

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



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NIGHT SITE MANUAL

CONGREGATIONAL NITE SITE MANUAL

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 is purchased and renovated and on March 23-24th the move was made into the newly remodeled Providence Center.

Room At The Inn

Originating in Nashville, Tennessee, Room at the Inn was designed to provide homeless women and families temporary shelter in unused church space. Introduced in St. Louis by members of McKnight Road 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, 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.

Room at the Inn is a unique collaboration between the Sisters and 50+ interfaith, inter denominational congregations and supported by federal, state and local grants, private foundations, business, congregation and individual donations and fundraising events. The program could not serve families without the generosity of time, hospitality, congregational plant facilities, and financial support of hundreds of interfaith volunteers.

The program consists of a single day-site at Providence Center in Bridgeton and 50+ rotating overnight sites throughout the St. Louis and St. Charles County region.

At Room at the Inn the families have storage for personal belongings, free local telephone, and internet use, laundry and shower facilities, and access to social services and programs including transportation assistance.

Each evening, two congregations from a broad spectrum of Christian, Jewish and Non-theistic communities provide transportation to and from rotating hosting sites, dinner, fellowship, a place to sleep, and breakfast for no more than ten clients in their congregational space.

The homeless lack permanent housing. Perhaps a landlord has raised the rent past the point that the family budget will allow. Through divorce a man or woman with children may have no place to live. Sometimes an individual cannot or will not keep a job because of a company downsizing, emotional distress, or substance abuse. A family may tell a young adult that he or she is no longer welcome at home. A client may have just finished a treatment program and is trying to put their life back together. For every homeless individual there is a different reason and history.

The majority of clients are single females with children. Some are married couples and married couples with children. There are few fathers with children.

A very small percentage of clients suffer with mental illness, caused mainly by depression. All clients suffering with mental illness are actively taking medication.

If there is evidence of drug or alcohol use, the individual is not admitted to the program. If the staff suspects drug or alcohol use, the individual must submit to a urine/drop test. If drugs are brought into the program the individual is terminated immediately. No one is allowed to stay at Room at the Inn if actively using any illegal mood-altering chemicals.

Adult clients are seen by a St. Louis County nurse. Community Alternatives provides mental health evaluations.

A small percentage of clients go to work. Clients who do not work or go to school spend the day attending classes through the Redevelopment Opportunities for Women (ROW) Community Action Agency (CAA), Realizing your Economic Action Plan (REAP), and the St. Patrick's Center. In addition, clients work on accomplishing the goals they have set for themselves and/or their families. School age children attend school in their home district; preschoolers may go to daycare.

Because Room at the Inn is a CDP congregation sponsored event, regular building

insurance should cover any questions of liability. The congregation is not liable for accidents or injuries to clients. Each adult client signs a **Release of Liability** form when entering the program at the time of their intake interview.

CLIENT SCHEDULE

- 5:30-6:30 AM Breakfast at the night site
- 7:00 AM Return to the day site
- 9:00-4:00 PM Classes, appointments, completing goals,
Laundry, bathing, children in school
- 4:00-4:30 PM Chores completed at day site
- 4:30 PM Prepare for the congregations
- 5:00-5:30 PM Clients picked up from day site
- 5:30-7:00 PM Dinner at the night site
- 8:00-9:00 PM Homework and activities
- 9:00 PM Children's bedtime
- 10:00 PM Adult bedtime

EXPENSES INVOLVED IN SPONSORING THE PROGRAM

Space

The church needs a space that is available the same night each month.

Beds and linens

Congregations provide a mattress of some sort, bed linens, hand towel and wash cloth for each individual. Linens are cared for by the host congregation.

Storage

Mattresses and linens take up space.

Meals

Congregations provide and prepare the meals for the evening and morning. Some area merchants and restaurants/fast food welcome the opportunity to assist with food. Your congregation will be preparing a dinner and breakfast for no more than 10 clients, plus volunteers staying to eat.

Gas

Volunteer drivers normally absorb the cost of transporting clients. If Room At The Inn van is used, a donation for gas is appreciated.

Donations

There will be congregational members who show an interest in sheltering homeless women and families. But time constraints and other commitments prevent them from volunteering. These members are great sources for donations especially with start up expenses and defraying gas costs.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Each congregation determines their number of volunteers and how often they will be called. The program can be kept vital by engaging more than one coordinator to recruit and organize volunteers and to invite additional coordinators to co coordinate the smaller jobs.

The Room at the Inn Volunteer Coordinator provides all training, follow up support and assistance to the congregation, the coordinator, and volunteers at any time.

CONGREGATIONAL COORDINATOR *(generally one)*

Responsibility: To oversee the program and maintain a strong volunteer base.

To recruit and keep an up-to-date list of volunteer names, addresses, and phone numbers.

To insure all volunteers having contact with client children have completed a background check.

To coordinate the program with volunteers on an as-needed basis; answer questions, help with meal planning, keeping any necessary keys for the innkeepers/hosts to pick up, etc..

To call Room at the Inn to determine the number of drivers needed for the evening.

If coordinating all areas, call drivers and give the number of clients each driver will transport.

Inform cooks, innkeepers/hosts, of the number and ages of clients. Make any necessary adjustments in volunteer positions.

If clients are not picked up by 5:30 p.m. 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

DRIVERS *(normally from one to four drivers each a.m. and p.m. depending on the passenger size of the car)*

Responsibility: To transport clients to and from the day site at Providence Center 3415 Bridgeland to the congregational night site. Pick up is in the back of Providence Center.

Drivers must be at least 21 years of age have a current, valid driver license, auto insurance, and seat belt for every client transported.

The congregational 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 p.m.

Evening drivers pick up the large blue plastic tote that contains the first aid kit, communication log/gray binder, and cab vouchers.

