

Dear Friends,

Day after day of terribly cold weather and my inbox is filling up with offers to help. "What do you need? How can I help?" are the simple messages. I've also received emails and visits from people who are desperate to help their neighbors or loved ones who are currently homeless. It becomes painfully clear that anyone who refuses to take shelter when it's -10 or worse is not "choosing" to be homeless. They are likely people who have some difficult mental health issues.

Just yesterday, a couple came in and asked about services for their son who has Bipolar Disorder and Schizophrenia. They live here in Evanston and shared that they tried living with him for the last decade but they couldn't do it anymore and he refused to go anywhere that wanted to talk about his mental health. I explained to them that sometimes the worst has to happen before people can receive help. Landing in the emergency room from exposure to the cold might mean that he could be stabilized on his medication while in the hospital. They agreed, acknowledging that when he'd been picked up by police or paramedics before, that he would do better but then he'd refuse treatment and the cycle would restart.

We need more affordable housing. We need more shelter beds while we wait for affordable housing. We need more mental health services. While we wait for things, Connections for the Homeless also needs your financial and volunteer support so that we can care for people as best we can until they can be housed. Please share this email with your friends and coworkers so that we can garner as much support as possible for the following program needs:

Assembling homeless outreach kits: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0444abae23a46-assembling>

Hosting a donation drive for much needed items:
<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050d49aba82ea02-donation> Preparing breakfast for the Hilda's

Place residents: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0444abae23a46-hildas>

For those of you who are cooking dinner for Hilda's Place shelter this week, (Bethel AME, First Congregational Church of Evanston, Sheil Catholic Center, North Shore Country Day School, First Congregational Church of Wilmette, The Mather residents, Catherine Leonard and Baird & Warner Evanston Team), you should prepare food for 18 residents plus the number in your cooking group.

Warmly,

LISA TODD

Community Relations Manager

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* MY EMAIL ADDRESS HAS CHANGED AS OF 08/01/17. PLEASE UPDATE YOUR CONTACTS.