




EL DORADO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Doug Nowka
Interim Director

Memo

Information Only

To: Members of the Board of Supervisors
From: Doug Nowka, Interim Director 
Department of Human Services
Date: August 23, 2007
Subj: United Outreach Homeless Shelter

2007-08-24 PM 2:40
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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
EL DORADO COUNTY, CA

Last week a representative of the United Outreach Board of Directors approached Human Services requesting support in the form of funding so that Grace Place, the local homeless shelter, may re-open its doors in November, 2007. The Shelter has been open during the winter months for the last two years, operating on a 100% volunteer and donation only basis. United Outreach has now recognized the need for trained, qualified staff to provide administrative oversight of the nightly operations of the shelter to ensure the safety of both workers and visitors.

United Outreach of El Dorado County, a 501c3 non-profit organization, is a collaboration of eight faith-based groups, four service clubs, six local agencies serving people in need and over 200 volunteers in El Dorado County. United Outreach currently operates Grace Place, a nomadic sheltering program, and provides transportation from nearby towns and community food kitchens to a centrally located church (Camino Seventh Day Adventist) that offers food, clothing and showers, with 30 beds available for the homeless four nights a week during the cold weather months. Since March of 2005, Grace Place has served over 300 individual guests with approximately 4,313 check-ins. In 2006, 179 individuals were served with 2,434 check-ins.

Grace Place was conceived as a grass-roots, volunteer program that would serve between 10 and 20 of the neighborhood homeless. For many months this was the case; however, over the last year the demand has severely outgrown the capacity of the entirely volunteer-based organizational structure. Essentially, Grace Place has become the homeless shelter for El Dorado County. Grace Place regularly receives referrals and phone calls from numerous County agencies, private organizations and individuals, seeking sheltering services. Frequent contacts come from as far as South Lake Tahoe. The volume of participants is a major concern. The other primary concern is the degree of need and dysfunction of the guests being served, which often exceeds the abilities of untrained volunteer workers.

Although Grace Place has received an outpouring of community support as a result of these combined efforts, local resources have been overwhelmed, and the need for appropriately trained staff remains a concern. After serious consideration and consultation with volunteer leaders, the United Outreach

Board of Directors voted on June 19, 2007 to leave Grace Place closed until there is enough cash on hand to operate with a qualified staff for a minimum of three months. The estimated cost to operate the shelter at four nights a week for a three-month period is \$42,000. It is my understanding that United Outreach is planning on asking the County for financial assistance so they may open this coming winter.

United Outreach has been working closely with the County in the development of a Continuum of Care Strategy (Measure HO-FF of the Housing Element). Our efforts to date will provide an excellent opportunity for an ongoing funding stream for the shelter project. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has annual funding of up to \$180,000 for shelter projects such as this. We have already applied for the first step of the process and should that be approved, we will have an excellent chance of securing the additional ongoing operational funding. Unfortunately, the federal process is lengthy, and we will not be eligible to apply for this funding until 2008, and grant funds will not be awarded until March 2009.

For further information or detail please do not hesitate to contact me at 621-6163 or Joyce Aldrich at 621-7276.

Thank you.

cc: Laura Gill, Chief Administrative Officer