

November 10, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

Shelters and Housing Springfield Homeless

Earlier today, a press conference was held that indicated a shortage of shelters and housing for the homeless in Springfield. The Springfield community, through the Continuum of Care, which includes a wide variety of participants representing the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, has an on-going strategy to address sheltering the homeless.

In the past two years, a number of new initiatives have increased the number of beds for homeless individuals and families. This includes both access to short-term emergency shelter and long-term permanent housing solutions.

Solutions involve sheltering the homeless in existing shelters (The Kitchen, Family Violence Center and the Salvation Army); hotels; and churches. Individuals and families are sheltered in existing shelters, while families are also being accommodated in hotels in donated or reduced-rate rooms. In the past year more than 180 families have been given emergency vouchers when shelters are full.

On October 17, 2011, the Springfield City Council adopted a resolution extending a declaration of economic and housing access calamity, which allows churches to shelter the homeless regardless of the zoning district of the church.

Two churches now have shelters open for individuals. Safe to Sleep–Women's Overnight Shelter provides shelter for up to 12 women each night in apartments provided by The Kitchen. East Sunshine Church of Christ is sheltering single men any night the temperature is 32 degrees or below. East Sunshine has a maximum capacity of 49, and during the winter of 2010-2011 averaged over 40 men each night.

Shelter services are coordinated through One Door, a clearinghouse operated by The Kitchen and funded through Community Development Block Grant funds provided by the City. One Door ensures that homeless individuals and families are provided the appropriate services based on their needs. The telephone number for One Door is: 417-225-7499.

For more information, contact: Ralph Rognstad Jr., Director Planning & Development Department (417) 864-1031.