember those who died while living on the streets. This special Memorial Service for the homeless was held in conjunction with the National Coalition for the Homeless. They encourage communities across the nation to hold events close to the longest night of the year. Our event was organized by the St. John Homeless Shelter Chaplaincy Team.

The prayer service was attended by over one hundred people who gathered to remember those who have died locally as well as in solidarity with those remembered in cities across the country. The service began with a presentation of shoes to represent the people remembered, both known and unknown.

Homeless advocate Karina O'Malley was invited to offer the evening's reflection.

Recognized in the community for her many efforts to address homelessness, including working with her husband Lou to open and operate Green Bay's first homeless shelter in 1987, Karina retired from teaching sociology at St. Norbert College and currently works with Community Voices In Action, a group who advocate and educate about issues connected with homelessness and housing. In her reflection, Karina challenged the Brown County community to establish a permanent memorial for homeless veterans who have died. Two others offered words of remembrance for a friend and a family member.

During the service, a candle was lit for the twelve homeless individuals who died in 2011 in Brown County. A thirteenth candle was added to remember those who died unknown and unnamed. Those attending were invited to

bring forth candles as a way of adding their prayers of remembrance. Joined in the belief that medical care, housing and physical safety are basic needs that should be available to everyone, the congregation prayed, "Lord, build us into a spiritual house".



Special Thanks to Ed Winney, Sr. Fran Bangert, Susan Perrault, and Sr. Sally Ann Brickner who served as prayer leaders for this service; to Maureen Rompa, Skip Jones, David and Dan Robinson for leading the music; to Carrie Gusmer for serving as Interpreter for the Deaf, and members of Citizen Voices In Action (CVIA) for their participation and assistance with the planning of the service.

LIFE-LONG GREEN BAY RESIDENT UNEXPECTEDLY HOMELESS

After taking care of others for nearly thirty years as a registered nurse, Vicky found herself needing help and a place to stay. A brutal assault left her hospitalized for several weeks and physically and mentally unable to return to work. When her money ran out, she found herself in a place she never expected to be...living in a shelter.

After getting items stolen during a stay in a Milwaukee shelter, Vicky returned home to Green Bay, and eventually found St. John's shelter in January, 2010. "They were awesome," Vicky said. "They helped give you job leads. They gave you bus passes. They helped you find a place to live. If you needed somebody to talk to, they were always there."

What most impressed Vicky was how the staff at St. John's made her feel like a human being

again. "At the other shelters, you were just treated like a number. You were automatically distrusted just by the virtue that you were there," she said. At St. John's, Vicky said, she felt 'compassion, love and respect.'

Despite the tough times, Vicky said she looks back fondly at her three-month stay at St. John The Evangelist. "I think of some of the fun we had there," she said. "Telling stories about ourselves or our kids."

Now living in a nice apartment the St. John's staff helped find for her, Vicky's life is back on track. "Life's pretty good these days. I can't complain."

*"It's nice to know that people think you're actually **a person** and **you matter**." - a current shelter guest*

HELP US REACH OUT TO THE HOMELESS

To mail a donation:

Write and send checks to:

St. John Homeless Shelter
P.O. Box 1743
Green Bay, WI 54305

To make a donation online or view our Wish List:

Please visit our website:

[www. StJohnHomelessShelter.org](http://www.StJohnHomelessShelter.org)

and click on "Donate"

To become a volunteer:

Please visit our website:

[www. StJohnHomelessShelter.org](http://www.StJohnHomelessShelter.org)

and click on "Volunteer"

*Thanks to all who help in
any way!*



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