

ASHLAND WINTER HOMELESS & EMERGENCY SHELTERS 2017-18

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Volunteer opportunities abound, as faith-based members of churches, synagogues, and non-religiously-affiliated members of our community, in partnership with the City of Ashland, are again offering 5 nights of shelter each week to the un-housed in our community during the cold winter months. Each shelter volunteer is paired with a more experienced host so no one will ever be hosting alone. A background check is required for hosts at any of the City-sponsored sites such as Pioneer Hall or any city-owned buildings used for Emergency Shelters. Other locations have no prerequisites other than a willingness to serve.

This past winter our all-volunteer shelter program provided 112 nights of shelter (8 of those Emergency or Special Shelters) from mid-November to mid-April. We housed record numbers of guests, ranging from between 25 to 52 people each night. The shelters utilized more than 120 volunteers, with at least 2 volunteer hosts spending each night. An additional 119 volunteers provided support to those spending the night (averaging 3 volunteers/ night) to help serve food and warm beverages, welcome and sign-in guests, launder blankets or help with general clean up the next morning.

Beginning in **mid-November** and continuing through **mid-April** each year there is a "no frills" overnight shelter on each **Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights** in Ashland at the following locations:

***SUNDAY NIGHTS: PIONEER HALL**, 73 Winburn Way across from Lithia Park *Sponsored by The United Congregational Church of Christ (UCC), The South Mountain Friends Meeting (Quakers) & The City of Ashland.* Hours: 7:30 p.m.-7:30 a.m. Well-behaved Pets OK. No unaccompanied minors permitted at this site. **(Background check required of hosts at this site.)**

***MONDAY NIGHTS: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**, Calvin Hall, 1615 Clark Ave. (Corner of Walker Ave. & Siskiyou Blvd.) Hours: 7:30 p.m.- 7:30 a.m. the next morning. Families & Well-behaved pets are welcome at this site.

***TUESDAY NIGHTS: PIONEER HALL**, 73 Winburn Way across from Lithia Park *Sponsored by Temple Emek Shalom, Unitarian Universalists & the City of Ashland.* Hours: 7:30 p.m.-7:30 a.m. Well-behaved Pets OK. No unaccompanied minors permitted at this site. **(Background check required of hosts at this site.)**

***WEDNESDAY NIGHTS: TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH**, 44 N. 2nd Street
Hours: 7:30 p.m.-7:30 a.m. next morning. Families & Well-behaved pets allowed here.

***THURSDAY NIGHTS: PIONEER HALL**, 73 Winburn Way across from Lithia Park. *Sponsored by Temple Emek Shalom, Unitarian Universalists & the City of Ashland.* Hours: 7:30 p.m.- 7:30 a.m. Well-behaved pets ok. No unaccompanied minors permitted at this site. **(*Background check required of hosts at Pioneer Hall.)**

***FRIDAY NIGHTS: PIONEER HALL**, 73 Winburn Way across from Lithia Park. *Sponsored by Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice & the City of Ashland.* Hours: 7:30 p.m.- 7:30 a.m. Well-behaved pets ok. No unaccompanied minors permitted at this site. **(*Background check required of hosts at Pioneer Hall.)**

HISTORY OF HOMELESS SHELTERS IN ASHLAND:

In January of 2007 two very kind Ashland citizens -- Ruth Coulthard and Barbie Breneiser -- began offering on their own, Emergency-Only Winter Shelters at the Presbyterian Church. In the winter of 2009 they began hosting regular Sunday night shelters for the homeless in addition to the Emergency Shelters from December to February. In 2012, a larger group of volunteers joined with them to offer 3 nights of shelter each week from November to April. By January 2013, we were able to offer 4 regular nights of shelter each week. With the addition of the Sunday Night Pioneer Hall shelters beginning 1-1-17 and Friday Night Pioneer shelters beginning 12-15-17, we now offer 6 nights of shelter each week.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

We periodically provide group training for community members who volunteer to be shelter hosts, an orientation to volunteering. It isn't a long or extremely detailed process, but it's good to go through all the "what if" situations with people who have been doing this work for some time.

If you are unable to attend one of the trainings, you can still volunteer. We provide a video recording of the Orientation is available at <http://WinterShelters.com> thanks to a generous grant from the Carpenter Foundation to the Ashland Cultural of Peace Commission (ACPC).

Also, we would have you "apprentice" along with other, more experienced hosts.

NOTE: If you would like to volunteer to host at the Pioneer Hall Shelters or the Emergency Shelters, you must first have a background check done.

There are ***NO Prerequisites*** required to volunteer at any of the other shelter sites.

To reassure you, in the many years that overnight shelters have been happening in Ashland, there have been relatively few problems. The police occasionally bring people to us who are in need of shelter, and they are readily available and respond quickly and professionally on the rare occasions that we need to call them for assistance.

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

In addition to our regular weekly shelter nights, whenever the temperature is projected to drop below 20 degrees or severe weather conditions are predicted to occur, the Ashland City Manager authorizes an Emergency Shelter to open in a city-owned facility, provided there are at least 2 community volunteers (ideally one male and one female) available to oversee the shelter. Whenever an Emergency Shelter is called, the City Manager notifies the Volunteer Shelter Coordinator, who then sends out an email & phones Shelter Volunteers stating the date, time & location of the Emergency Shelter. As soon as 2 volunteers are found who agree to host the shelter, announcements are put out to the police and help lines, and signs are posted around town and online, directing people where to go for shelter.

To find out if there is an Emergency Shelter on any night other than the regular Sunday-Friday nights (i.e., Saturday nights), notices will be posted at the following places:

- [Facebook.com/AshlandWinterShelters](https://www.facebook.com/AshlandWinterShelters)
- Options for Homeless Residents of Ashland (OHRA) website: www.homelessoptions.org (under "Projects/ Winter Shelters") Phone: 541-631-2235
- Bulletin Boards at: The Information Kiosk on the Plaza in downtown, Shop n' Kart & Ashland Food Coop
- On the door of: Pioneer Hall, Ashland Emergency Food Bank, Henry's Laundromat, City of Ashland's main office on the Plaza, Community Development Building & DHS office

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer host for the Emergency Shelters, you must have had a background check in advance, since Emergency Shelters usually happen with very little prior notice.

BACKGROUND CHECK INSTRUCTIONS

To get a background check, you go to the Ashland Police Department at **1155 East Main Street** and tell the person at the window that you plan to be a volunteer for the Winter Homeless shelters and that you need to have a background check done. Be sure to bring a photo ID with you. They will do a computerized background check based on your date of birth. You will get the results immediately.

The red flags that they are looking for with background checks are:

- Conviction of a felony in the last 7 years
- Conviction of a misdemeanor in the last 3 years
- Applicant is subject of a pending misdemeanor or felony violation investigation

There should be **no charge** to you for this service as the City of Ashland has agreed to cover the cost of the background checks. If there is a question about what shows up on the computerized check then they will want to do a more in-depth, fingerprint-based background check that takes longer to get the results back. The background checks are good for 3 years. Additionally, if you have had a background check done within the last 2 years and can show proof of that, then you don't have to be re-checked.

HOW THE SHELTERS WORK

WHAT YOU SHOULD & SHOULD NOT BRING WITH YOU TO THE SHELTER

BRING:

- Cell Phone & Charger
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Extra Batteries
- Pillow & sleeping pad
- Sleeping bag or blanket
- Water bottle
- Shoes that are easy to slip on & off
- Comfortable, loose-fitting clothes to sleep in
- A fanny pack for valuables
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Pen/Paper or notebook
- Reading material in case you're up at night

DO NOT BRING:

- * Any expensive jewelry or rings
- * A purse
- * Anything valuable (leave home or locked in car)

HOST JOB DESCRIPTION

Two volunteers will serve as overnight hosts each night (one male & one female when possible), and sometimes a third host will be scheduled as well. New volunteers will work with a more experienced co-host. Someone once described what it's like to sleep at the shelter as similar to the kind of sleep you get with a new baby; you've always got one ear open!

Volunteers arrive by 7:15 p.m. and open the doors to guests by 7:30 p.m. Please be respectful and responsible if church events require a delay in opening. Check in with co-hosts before guests arrive to familiarize yourself with the space and share any concerns. Agree on your sleeping areas and arrange your belongings. There should always be one host near each exit. Plug in the hot water dispenser in the kitchen. Bring in any stored bedding or pads from the storage space.

GREETING THE GUESTS: Welcome the guests by introducing yourself by first name and asking their name. Whatever name they choose to use is fine. Many guests have a “street name.” Write guest’s name in Shelter log- book or paper file.

Review with guests the rules of the shelter:

- HOURS: 7:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m.
- NO DRUGS, ALCOHOL, or SMOKING IN SHELTER
- NO WEAPONS
- SPEAK RESPECTFULLY; NO Swearing or Disruptive Behavior
- No guests are allowed in the kitchen
- Quiet hours are from 9:00 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.
- Last call for cigarettes, or to take dogs out for a bathroom break is 9:30 p.m. Remind smokers to use ashtrays and smoke away from the building in designated smoking areas.
- **LIGHTS OUT & doors are locked at 9:30 p.m.**
- Assure guests that **they may leave at any time, but** once out, **NO RETURN AFTER DOORS ARE LOCKED** (without special prior arrangement, like taking a dog out) **until 6:30 a.m.**
- All guests must exit the premises by 7:30 a.m. No Storage of Personal Belongings.

DOGS & PETS:

Well-behaved pets are permitted at all the shelters. Guests must be responsible for cleaning up after their dogs and dogs must be relatively friendly to humans and other guest dogs and pets.

SLEEPING AREAS:

This is a “NO FRILLS” Shelter. There will likely be some bedding that has been donated, but none is promised. We do promise a warm, dry floor. Show guests the sleeping area and encourage them to arrange their bedding where they like. Families with children (except in Pioneer Hall Shelters) should be provided the most private space available (perhaps a screened corner). Relay special needs information of families, seniors, sick, or disabled to the experienced Shelter Coordinator. Give directions to bathroom facilities. “Sorry, no guests may use the kitchen space.” You may microwave something for someone, or help with paper plates and utensils if guests have something to eat. We try to supply instant oatmeal, instant hot chocolate, and coffee and tea. Often volunteers bring breakfast for the guests. Sometimes the guests bring food to share in the evenings when they first arrive.

TIME TO VISIT AND RELAX: Explain the morning plan. (Coffee and instant oatmeal can be made at some sites.) Let folks know that their help with clean up before departure in the morning would be appreciated. Let them know if you foresee the shelter being open again the next night, and direct them to look for signs posted in the downtown Plaza Kiosk or on Pioneer Hall door if an Emergency Shelter is anticipated.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:

Disruptive behavior is an opportunity for creative problem solving: Snoring? Earplugs. Impatience with crowding? A private corner. Still lacking cooperation? “I’m **so** sorry, but you are going to have to leave. I know it’s hard to be in this crowded space. Do you need a blanket to take with you?”

If necessary for safety or health reasons, hosts should not hesitate to call 9-1-1. (This does not happen very often.) The Ashland Police are a very good resource. The few times hosts have needed assistance, they have come quickly and were very respectful in the ways that they dealt with uncooperative guests, quietly escorting them outside, so as not to wake up others.

If a guest complains of severe pain that is not easily resolved by simple suggestions, or feels that he or she needs to go to the Emergency Room, it is important to call an ambulance, and let them evaluate the problem to decide whether or not to transport them to the Emergency Room. Two hosts should always remain on site; never leave one host alone at the shelter. Each Shelter will have a first aid kit that includes basic first aid supplies along with emergency phone numbers to call for assistance. When in

doubt about what to do, call 9-1-1.

IN THE MORNING: Usual wake up time is 6:30 a.m. Unlock the doors, turn on the lights and prepare hot beverages as needed. Often there are volunteers available for this and to serve any breakfast that is available. After guests leave, try to debrief with your co-host. Pass on specific problems and suggestions to the Volunteer Coordinator or the Site Coordinator, if you are comfortable doing so. All guests must be gone by 7:30 a.m. At Pioneer Hall, the hosts are responsible for sweeping and mopping floors and cleaning the restrooms. Most days one or more guests will stay to help with cleanup. Remember to lock doors and windows, turn off lights and turn down thermostat as required. Each site may have slightly different protocols for closing up shelters.

HOW TO SIGN UP

Volunteers for all the sites sign up using an online Google Doc. All the shelter sites are listed by the day of the week. For example, Presbyterian Church on Monday nights is shown first with all the Monday nights of the season. Following is Pioneer Hall Tuesday nights, etc.

Here is the link to the Google Doc site where you sign up to volunteer:

tinyurl.com/homeless-sign-up

To sign up, type or copy the entire web address link above and then paste it into your browser. It will take you to a Google Doc called "**Homeless Winter Shelter Volunteer Sign-up 2017-18**". (You do not need a password to access the list.) Once there, if you *scroll down the page*, you will see each of the five shelters listed under each individual shelter's name, along with the name & contact information of the Coordinator(s) for each shelter site.

Along the left side of that section is listed the day of the week and date of each shelter from November 12, 2017 to April 15, 2018. If you see a blank to the right of the date, under the headings of **Overnight Host #1 & #2 + Contact Info**, that's an open space indicating that a volunteer is needed on that date. There should be a minimum of 2 volunteers per date as you read across the page. If you're not planning to spend the night, you can also sign up to help out in the evening or in the morning, or to bring or serve food, under the "Additional Volunteers" column.

Once you find the date, site and position you'd like to volunteer for, just click on the blank space and type in your name and phone #. The program automatically saves what you type. For those volunteers who are unable to sign up by computer just call the Volunteer Coordinator or the Coordinator for that site and one of us can either walk you through the process or just add your name to the signup sheet online for you.

We ask you to put in your phone number so that the site coordinator can call you to remind you if for any reason you don't show up. If you are unable to host on the day you've signed up for, it is EXTREMELY important to notify the Site Coordinator or the Volunteer Coordinator by phone as soon as you know, so that we can find a replacement quickly. We CANNOT OPEN a shelter unless we have at least 2 overnight hosts.

PUBLIC HEALTH FOR VOLUNTEERS: It is very important to all of us that our volunteers stay healthy. Remember to get plenty of sleep & exercise, drink plenty of fluids, eat healthy foods, and don't smoke. There are a few preventative measures that we can all take. Here are few common sense recommendations from our local Public Health professionals:

- Make sure you are up to date on recommended vaccines, including this season's flu shot, TB skin test, and Hepatitis A.
- Wash your hands often with soap & water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your arm.
- Stay home if you are sick

If you need an immunization or TB test, these services can be accessed by going to the Jackson County Public Health office in Medford at 140 S. Holly Street. NO Appointment Necessary! They are open Mon.-Fri. from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (closed 8-9 a.m. the 4th Wed. of each month). They can bill insurance if you have it, or it may be free if you don't have coverage. You can call them at: [541-774-8209](tel:541-774-8209), or look online under Jackson County, OR Health Dept. /Immunizations for more info. Flu shots are readily available at most local pharmacies without an appointment.

In closing, volunteers for the Ashland Winter Homeless Shelters are a group of caring community members who are passionate about providing for the health and safety of the un-housed members of our community. Some volunteers are religious, some are not; they come from many different faiths and practices. Some are ministers, doctors, EMT's, retired nurses, mental health counselors, parents, grandparents, real estate agents, teachers, college students, etc. Age is not the limiting factor for volunteering as we have several volunteers who are in their 80's! The shelters are an all-volunteer endeavor, made possible by many community partnerships.

Thank you for considering joining us as a volunteer to help the most vulnerable members of our community. By giving of yourselves and helping to provide a dry, warm space to sleep, even for one night, you help bring warmth, peace and a brief respite from the storm of living outside without shelter. Please call or email me or other members of our team if you have questions or need help to sign up.

Yours With Gratitude,

Heidi Parker, Volunteer Coordinator
Ashland Winter & Emergency Homeless Shelters
Email: parkershames@gmail.com

Job Descriptions - Ashland Winter Shelters

Evening Volunteers - 1½ hours (7:30-9:00pm)

There are several opportunities to volunteer that do not require spending the night. From opening at 7:30pm until quiet hours at 9pm is the busiest time at the shelters. It really helps to have help getting everyone in out of the cold and settled for the night. You might be asked to distribute sleeping pads and blankets, help guests in sign in and explain rules to the new guests (these are printed and easy to review), make tea/coffee or serve hot beverages, help with light clean up in the kitchen or be a "listener".

- **Listeners** - Listeners come to the shelter in the evening and just sit with guests, usually one-on-one, and simply listen and talk to them. This act of respect and kindness is vital to every person and means so much to those who are now homeless. Every positive human interaction people living on the margin have helps move them away from crisis and closer to stability.
- **Dinner Volunteers** - Several of the congregations who sponsor the shelter have volunteers who bring dinner or breakfast. If you are interested in bringing food, there is a place to signup on the volunteer form and it would be greatly appreciated.

Morning Volunteers - 1½ hours (6:30-8:00am)

The overnight hosts have spent the previous 12 hours at the shelter watching over the guests. Morning comes and they are most likely tired. They have one hour to get everyone up, fold blankets, roll sleeping pads, serve coffee and breakfast and put everything away. Guests leave the shelter by 7:30am. The remaining hosts and helpers spend 30 minutes cleaning the shelter: sweeping, mopping, wiping down the kitchen and two bathrooms, emptying the trash and making sure the outside perimeter of the shelter is tidy. Not all shelters require extensive cleanup. Some have custodial crews that come in the morning. In any case, there are always a few guests who help clean in the morning. With everyone's help we usually get done in 15 minutes! Occasionally there is a need to deliver leftover food or serving trays to the Methodist Church or the Food Bank.

- **Breakfast Volunteers** - Several of the congregations who sponsor the shelter have volunteers who bring dinner or breakfast. If you are interested in bringing food, there is a place to signup on the volunteer form and it would be greatly appreciated.

Overnight Hosts - 12½ hours (7:30pm-8:00am)

Before you can be an overnight host you will need to go to Ashland Police Department, tell them you are a winter shelter volunteer at Pioneer Hall, and fill out the background check form. It's fast, simple and free. The first time you volunteer you will be the 3rd host (in training). There will be 2 other hosts who have done this before. As the third host, you can observe the shelter operation, ask questions, help out as you are able. It is up to you to determine when you are ready to spend the night as a regular host. New hosts are always paired with experienced hosts.

QUESTIONS?

Heidi Parker, ph.#: 541-482-1520; email: parkershames@gmail.com

Phil Johncock, email: CEO@PhilJohncockNetwork.com (Tech Help & Communications)

Kathleen Hering, Cell phone (text OK): 530-210-9886;

Email: kathleen4bees@gmail.com (Shelter questions)

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SITE COORDINATORS:

Presbyterian Shelter: Bob Altaras: ph#: 541-201-0437; email: bobsai@hotmail.com

& Karen Amarotico: ph#: 541-890-6817; email: Karen.amarotico@gmail.com

Trinity Episcopal Shelter:

Peter McBennett, ph#: 541-951-0007; email: petermcb@jeffnet.org

Mary Bonney, ph#: 541-482-9803; email: cccrazycat@icloud.com

Pioneer Hall Shelters:

- Sunday Nights: Vanessa Houk: ph#: 541-690-2807; email: sunriver@gmail.com
- Tuesday Nights: Sharon Harris: ph#: 208-215-1422; email: sharris63@yahoo.com
- Thursday Nights: John Wieczorek: ph.#: 541-482-8230; email: wiz@mind.net
- Friday Nights: Vanessa Houk: ph#: 541-690-2807; email: sunriver@gmail.com

LINK TO SIGN-UP SHEET:

tinyurl.com/homeless-sign-up

THANK YOU!

We are especially grateful to our Community Shelter Partners for their support: Unitarian Universalists (UU's), United Congregational Church of Christ (UCC), South Mountain Friends Meeting (Quakers), First Presbyterian Church, Temple Emek Shalom, Trinity Episcopal, Ashland Culture of Peace Commission, Options for Homeless Residents of Ashland (OHRA), Ashland Community Resource Center (ACRC), Ashland Food Angels, Southern Oregon Success & The Southern Oregon ACEs Training Team, Southern Oregon Jobs With Justice, Uncle Foods Diner, Jackson County Public Health, and The City of Ashland.