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and please include "Main Street" in your Subject Line

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## We Are In Need Of A Local Pottstown Homeless Shelter Cooperative

As helpful and needed as "One Night At A Time" (ONAT) has been in our area, it has been discontinued as a mobile homeless shelter—becoming a new stationary 50 bed facility located in Norristown, on the grounds of the State Hospital facility. The ONAT program no longer exists in the way that it once had—as a cooperative mobile shelter finding its physical location in different host churches, from Norristown to Pottstown, each month.

The difficulties with administering the ONAT mobile shelter, that covered the entire county, were formidable. And as much as it blessed the homeless community with protection from the elements at night, it operated with difficulty, in obvious need for a permanent location to better serve those needing its help.

ONAT was the only resource for homeless single men and women in the Pottstown area. The new facility, located in Norristown, gained a 70 person waiting list nearly as soon as it opened. There is a huge need, and the problem is growing.

With cold weather here, we need to help our county, and this growing population in need, by providing for them from the private sector, here in the Pottstown area, with a goal of working towards a more permanent and supportive solution for our friends within this population. Churches, businesses, cooperatives, and individuals that care, can help toward this end. This is why we have begun The Ministries at Main Street.

The short term solution to this struggle, is to establish our own cooperative mobile shelter within the Pottstown area, to shelter people through the winter months, with an ultimate goal of organizing a cooperative fixed location long-term.

We need each other, and your help...

Below, we have provided a FAQ about this effort:

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. What do I need to do to be a Host Church?**

**A.** Your church facility will need to be located within Pottstown, or the immediate surrounding areas, enough space to host possibly 30 people, and a willingness to help.

**Q. Would a host church notify the police – or township before hosting?**

**A.** Yes. This will help your officials know that you are hosting and will help them in the event of an emergency.

**Q. If I volunteer as Overnight Staff, what will my responsibilities be?**

**A.** The overnight volunteers will make sure that the food is served, they must stay awake throughout the night, and clean-up in the morning before they leave. There will be at least 2 staff each night, and there will be emergency numbers provided should a need arise. Of course, we do want people to be treated with dignity and respect, requiring everyone to be treated the way we would like to be esteemed.

We hope to grow a community of caring through the cooperative efforts of area churches, the TriCounty Community Network (TCN), community organizations, and individuals who are concerned about the increasingly difficult issues surrounding poverty and the homeless community in our area.

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**Q. If I volunteer as a Staff Driver, what will my responsibilities be?**

**A.** People need to be picked up at the Pottstown Consumer Center on High Street around 10:00 p.m. nightly, and transported back around 6:30 a.m. the following morning. Drivers will use their own vehicles.

**Q. If I volunteer as Laundry Staff, what will my responsibilities be?**

**A.** Launderers will collect bedding only, around 9 a.m. every Thursday from the Host Church location, will hot water-detergent-wash, dry, and fold the laundry, returning it to the Host Church by Friday noon, weekly. They can launder at home or use a Laundromat.

**Q. What types of food should I provided when volunteering to prepare something nightly?**

**A.** We do not expect people to prepare a dinner meal, just something light. Perhaps soup, since people may not have eaten. Fruit, snacks, nuts, cheese, pretzels, peanut butter bread, drinks; and for breakfast – instant oatmeal, fruit, coffee, tea, hot chocolate. We will also need paper products like cups, bowls, plates, plastic spoons and napkins, etc.

**Q. If I volunteer as a Staff Person, how will I know what to do?**

**A.** There will be an Orientation Meeting for those wishing to be Overnight Volunteers, Food Providers, Drivers, Launderers, etc. on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m., St. John's Parish House 75 East Main Street, Pottstown.

**Q. How many people are expected each night?**

**A.** We are expecting around 20 to 30 people when weather is mild. However, the numbers will increase when things turn inclement—very cold, or stormy.

**Q. What about insurance if we are a Host Church?**

**A.** We have developed documents for those we serve that preclude liability for the host church and those on staff. This is in addition to any insurance that most churches already carry.

**Q. What can I donate to help?**

**A.** Bedding; twin size sheets, pillows, pillow cases, twin size blankets, gift cards to WalMart or any grocery store in town, etc., financial donations, food, your time. We do not need clothes. For additional information, please visit our website: [www.besidestillwaters.net/mainstreet](http://www.besidestillwaters.net/mainstreet)

**Q. Where can I deliver the items I wish to donate?**

**A.** St John's Parish House, 75 East Main Street, Pottstown, PA 19465 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**Q. When donating financially, who do I write my check to?**

**A.** Please make checks payable to St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and note "Main Street," "Ministries at Main Street," or "Homeless" in the Memo Line.

**Q. How do I contact "The Ministries at Main Street?"**

**A.** You can reach us at: 75 East Main Street, Pottstown, PA 19465  
Phone: (610) 326-1120 Fax: (484) 363-4017  
Email: [ministry@besidestillwaters.net](mailto:ministry@besidestillwaters.net) and please include "Main Street" in your Subject Line  
Website: [www.besidestillwaters.net/mainstreet](http://www.besidestillwaters.net/mainstreet)

Thank You in advance for your concern!  
*The Ministries at Main Street*

