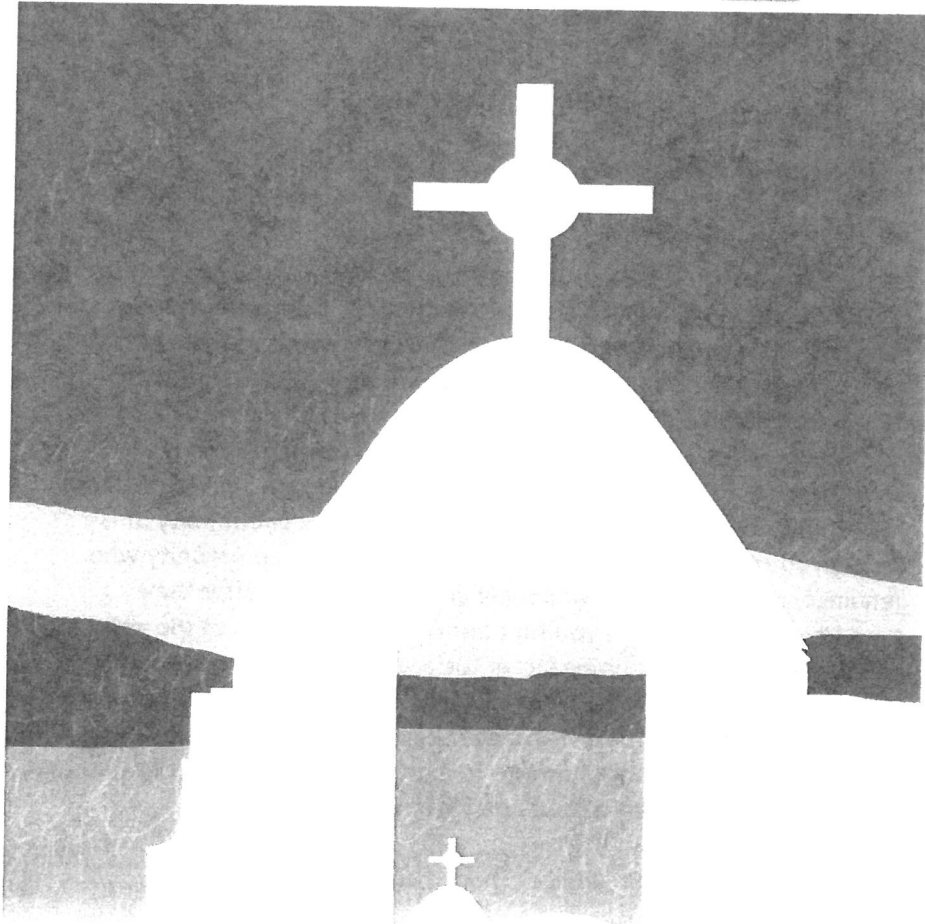


# Room at the Inn



*A sponsored ministry of*

**THE SISTERS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE**  
*Marie de la Roche Province*

*Making God's Providence more visible in our world*



3415 BRIDGELAND BRIDGETON, MO 63044 314.209.9198

## NIGHT SITE MANUAL

To our wonderful Volunteers,

Thank you so much for choosing to volunteer with Room at the Inn and supporting our night site program! Over the past twenty years, one hundred local congregations and thousands of volunteers have joined together to reach out and offer support to our homeless neighbors throughout the St. Louis Region. By committing to this work as a night site, you have become a part of a great, long-standing tradition of service and ministry. Our night sites are ROOM'S greatest asset because you are the connection between our clients and the community. It is through you that our clients see loving people in this community who genuinely care about their wellbeing and are willing to offer their support. It is also through you that our community learns of the very real obstacles and difficulties facing the least fortunate among us. Our hope is this will prove to be a challenging and fulfilling experience for you and your congregation. If you ever have any suggestions, questions, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 314-209-9181 ext 106 or by email at [dweber@roomstl.org](mailto:dweber@roomstl.org).

We are grateful for your service. Thank you!

David Weber, Interim Executive Director and the entire ROOM staff

# What is Room at the Inn?

The St. Louis Regional Housing Hotline receives more than 100 calls per week from people needing emergency shelter. Emergency shelter bed space is typically available for only 40 people. Three out of every four of these callers are families with children or single women.

## **Room at the Inn is an emergency shelter for homeless women and families.**

We meet the immediate needs of 20 people per day, providing safe, clean shelter, food, showers, laundry facilities, personal supplies, and clothing, along with access to phones, fax, mail, and computers.

Of equal importance is our support in helping clients move out of this homeless episode and toward self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. We do this by offering extensive case management services. Every adult receives a physical health assessment, mental health assessment, and substance abuse assessment conducted by outside agencies. This information, along with a comprehensive intake questionnaire, forms the basis for helping each client determine short-term goals that will be essential to becoming self-reliant.

Room at the Inn's Client Coordinator works with each household to determine their needs and then connects them with whatever services they require. We collaborate with more than 60 agencies, giving our clients access to help with everything from job skills, life skills, and parenting skills to budgeting, interpersonal communications, and basic health.

## **So where do the night sites fit in?**

Homelessness is one of those issues that can seem overwhelming. Room at the Inn answers that age-old question – *what can I possibly do to help?* – by using an innovative service delivery model in which we partner with 56 local congregations to provide nighttime shelter for our clients. There are typically two 'night sites' every evening, each taking 10 clients to their church or temple, feed them dinner, provide friendly social time, offer a safe place to sleep, provide breakfast in the morning, and then bring them back to our day site.

Each night site commits to serve on a regular night of the month (for example the second Tuesday) when they will care for and offer their best hospitality to our clients. Night site participants describe this as a time when they can put their faith into action, participate in grace, and reach out to those in need.

What does a typical night site structure look like? Many hands make light work. Generally, there are people who drive the clients to and from the night site who cook, who serve as nighttime hosts, who do laundry, and who organize the team. This makes the amount of work very manageable for each person, each one doing what they can. While Room at the Inn provides the overall organization, structure, training, and support, the night sites are free to organize their night however they would like to do it.

## **What are the advantages of this model?**

Clients are motivated by the interaction with the night site participants. The night site volunteers are excited about doing this; it is their one night a month when they can make a difference in the life of someone who desperately needs their help. Just sharing a meal together and providing a compassionate ear can be very meaningful. The clients feed on this excitement and interest, and it makes them feel good. It's good to have someone interested in your life. It motivates them to keep

trying. Over the course of a month, the clients meet lots of new people and engage in upbeat and positive interactions. This does wonders for self-esteem, confidence, and hope.

This interaction works both ways too. The volunteers talk with the clients and see that they are people just like you and me but are currently in a very difficult situation. They have hopes and dreams, just like we do; they want the best for their children, just like we do. There is an interesting story behind each person.

Partnering congregations and volunteers help our clients in many direct and indirect ways and the clients help the volunteers develop a stronger faith and a stronger sense of community. Sometimes this happens in challenging ways, sometimes in 'aha' moments, but it always results in a stronger understanding of what it means to be a person of faith.

Strengthening the ability of congregations to engage in social service ministry involves three components. **First**, becoming aware of a social need, **second**, recognizing that there is something our congregation can do to address that need, and **third**, realizing that the individual people within our congregation have the ability to put their faith into action to make a significant difference in the lives of the hurting, homeless people in the community where we live.

Room at the Inn has been meeting the needs of homeless women and families since 1993. We operate every day of the year and are an entry point into the local Continuum of Care. We are key partners with the St. Louis County Children's Service Fund and meet all 20 of the Better Business Bureau Standards for Charity Accountability. Governed by a 15-member board of directors we have a strong history of successfully meeting the needs of the homeless.

### **Who are the people we serve?**

All of our clients are homeless, about half are children, one quarter are the single mothers of those children and one quarter are other single women. All are very poor by any standard (the average income is only 37% of the Poverty Guideline as defined by the Department of Health & Human Services and 14% of our clients have no income or aid – SSI, food stamps, etc. – at all), most have no job and no car, no health insurance, no family that can or will help them. Most have very few resources of any type that haven't already been exhausted. They are certainly hurting but remain hopeful and optimistic. They definitely need help. This is a crucial time for us to say 'yes' to their need.

A new volunteer is sometimes apprehensive; unsure of what he/she are getting into. A new client is sometimes apprehensive as well. Fear of the unknown is not an emotion that is reserved only for the volunteers. However, pretty quickly, mothers-who-are-volunteers see that mothers-who-are-clients want the same things they want for their children. They may come from vastly different backgrounds and have vastly different resources but they have many things in common too.

### **How can you learn more about supporting Room at the Inn?**

Contact Room at the Inn's Night Site Coordinator. He will be happy to meet with you, answer all your questions and help you work through how best to get involved. It all starts by saying "yes, we want to help."



# Getting Started

## How Many Clients Will We Host?

Room at the Inn can currently shelter a maximum of 20 clients (this includes adults and children). The number and ages of clients assigned to a night site varies from month to month and day to day. We constantly take referrals from the Housing Resource Center but try to ensure that we have a head count available to our night sites by 3pm so drivers and food can be arranged. **We ask night sites to commit to at least 10 clients on their host-night.** If this is likely to be challenge, consult with the Night Site Coordinator or consider reaching out to other congregations in your area for additional support.

## How Many Volunteers Do We Need?

The next few pages will outline what kind of people your night site will need. Drivers and overnight innkeepers must submit to a background screening (\$10-\$11). Some host regularly with the same 10 volunteers. Others have teams of volunteers in ministries of 100-150 people. This is a great opportunity for your congregation to explore how it wants to put its faith into action through ministry!

## What Costs Do We Need to Consider?

- **Beds & Linens** – The night site provides a cot or floor mattress, pillow, bed linens, blankets, hand towel and wash cloth for each Room at the Inn client.
- **Space & Storage** – The night site needs a clean, secure space available the same night each month, where clients can have meals, sleep, and have access to restrooms. Linens are laundered by the night site. Linens and mattresses/cots are stored by the night site.
- **Meals** – Night sites prepare and serve the meals for the evening and morning. This requires food, plates, napkins, flatware, etc. Night site Volunteers provide a dinner and a breakfast for the clients and the volunteers who stay to eat. As a gesture of hospitality and mutual relationship, we welcome and encourage all volunteers to join our clients at the table to share a meal together.  
*(Area merchants will often welcome the opportunity to assist with food.)*
- **Transportation** – Night site ministries absorb the cost of fuel for transporting clients. All Drivers must carry liability insurance if using their own vehicle. The 12-passenger Room at the Inn Van is available for use by the night sites. If opting to use the van a donation for fuel is greatly appreciated.

## How Do We Get the Volunteers and Supplies We Need?

- **Volunteers** – As with most things, this tends to look different at each night site. In general, mass appeals in services, newsletters, and bulletins can be helpful for raising awareness and picking up a few people who are passionate about the issue or looking to get involved. Congregations have the most success when they reach out to people individually or in small groups. So think through who the people are in your congregation (or even in your neighborhood!) that should be involved, and ask them if they will help you with a role in this ministry, or talk with your men's club, youth group, or choir about how they might be able to support the ministry as a group. For more suggestions and best practices, check in with the Night Site Coordinator.
- **Supplies** – Some congregations work this into their budget; others seek out community resources (St. Vincent de Paul, foundations, etc.). This is also a great opportunity to reach out to people in your congregation that cannot commit as a volunteer but are still interested in supporting this ministry. These donors can be great resources that can help cover start-up costs and defray gas expenses.

# Night Site Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Each night site determines the number of volunteers they need and how often they will be called. The Room at the Inn Night Site Coordinator facilitates all training, follow-up support and assistance to the host congregation, congregation coordinator, and volunteers and is available at any time.

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## **Congregation Coordinator** *at least one*

*Oversees the program and maintains a strong volunteer base.*

- Recruit and maintain an up-to-date list of volunteer names and contact information
- Ensure that all volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement
- Ensure that all volunteers who have contact with client children have completed a criminal background check
- Coordinate volunteers on an as-needed basis by relaying information from the day site, answering questions, offering suggestions, supplying facility keys for the hosts/innkeepers, etc.
- Contact the day site on the day you serve to determine the number of clients being served and then contact volunteer drivers to ensure adequate transportation. If clients are not picked up by 5:00 pm and no one has notified Room at the Inn of a late arrival, staff will try to reach the coordinator. If a driver is not available, clients will be sent to the congregation by cab(s). The cab fare will be charged to Room at the Inn, but the congregation will be asked to reimburse the cost of the cab.
- Inform cooks, innkeepers, and hosts of the number of clients and ages of any children. Make any necessary adjustments in volunteer positions.

Please contact the Night Site Coordinator with any issues regarding clients or volunteers. We are always more than happy to offer support in any way that we can. The Night Site Coordinator can be reached at ROOM at 314-209-9198, ext. 117 or any time, day or night, at 314-378-4984

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## **Drivers** *from one to four drivers each evening/morning, depending on the vehicle passenger size*

*Transports clients from the day site at the Providence Center (3415 Bridgeland Dr., Bridgeton, MO 63044) to the host night site in the evening then back to the day site in the morning. Pick-up / Drop-off takes place in the back of the Providence Center*

- Drivers must be at least 21 years of age and have a current, valid driver's license and auto insurance and copies of such are submitted to ROOM for filing. The vehicle used to transport clients must have a seat belt for every passenger.
- The congregation coordinator will advise the drivers of the number of adults and children they will be transporting that day. This information is available by 3:00 pm.
- *Evening drivers* – Pick up clients by 5pm at ROOM and also pick up the large green plastic tote that contains the Med Pack and Binder.
- *Morning drivers* – return clients to the day site in Bridgeton. Clients must be back at 7:00am Mondays through Fridays, at 8:00am on Saturdays and 7:30am on Sundays. If clients are brought back too early the building may not yet be open, too late and clients might miss rides to school or work. On holidays clients should be back at the day site by 7:30 am.
- Please help us to discourage clients from eating or drinking in the vehicles.

Children / Car seats: Drivers ensure that the parents pick up the car seats for their children. Parents of a child who is under eight years of age, 80 lbs, or 4ft 9in are responsible for putting their child in a car seat. The parent is responsible to see that the car seat is not left in the volunteer's car. **NEVER transport small children without a car seat. NEVER situate car seats in a front seat.** Call staff if this presents a problem.

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## **Cooks** *usually at least two per meal*

*Purchase, prepare, and serve the evening and morning meals to the clients and volunteers.*

- Prepare an evening meal, which will be served shortly after clients arrive at the night site (usually no later than 6:30 pm). Evening meals may be potluck style, prepared at the cooks' homes and warmed up on arrival at the facility, or prepared at the facility.
- Prepare a morning meal ready to be served 15 to 30 minutes after the clients wake up (realizing that night sites that are further away may need to allow more travel time). Clients frequently will only eat a light breakfast if anything at all in the mornings. During the school week this meal may simply be cereal or packaged breakfast food (not donuts) but the elaborate nature of the meals is left to the discretion of the night site.
- Accommodate dietary restrictions as communicated to the Congregation Coordinator.

If a client does not like what is served, it is acceptable to offer another option if it is available (e.g. peanut butter, cereal, canned soup, etc.). They can choose to go without if they do not like what the night site has to offer. Do not purchase anything special and do not allow clients to order food to be delivered. Clients are not to bring their own food or drink to the night sites, unless there are dietary restrictions.

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## **Greeters** *usually two*

*Prepare the night site for guests and welcome them.*

- Obtain any keys necessary to open and operate the night site. Locate and know how to regulate thermostats and timers.
- Greet clients, familiarize them with the facility especially fire exits. Explain restricted areas. Assist with setting up sleeping area.
- Review the Binder and be familiar with any necessary client information, medical needs, issues, emergency numbers, and procedures.
- Assist with serving dinner if needed. Feel free to stay and enjoy the meal with our clients. They tend to appreciate it when people show an interest and making these connections over a meal can be one of the most beneficial parts of this program for clients and volunteers.
- Unless the activity area is well separated from the sleeping area, greeters should exit the facility when clients start to retire for the evening (which may be as early as 8:00 pm and should not be later than 10:00 pm).

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## **Hosts** *usually at least two people or a family*

*Visit with guests after dinner and/or engage them in some kind of activity*

- Feel free to stay and enjoy the meal with our clients. They tend to appreciate it when people show an interest and making these connections over a meal can be one of the most beneficial parts of this program for clients and volunteers.
- Invite clients to share in an after-dinner activity (card games, board games, BINGO, crafts, or movies). While some groups might be more interactive than others, it's always helpful to have age-

appropriate activities available for children, teens, and adults. Finding activities for teens can sometimes be particularly challenging. Some have had success with ice breaker games, mind teasers, card games, and board games. If only one teen is present it can be beneficial to have them help and take a leadership role with younger children.

- Unless the activity area is well separated from the sleeping area, hosts should exit the facility when clients start to retire for the evening (which may be as early as 8:00 pm and should not be later than 10:00 pm).

Some facilities have playgrounds or play areas. We greatly appreciate volunteers who want to take Room at the Inn Children to play in these areas. We ask that you please do not engage a child without parental consent. Our Clients are to be with their children at all times unless they authorize another Client to be responsible for their children. If a volunteer offers to take care of a parent's child, the parent is still expected to be readily available and able to provide disciplinary supervision. Adult clients should ALWAYS be able to maintain visual contact with their children. Volunteers are not permitted to escort young children to the bathroom. This is for the safety of the clients and the host congregation.

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## **Innkeepers** *usually two per evening; must be at least one*

*Spend the night with the clients in the night site facility.*

- Review the Binder to be familiar with any necessary client information, medical needs, issues, overnight procedures, and emergency numbers of the Congregation Coordinator and Room at the Inn staff. Know the locations of blankets, thermostats, phones, and fire escape routes.
- Feel free to come early and share the meal with the clients
- 7:15 pm – Be on the premises no later than this time.
- 7:15 pm – Inform clients that you will be locking the doors in 15 minutes.
- 7:30 pm – Lock all doors to the facility. Our clients know this is the rule – after 7:30 pm no one enters or exits.
- 8:45 pm – Announce that children need to be in bed in 15 minutes (Child/Student curfew – 9:00 pm on school nights).
- 9:45 pm – Announce that it's "Lights Out" in 15 minutes (Adult Lights Out curfew – 10:00 pm on school nights).
- Set an alarm for 5:30 am (night sites at a great distance from Bridgeton may need get up earlier to be back by the morning arrival time)
- Sleep. It is not necessary that you sleep in the same area as the clients but clients must know where to find you. You need to have a working cell phone and it needs to be ON during the night.
- When alarm goes off, turn on all lights and let the clients know what time it is.
- Unlock pertinent doors for the arrival of Cooks, Drivers, and any other volunteers.
- Respond to miscellaneous client needs as they arise.

Record any inappropriate behavior or other issues in the Communication Log in the Binder. The Night Site Coordinator is always available at 314-378-4984. If any kind of issue arises and you are unsure how to handle it, feel free to contact the Night Site Coordinator at any time.

(The times listed above follow the recommended schedule but are left to the discretion of the night site.)

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## **Launderers** *at least one person*

*Launder all towels and bed linens and prepare them for the next host night.*

- Collect bed linens, towels, and face cloths after the clients have departed.
- Launder all linens after every use. Launder heavy blankets, afghans etc. as needed.

- Fold and Return cleaned linen to the night site facility prior to your congregation's next scheduled night.

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## Policies and Procedures

The following information is offered as a guide for host congregations.

### Program Details

- The following homeless persons will be served by this program: single women, single women with children, married couples with OR without children, and single men with children. Single men without children will not be admitted but will be referred to shelters for men.
- We receive all of our referrals from the Housing Resource Center where clients are screened to determine their eligibility for the program. This process also ensures that individuals with severe untreated mental health, drug, and/or alcohol problems are not admitted into the program.
- Every participant is interviewed by the ROOM staff and asked to sign a Release of Information form to aid in the search for shelter. A drug- and alcohol-free statement is also signed at the time of admission.
- Clients are allowed up to 30 days in the program while seeking housing. This may not be long enough time to secure shelter, and the client may be given an extension of up to ten days. The program does reserve the right to deny some residents an extension. The decision is made on a case by case basis.
- If caught using or in possession of drugs or alcohol, clients will be asked to leave the day site or congregational grounds immediately. An individual who is suspected of using drugs or alcohol will be asked to submit to a urine test performed by the ROOM staff. If the individual refuses to submit to the test, he or she will be asked to leave the program.
- Room at the Inn and the host congregations take no responsibility for injury to guests; damage to their property; or loss of personal property.
- Laundry and shower facilities for the clients are available at ROOM.

### Night Site Schedule

The following schedule is an example of a typical day in the program. Each evening clients are provided shelter by one of 56 congregations that serve as night sites for Room at the Inn. Some adjustments to the schedule will need to be made depending on the night site.

5:30 am	Lights on
6:00 am	Breakfast and drivers arrive, inn keepers leave
6:30 am	Clients depart and volunteers clean up
7:00 am	Arrive at ROOM (Saturday at 8am & Sunday –at 7:30 am) It is important for the clients to arrive at ROOM as close to 7:00 am as possible during the week to ensure they are able to catch busses to school or work. Children prepare for school
8:30 am	Leave for classes, completing goals, and employment. Clients prepare their own lunch between 11:00 am and 2:30 pm
3:00 pm	Night Site Coordinators contact Room for client numbers and ages
4:00 pm	Curfew; cell phones and other electronic devices are turned in to ROOM staff and

	chores done at started; storage Room is opened
4:30 pm	Prepare for pick up by the night site volunteers
5:00 pm	Drivers pick up clients at Room
6:00 pm	Dinner at the night site
7:00 pm	Hosts arrive for fellowship with clients
7:30 pm	Outside doors are locked and smoking ceases at this time
9:00 pm	Inn keepers arrive for the night Children are in bed and quiet
10:00 pm	Adults in bed and lights out (possibly later on weekends)

- We recommend that our night sites follow this schedule to the extent that they are able for the sake of maintaining a steady routine for the clients. We leave most of the specifics at the night site to your discretion. We realize that some sites will have to leave before 6:30 am in order to arrive at ROOM by 7:00 am during the week. Likewise, some will be able to accommodate a later smoking time, etc. Our clients are expected to be respectful of the decisions made by the night sites and are asked not to argue for extended smoking time, later lights-out time, etc. If this becomes an issue, please notify ROOM staff.

### **Client Expectations**

- Clients are expected to be respectful to our volunteers, staff, and each other.
- Clients are not allowed cell phones or electronic devices at the night sites. Clients who need to use the phone in the evenings are expected to make arrangements with staff before leaving for the night sites. Any such arrangements will be recorded in the Communication Log of the Binder.
- Smoking can be permitted outside the facility in accordance with the policies of the individual congregation.
- Once clients are picked up from the day site and taken to the congregation, they must remain there for the entire night. They are not allowed to leave and return. They are not permitted to have any visitors while staying at the night site.
- Clients will be responsible for safeguarding and taking their own medications. A first-aid kit will be provided by the program and transported to the host congregations each evening.
- We recognize that our volunteers take time to provide a nutritious meal. Clients are not allowed to order or bring in food from the outside. Any clients with dietary restrictions are asked to notify staff ahead of time so the appropriate accommodations can be made.
- Clients are expected to wear shoes or socks at all times.
- Vulgar language is not permitted.
- Loud or vulgar music is not allowed.
- Only original (not taped over) family videos rated G or PG may be viewed at ROOM or the night sites. Videos are not to be taken from or brought to the night sites.
- Pornographic material of any kind will not be tolerated
- Clients are to refrain from any public display of affection, and, considering the sleeping arrangements provided, clients are not to engage in sexual activity while at Room.
- Unless they are a married couple, men and women should sleep in separate areas. Some facilities may have an extra room where married couples may sleep.

### **The following are grounds for immediate DISMISSAL:**

- Fighting by any adult or child
- Verbal aggression and physical punishment



- Use of or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Being physically aggressive
- Choosing to continue arguing with others after being given a warning
- Possessing firearms or other weapons including pocket knives and toy weapons are discouraged. Clients are to inform staff if a child has a toy like this)

### **Night Site Expectations**

- Volunteers are asked to provide food, fellowship, transportation, and shelter to clients in the program. If there are other things the congregation is interested in providing, please contact ROOM staff to arrange appropriate distribution.
- Volunteers should be present and available at the night sites at all times while clients are present. Clients should not be left unattended, especially overnight.
- Hosts, not guests, must respond to phone calls and knocks on the door at the night site.
- Each evening a member of the congregation should review those areas of the facility that are appropriate for the guests to utilize. Emergency fire exits should be reviewed with clients.
- Each volunteer should sign and submit a Confidentiality Agreement (copies available in the Binder).
- We require written consent forms from any client that is being included in pictures. If you are interested in taking pictures with the clients, please contact the Night Site Coordinator to make the necessary arrangements. Otherwise, please refrain from taking pictures of the clients.

### **Transportation**

- Every child under eight years old, 80 pounds, or 4ft 9in must be in a car seat when commuting to and from the night site.
- Due to limited space in vehicles clients are asked to bring no more than one reasonably-sized bag with them to the night sites. Other belongings should be left in the storage room at the day site.
- Out of respect for the volunteers, we ask clients not to bring food or drinks into the vehicles (exceptions can be made to send food back to ROOM at the night site's discretion).

### **Children's Issues**

- Parents are responsible for care of their own children at all times.
- If volunteers offer to take care of parents' children, the parents are still expected to maintain visual contact and be readily available and able, to provide disciplinary supervision.
- Parents are strongly discouraged from sharing a bed with infants in order to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Staff members are required by law to report all instances of abuse (physical or otherwise). For recommendations of appropriate disciplinary methods clients are encouraged to speak with the staff. If volunteers witness any behavior that they feel might be considered abusive, we ask that you please notify us using the Communication Log or call the Night Site Coordinator at 314-709-0716. When making a report please leave your name and contact information.

### **Emergency Procedures**

- An Emergency Folder with supplies and instructions is available in the Binder.
- In the event of a life threatening emergency call 911.
- If the emergency is non-life threatening or if an ambulance has already been called, call the Room at the Inn Night Site Coordinator at 314-378-4984. Room staff will arrange for a cab if necessary.
- If the client needs to leave the site, give them a green Emergency Card from the Emergency Folder so that they can remain in contact with the staff.



- If the client has children who are not able to accompany them, the client should fill out a Child Release Form to release care of their children to another client. Children should be released to another Room client, NOT to a volunteer.
- In the event of an emergency or other significant event, please fill out an Incident Report. This is extremely helpful for keeping staff informed and allowing us to respond to the needs of our clients and volunteers.

### **Reporting Issues**

- If a client's behavior is not in line with the listed expectations or if there are ever issues with rudeness, disrespect, etc., we ask that volunteers please inform staff. If it is an issue that can be addressed over the phone, the Night Site Coordinator is available any time at 314-378-4984. Volunteers can also contact ROOM at 314-209-9198 during the day between 7:00 am and 5:30 pm. Thank you for helping us to ensure that this continues to be a safe and rewarding program for everyone involved.

### **Totes**

Upon arrival at the day site one driver will be given a large green tote with the following supplies:

#### ***Night Site Binder***

- *Cover Page*: this has contact information for Room at the Inn staff as well as emergency contact numbers. For any issues contact the Night Site Coordinator.
- *Confidentiality Agreements*: If any volunteers have not signed this, please have them do so and leave signed copies in the front pocket of the Binder.
- *Communication Log*: This lists the clients staying at your night site for the evening along with any relevant notes. There is also a space where you can leave comments for the Night Site Coordinator.
- *Volunteer Log*: Tracking volunteer hours helps us monitor the size and scope of our volunteer program and assists in reporting to funders. Last year we had over 2000 volunteers that participated in our night site program! Keeping accurate records helps us track growth and, in some cases, attract additional funding.
- *Emergency Folder*: This includes Emergency Procedures, Emergency Cards, Child Release Forms, and Incident Report Forms.
- *Tote Supplies Checklist*: If we are low on or out of any supplies please make a note in the Communication Log
- *Master Calendar*: Check what other congregations are involved as night sites
- *Night Site Manual*: Use this for your reference and if you need a copy for yourself, please inform the Night Site Coordinator.

#### ***Med Pack***

- *Basic Medical Supplies*: Includes feminine hygiene products, band-aids (small and large), alcohol-free cough syrup, antacids, ibuprofen or acetaminophen, Pepto Bismol, alcohol swabs, rubber gloves, calamine lotion, cotton swabs, and hand sanitizer

## Frequently Asked Questions

- Q.** I met a family that said they were homeless and looking for help. Can I have them contact Room?
- A.** We receive all of our referrals from the Regional Housing Helpline, as do most shelters in the area. Anyone needing shelter should call the HRC at 314-802-5444 and they will help them connect with the appropriate service provider.
- Q.** Can our congregation help pay for a client's utility bill, bus ticket, childcare, etc.?
- A.** One of the great things about this program is that it brings our community together by linking those of us who are in need with those of us who are in a position to help. Sometimes our clients are in a situation where that one barrier really is all that is keeping them from housing. However, some of our clients are dealing with problems that are more complicated than that – problems that require a more comprehensive solution. For that reason, if you are interested in helping a client in this way, we ask that you contact the Room staff rather than offering your support directly to the client.
- Q.** One time a client asked me for an aspirin. We didn't have any in our Med Pack so I just gave him one from my purse. Is that okay?
- A.** We do not recommend volunteers giving the clients any kind of medications beyond what is in the Med Pack. These kits are usually stocked with basics (if they're ever getting low, please write a note in the Communication Log). Beyond that, clients are responsible for managing their own medications and should have anything they need for the evening ahead of time.
- Q.** One of our volunteers donated a bunch of clothes. Is it okay if we give them to the clients?
- A.** A number of our night sites have Clothing Closets and have arranged for the clients to come in and take what they need when they are at the night site. This is a great way to help our clients but since we have very limited storage space at the day site, we ask that congregations interested in this kind of support contact us ahead of time.
- Q.** A few months ago we had a client who was rude, unappreciative, and disrespectful. It wasn't a big deal, and I didn't want to get anyone in trouble so I didn't worry about it. Is there something I should have done?
- A.** We realize that it can be difficult to report these kinds of things because we're all here to help and we don't want to get anyone in trouble. But there are a number of reasons why it's very helpful for you to inform us about these issues: 1) if you don't tell us, then the group hosting the next night is likely to encounter the same issues (and while it may not be a big deal tonight, maybe it will be tomorrow), 2) we occasionally hear about these issues from clients and it's helpful for us to have your less-objective perspective, and most importantly, 3) having this information can help us connect clients with the resources and help they need.
- Q.** I'm struggling to find enough volunteers. What can I do?
- A.** If you ever find yourself struggling to find enough volunteers, PLEASE contact the Night Site Coordinator! There are a number of strategies we can use to bring in more support. It is in everybody's best interest to help keep our volunteers from becoming over-extended, but we can only help if we're made aware of the need. So if there is ever anything we can do to offer assistance, please let us know!

## History

Room at the Inn was designed to provide homeless women and families temporary shelter in unused church space. This model of shelter (born out the national Interfaith Hospitality Network) came to the Salvation Army of St. Louis by way of Nashville, Tennessee. Introduced in St. Louis by members of McKnight Crossing Church of Christ in 1988, Room at the Inn provided overflow housing for The Salvation Army on weekends and during the cold winter months.

In February 1992, a grant from the St. Louis County Government Department of Housing Resource Commission was awarded to Room at the Inn. With this grant The Salvation Army expanded Room at the Inn to a 24 hour year-round shelter. Program Director, Barbara Vogel Bixler, approached the Sisters of Divine Providence to house the expanded daytime program utilizing space in their Motherhouse.

In April 1993, The Salvation Army could no longer sponsor Room at the Inn. The Sisters of Divine Providence, wishing to see the program continue, made a corporate commitment to the homeless and became the sponsoring agents of Room at the Inn. As sponsors, the Sisters donate the building space, utilities, and professional services.

In March 1999, the Provincial offices of the Sisters were moved to Providence Center in Bridgeton across from DePaul Hospital. One third of Providence Center was designed to accommodate the daytime shelter of the program.

## About the Sponsor

The Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence was founded in 1851 in Mainz, Germany, by Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler. Bishop Ketteler was known as the "social justice Bishop" because of his tireless work in helping oppressed, unskilled laborers. Ketteler encouraged the church and the orders he founded to address the pressing social issues of the times. One such group of women founded by Ketteler and placed under the leadership of Marie de la Roche, was the Sisters of Divine Providence. The congregation in Germany grew and spread to the United States in 1876 settling first in Pittsburgh.

In 1929 a new province was founded in the Archdiocese of St. Louis located across from what is now the University of Missouri at St. Louis campus in Normandy, MO. Attached to the Motherhouse was Mount Providence Boarding School for Boys.

In 1995 the Sisters made the very difficult decision to close Mt. Providence at the end of the academic year. On November 12, 1996, the Provincial Center for the Community was moved to St. Bartholomew vacant school and convent. On August 14, 1998 Barnes, Jewish, Christian Medical building in Bridgeton was purchased and renovated and on March 23-24th the move was made into the newly remodeled Providence Center, 3415 Bridgeland Dr.

**[www.roomstl.org](http://www.roomstl.org)**