The community has long known St. John’s as Green Bay’s largest emergency homeless shelter, serving adult men and women who would otherwise be on the streets. During the winter season — November through April — the shelter opens its doors at 5 p.m. The summer season — regarded by St. John’s as May through October — is when the shelter operates its Summer Safe Sleep program from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. But some of the organization’s most critical work happens during business hours at their daytime resource centers, The Micah Center and Wellspring.

“We scope of services has evolved tremendously, especially in the last seven years,” said Alexia Wood, executive director of St. John’s Homeless Shelter. “We started as an organization of two people running an overnight shelter with mats on a gym floor and now we employ more than 40 across three locations.”

The Micah Center, originally housed at 700 E. Walnut St. when acquired in 2014, now operates out of the recently purchased 612 Stuart St. location. Wellspring, on 413 Dausman St., empowers and provides a safe place for women experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Between the two locations, St. John’s offers wraparound services, including on-site case management, mental health counseling, medical care, computer labs and, most importantly, forward-moving programming.

“Programming and case management are our bread and butter,” said Wood. “The shelter provides those basic needs — a bed, a hot meal and a place to shower. But, at our daytime centers, we offer programs and the guidance of case managers to help guests set personal goals and move forward. These are spaces of huge growth and transformation for our guests.”

The Micah Center and Wellspring offer a wide array of options for guests to achieve the goals they set for the immediate and long-term. Workshops and classes comprise the bulk of the programming calendar. Some address the barriers that may prevent someone from moving towards self-sufficiency: employment and housing applications, securing a government ID or building a resume, for example. Other workshops are focused specifically on mental, spiritual and financial health, such as Mindfulness for Depression & Anxiety, Relationship Goals, Jesus & Donuts, No More Excuses and Empower Yourself.

“We need to offer classes that are relevant to the guests that we serve,” said Eugene Smalls, case manager. “Something that adults can relate to is extremely important and not the usual mundane group talks that you can get anywhere else. I feel like, if we don’t challenge people to move forward instead of continuing to live their current lifestyle and just surviving, then we aren’t forward moving.”

Both locations are open to shelter guests as well as other community members who are at-risk of homelessness, and the atmosphere at Wellspring takes that community feeling to heart. The services there are tailored specifically to women, especially those who have experienced trauma or abuse. It’s not uncommon to see women who are homeless and women at-risk of being homeless and women who simply need a safe space, all interacting over a cup of coffee or working together during a Bible study reflection hour.

“When we are developing the programs at Wellspring, we are looking to serve our guests with programs that are helping them sustain or find housing, maintain their finances, build healthy relationships and empower themselves through adversity,” said Tameska Hughes-Poole, case manager. “Our programs also cater to our population, so we do some programs that are specifically for empowering women and diversity.”

These daytime services are essential to the wellbeing and forward movement of St. John’s guests.

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St. John’s is, at its core, a place where an individual will receive the dignity they deserve, be instilled with hope for the future and work towards lasting change to put them back on a path towards self-sufficiency. That path starts with the wraparound services at the Micah Center and Wellspring.
ST. JOHN'S PUBLISHES 2020 IMPACT REPORT
Shelter, programming offered for homeless population year-round

GREEN BAY, Wis. — St. John's Homeless Shelter has always and will continue to honor the dignity, restore hope and create lasting change for the homeless population in the Green Bay community. During 2020, it was a year unlike any other with a global pandemic, and St. John's responded to those with the greatest need in the community.

For the first time ever since the inception of the shelter in 2005, St. John's Ministries published an Impact Report showing the true scope of the homeless issue in the Green Bay community.

"St. John's has served homeless adults or those at-risk of experiencing homelessness for over 15 years," said Alexa Wood, St. John’s executive director. “I’m excited that we’re able to offer our donors and the larger community concrete data that illuminates our work in this community.”

St. John’s Impact Report shows that during the 2019-20 shelter season (Nov. 1 to April 30), the organization served 562 guests, provided 20,145 nights of shelter and served 40,290 meals. It was the busiest season for the shelter in the history of St. John’s.

“We were seeing unprecedented shelter numbers, upwards of 120 adults per night, even before COVID hit,” Wood remembered. “We were utilizing our overflow facilities nearly every night and our daytime resource centers were packed.”

St. John’s is known primarily as a homeless shelter of last resort, but it also operates the Micah Center and Wellspring, two daytime resource centers for men and women experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Throughout 2020, the locations combined to assist nearly 1,500 guests with case management, mental health counseling, on-site medical care, services to help seek employment and housing, and opportunities to increase one’s sense of self-worth through giving back.

While the harsh winter months are a particularly hard time for those experiencing homelessness, St. John’s also recognizes the need to provide a range of services during the summer and early fall months. St. John’s initiated a Summer Safe Sleep program in 2018 to provide shelter for 35 adults from May 1 to Oct. 31. In 2021, the Summer Safe Sleep program provided 4,916 nights of shelter for 274 guests from May through the end of September. St. John’s also created an ENGAGE the park program at St. John’s Park across from the shelter where case managers and staff can engage with those experiencing or at-risk of becoming homeless. This program has allowed case managers and staff to meet guests where they are at and work on forward-moving programming and individual support.

“The guests that we see at St. John’s Park have very few options left for shelter,” said Green Bay City Police Department Lt. Nate Allen. “Some of the guests that we see at the park are our unsheltered population. The ENGAGE program has given guests that frequent the park a sense of belonging and, in some cases, a jumping-off point to move forward or have continued motivation to do so.”

“Without the program, the case managers would not have been there to help intervene and work with guests to get them into shelter,” noted Green Bay City Police Department Cmdr. Kevin Warych. “By having staff, it helped the police department and the shelter by providing a sense of order and consistency that is needed in the park. In turn, this does help other park-goers to ensure everyone sees we are trying to help the clients.”

St. John’s also runs Drop-in Tuesday during the summer season, a daytime program that offers meals, laundry services, showers, shelter facilities, and basic clothing and toiletry needs to men and women experiencing homelessness.

The community support for St. John’s was at an all-time high, with just over $1.7 million donated during 2020, with 78% of St. John’s total revenue coming from community members, which, in turn, directly benefits our homeless brothers and sisters through various avenues.

“We have been in absolute awe of our community members, who stepped up to provide for us even amidst a global pandemic,” Wood said. “Everyone is incredibly grateful.”

Quilt Project

St. John’s cares deeply about the inherent worth and dignity of each guest who stays at the shelter or uses the services at the Micah Center or Wellspring, our daytime resource centers. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an idea for a quilt project was proposed to tell the story of the homeless in the Green Bay community. It became a reality as volunteers worked alongside our homeless brothers and sisters to help them tell their stories on quilt squares. Each guest was given the opportunity to design his or her own square that tells their story. The quilt was then graciously sewn and completed by loyal volunteers and will be displayed for the first time at the Restoring Hope Gala. Afterwards, it will be proudly displayed at loyal businesses and organizations around the Green Bay community.

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Since the pandemic began in our country a year and a half ago, we have all adjusted to the different world we now live in. Our leadership and planning committee has embarked on a hybrid Restoring Hope Gala that has never been done before in order to give everyone an option to participate at their comfort level. The 7th Annual Restoring Hope Gala will bring back the energy and excitement our very loyal and valued supporters with the live 11-piece Bluewater Kings Band, along with a wide variety of raffles, live auction, silent auction and services auction opportunities.

St. John’s Ministries has worked through many difficult challenges since early 2020 because of the pandemic and we want you to be connected to our mission of honoring dignity, restoring hope and creating lasting change.

In person, guests will see the highest standards in health and safety that we have here in the Green Bay area because we are meeting and exceeding the standards put in place by health officials in our community. When you arrive, you will see that the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center and our staff have done our very best. Masks will be required for those in-person, while sanitizing stations will be available, and servers will be wearing masks and gloves. We know that those who choose the in-person ticket option will feel at ease with the safety standards in place.

For those who opt for the virtual ticket option, they will have a top-of-the-line experience as well! The virtual ticket for the Restoring Hope Gala is not a “lesser” ticket as they can be for some events. Virtual gala-goers will have a “Party in Place” package delivered to them that will feature a gourmet dinner from Crisis Cafe, coffee from Copper Rock, a bottle of Captain’s Walk wine and a coffee mug and cloth tote bag as a special gift. In addition, each virtual ticket holder will get an event magazine and a link to join the in-person event virtually. We’ve really taken a lot of care to make the virtual experience special.

The 7th Annual Restoring Hope Gala is our signature event that raises crucial funds to help offset costs of operating an overnight shelter and two daytime resource centers, the Micah Center and Wellspring, for those experiencing homelessness or at-risk of becoming homeless. During the 2020-21 shelter season, we saw the greatest need in our organization’s history, operating in overflow each day of our 180-day season. We served 562 guests with 20,145 nights of shelter and 40,290 warm meals. Our programs extend beyond these essential emergency services. We also provide wraparound services to ensure that each guest is offered every opportunity to seek out the resources necessary to take steps towards self-sufficiency. This includes case management, mental health counseling, on-site medical care, services to help those seeking employment, and opportunities to increase one’s sense of self-worth through giving back to help people heal, connect and pave the way for successful futures.

At this year’s 7th Annual Restoring Hope Gala, we welcome headlining performer the Bluewater Kings Band; emcee Randy “Shotgun” Shannon, from Y100, and auctioneer Bill Jartz, from WBAY-TV. The event will have a silent auction, services auction, live auction and several raffles!

Tables are $850 for 10 people and individual tickets are $100.

For event details, including more information on the Restoring Hope Gala, visit: stjohnhomelessshelter.org/gala.

Join us for the 7th Annual RESTORING HOPE GALA Live & Virtual Event

Friday, November 12, 2021

Live at
Radisson Hotel & Conference Center
2040 Airport Drive, Green Bay, WI 54313

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

LIVE AND VIRTUAL TICKET OPTIONS AT STJOHNHOMELESSSHelter.ORG/GALA

Welcome headline performer Bluewater Kings Band, with Emcee Randy “Shotgun” Shannon from Y100 and Auctioneer Bill Jartz from WBAY.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS...
Seeing the face of Jesus in All

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Green Bay Inc. was established in 1918 and is dedicated to serve those living within the 16 counties the diocese covers in northeastern Wisconsin. As Missionary Disciples, Catholic Charities labors in the streets, inviting and serving those who have been left out or felt alone to know and experience the tremendous and abundant love of God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

St. Willebrord Parish is committed to ending homelessness, and until such time we are committed to feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless.

May God bless the ministry of St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter!

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 13:34-35

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