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Protective measures have been put in place at Franciscan Outreach shelters to safeguard the health and safety of our guests.

A COVID-19 Response: Protecting our Most Vulnerable Neighbors

During this COVID-19 crisis, we are all doing our best to adhere to the new protective protocols like social distancing, frequent hand washing and wearing face masks. Unless we're essential workers, most of us have been able to follow the statewide stay-at-home order. However, for people who are experiencing homelessness, this crisis has left them even more vulnerable than they already were with little access to the protection they need to survive.

The difficult truth is that people who are experiencing homelessness are at a much higher risk of contracting COVID-19 than the general population. People who are experiencing homelessness do not have the privacy of a home in which to quarantine. They live in an open environment and often in very close proximity to others. Basic hygiene products like soap and hand sanitizers are not always easily accessible.

People who are experiencing homelessness are uniquely vulnerable to COVID-19 because often times they have underlying medical conditions like diabetes, asthma, hypertension and heart disease. And, many are 60 years old or older.

For many men and women, a chronic health condition was the cause of their homelessness. Often times, people are in a position where they need to choose between health care, food and rent. Because people need to eat and a place to live, these expenses become a priority over health care. A prolonged chronic health condition will often lead to the loss of a job and then the loss of a home. Unfortunately, this situation is all too common among people experiencing homelessness.

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A Message from Richard Ducatenzeiler, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Over the past several months, our world has turned upside down with social distancing and sheltering-in-place becoming all too common parts of our everyday lives. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our priorities continue to center around the health and safety of the people we serve, our employees and all those associated with Franciscan Outreach.

We are so grateful for the outpouring of love and support that we have received through financial contributions, donations of much needed supplies and hundreds of cloth face masks stitched by the dedicated hands of dozens of individuals committed to protecting our guests and front line staff. Your response to our call has been nothing short of extraordinary and we are so humbled and encouraged by your generous support.

This Spring Newsletter is entirely focused on our COVID-19 response efforts, including the critical measures we have taken to protect our city's most vulnerable neighbors. Throughout this newsletter, we share how our life-changing work has really become life-saving as many of the men and women we serve each day are at higher risk of illness, like COVID-19, because often times they have underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma, hypertension and heart disease.

We describe how we put protective measures in place to mitigate the risk of illness and transmission, including the decompression of our shelters. By decreasing the capacity across our programs and moving some of our guest over to a local YMCA, we were able to increase social distancing and the protection among the men and women residing at our shelters. In addition to increasing the operational hours at our three existing emergency shelters to 24 hours a day, seven days per week, Franciscan Outreach has been serving as the lead coordinating agency of the 188-bed temporary shelter at the YMCA since mid-March.

One of the most essential partnerships that has significantly grown through this crisis has been with our medical community partners, including Rush University Medical Center, Lawndale Christian Health Center, and Heartland Alliance. We are very proud to be a member of the Chicago Homelessness and Health Response Group for Equity (CHHRGE). See page 5.

This team of homeless service providers and healthcare professionals has been effectively leading the charge to address the

impact of COVID-19 on individuals experiencing homelessness across the city. From what began as initial conversations between Franciscan Outreach and Rush University Medical Center to develop a response to the rapid growing health crisis, quickly evolved into daily calls of a consortium of more than 50 organizations.

When I think about what is happening today during this crisis and how people and communities are coming together to help each other through these extraordinary times, I think about one of Chicago's darkest times. In 1871, the great Chicago fire killed approximately 300 people and burned a little over three square miles of our city into ashes leaving one of every three residents homeless. Within just a few days after the fire, people across the country heard about the destruction and donations and support began to pour in to help with the city's relief efforts.

In April 1872, the City Council passed an ordinance to establish a free Chicago Public Library providing access to books to all Chicagoans and the city began to rewrite its building codes and fire safety standards. Although the fire was devastating and caused so much harm to many people, there was good that came from it as Chicago began to rebuild almost immediately after and from the ashes, created one of the most magnificent cities in the world.

Today, nearly 150 years later, Chicago faces a different type of crisis; we are facing a health crisis on top of a social crisis. At Franciscan Outreach, we believe that everyone deserves a place to call home as well as access to adequate health care.

Through the work and recommendations made from CHRRGE, the city has repurposed a hotel located in the downtown area to serve as shield housing to protect those experiencing homelessness and also at high risk for COVID-19 because of age or medical fragility with the goal of placing them into permanent supportive housing. We also are looking at ways to improve access to health care for individuals residing in shelters by creating standards of care for shelter-based health care (SBC) that will help strengthen the relationships between our guests and health systems.

As the city slowly begins its path toward reopening and recovery from this crisis, we will remain committed to prioritizing the health and safety of our guests and employees. Just like we did over a century ago after the great fire, we too will get through this crisis together and rise again from the ashes to build a better, stronger Chicago.

Stay strong and healthy and remember that we are in this together!

Thank you for standing with Franciscan Outreach and the hundreds of men and women we serve each day.

Gratefully,

Richard Ducatenzeiler



Franciscan Outreach shelter guests receive three healthy meals each day.

Serving our Vulnerable Neighbors

Franciscan Outreach exists as a safety net for men and women who rely on us to provide for their basic needs and who count on us to safeguard them from harm. Throughout the year, we serve more than 4,100 people who are experiencing homelessness through five service sites, including three shelters and two day centers.

Each day, we serve hundreds of men and women who are extremely vulnerable. We provide direct services to ensure that our guests can meet with case managers and support staff to address their immediate and long-term needs. Our three shelters are designed as congregate living facilities, with the bed capacity to serve 382 people each night. We also serve three meals a day. Our guests eat and sleep within close proximity to one another.



Dorothy Nelson and Mackenzie Trott

A Safe Place to Regain Strength

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, Dorothy Nelson, 72, was riding on buses and sleeping on trains to stay safe. When she finally found Franciscan Outreach, last April, she was exhausted.

"I thought - thank God for a bed. I slept for 12-14 hours straight. They finally had to wake me up," says Dorothy. "I'm slowly getting my strength back. But, to be honest, I'm lost."

Franciscan Outreach is helping Dorothy to regain her strength. She has three healthy meals a day. And, she meets with a doctor from Rush University Medical Center, who monitors her health and screens her for COVID-19.

Dorothy's case manager, Mackenzie Trott, has provided her with her basic needs, such as clothing. She is also helping Dorothy address her long-term needs, such as housing. Mackenzie entered Dorothy into Chicago's Coordinated Entry System (CES) for housing opportunities.

"My case manager is helping me to get what I need. I feel safe. And, I'm treated with respect," says Dorothy.

In the Face of Crisis

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the country last February and into March, we knew that if we didn't take immediate action, the result would be catastrophic; causing devastating consequences for the hundreds of people within our care and our employees.

We took a number of proactive steps to put measures in place to protect the health and safety of our guests, employees and all those associated with Franciscan Outreach. It was important to establish systems for education on personal protection and hygiene protocols; rigorous cleaning and disinfecting schedules; guidelines for maintaining six-foot social distances; and procedures for screening and monitoring for signs of illness.

"In the very early days of this crisis, it felt like there was a tornado heading right for us," says Richard Ducatenzeiler, Franciscan Outreach executive director. "We had to act quickly. It was essential that all our employees and guests were equipped with information on personal protection protocols and safety procedures. We met with our guests, gave them information and posted notices throughout our facilities. We also set up weekly staff conference calls to provide everyone with the most up-to-date information and to offer a platform for them to share information and ask questions."

To protect the health and safety of the broader Franciscan Outreach community, we suspended all community volunteer activities and all in-person organization-wide events. Our Full-Time Volunteer Program was also suspended and the young adult volunteers who came to Chicago from Germany to dedicate a year of service to Franciscan Outreach returned home.

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Looking to the Future

Kenesha Williams celebrated her 38th birthday last April during the COVID-19 crisis. She has been staying at Franciscan Outreach's largest shelter in North Lawndale since her last birthday in 2019.



Rush medical professional and Kenesha Williams

Difficult times are no stranger to Kenesha. For 10 years, she lived with and cared for her sister who was ill, while also raising her nieces and nephews. When her sister passed away, Kenesha cared for her uncle, who was also ill. After her uncle passed away in 2019, Kenesha had no place to go and ended up becoming homeless.

Kenesha, who has health concerns of her own, sees a physician from Rush University Medical Center at the shelter. "I worry about the sickness that's going around but the doctors are monitoring me," says Kenesha. "I wear a mask every day and I make sure I wash my hands."

Rose Plaza, Kenesha's case manager, says that she has been working with Kenesha on finding a job and housing. "I helped her to develop her resume," says Rose. "I also entered her into CES for housing opportunities."

"I'd like to go back to school and become a secretary. Or, I'd like to be a CNA," says Kenesha.

Thankfully, Rose is helping Kenesha look to the possibilities of the future.

Preventing the Spread of Illness

There was a very real and growing concern about our ability to maintain social distancing and isolation practices for the prevention and spread of illness among the hundreds of guests we serve each day at our three shelters. We were particularly concerned about our guests who are most vulnerable and at greatest risk of contracting the illness.

To address these concerns, we worked under the guidelines of the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH). The decompression of our two largest shelters was critical for the health and safety of our guests. DFSS identified a local YMCA where we were able to transport 145 people, which has allowed us to decrease capacity and increase social distancing in an effort to reduce the spread and transmission of illness at all our shelter locations.

With this additional site, we have been staffing four shelter locations during the COVID-19 crisis. Each shelter is operating twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The YMCA has the capacity for 188 and we continue to receive referrals for people to stay there. The YMCA and the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) has supplied the cots and blankets and the Salvation Army provides all meals for our guests at this new YMCA location. The Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) provides food for our guests who stay at our three other shelter locations. We also receive lunch three days per week from Inspiration Kitchen for guests at our shelter in East Garfield Park.

"With the addition of the YMCA shelter, we're able to ensure that all our shelter guests are sleeping, eating and receiving daily support services at a safe six-foot distance from one other," says Luwana Johnson, director of Franciscan Outreach's Shelter Operations.

Franciscan Outreach operates a temporary YMCA shelter serving 188 guests.



Protecting the Most Vulnerable

Although the increase in our shelter operations allowed for greater social distancing, it also increased our concern as to our ability to maintain the health and safety of the men and women within our care who are most at risk of contracting COVID-19. We reached out to our community partners, including Rush University Medical Center and Lawndale Christian Health Center to help us address the urgent needs of our most vulnerable guests.

Rush, which operates an onsite health clinic at our largest shelter in North Lawndale, has been instrumental in providing education and training to our staff on how to identify and respond to signs of illness. They implemented a nightly on-call service, staffed by Rush physicians and clinicians, to answer any questions from Franciscan Outreach staff concerning our guests' health. They've also been providing medical supplies and personal protective equipment, including face masks for Franciscan Outreach staff and guests.



Guests are screened for symptoms of COVID-19.

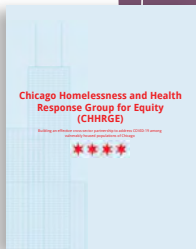
Chicago Homelessness and Health Response Group for Equity (CHHRGE)

In early March, Richard Ducatzenleier began scheduling daily morning calls with Rush physicians, Dr. David Ansell and Dr. Steven Rothschild, and Lawndale Christian Health Center physician, Dr. Thomas Huggett, to gain expert medical advice. The physicians have provided guidance on how to put protective measures in place to minimize the risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19.

These morning calls have provided best practice recommendations from leading medical professionals in the field. Soon, other medical professionals, homeless service providers, human service agencies, representatives from DFSS and CDPH joined the calls. All participants on the calls are welcome to share their insights on effective

methods for screening, monitoring and managing COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness. This group has evolved to include more than 50 people from a variety of professions, and is now known as the Chicago Homelessness and Health Response Group for Equity (CHHRGE).

“The West Side COVID-19 response group, CHHRGE, has become a critical consortium of medical experts and valued professionals from across the city who have joined together for a common purpose – to identify and implement best practices in the guard against COVID-19 transmission among people experiencing homelessness,” says Richard Ducatzenleier.



White Paper: COVID-19 Response Lessons Learned

The Chicago Homelessness and Health Response Group for Equity (CHHRGE) produced a white paper to share lessons learned and resources developed by a team of healthcare professionals and homeless service providers who convened in March 2020 to address the impact of COVID-19 on the health of people experiencing homelessness in Chicago. Read the full white paper at www.franoutreach.org/resources.



A Place for Those at Risk

The City of Chicago was able to secure two local hotels for people who are experiencing homelessness and at high risk of contracting the illness. Dr. Thomas Huggett and his medical team from Lawndale Christian Health Center helped to convert one of the hotels into a shelter for 174 individuals who are at risk because they are over age 60 or 55 with underlying medical conditions. Dr. Huggett has a room at the hotel where he now lives and works so he can manage his medical team and monitor the health of those who are staying there.

Dr. Huggett and his medical team work with Franciscan Outreach to identify shelter guests who are at high risk of contracting COVID-19. If guests are at risk, they are invited to stay at the hotel. They are provided transportation to the hotel, where they must stay in their rooms to self-isolate. They receive three meals a day and any necessary medication.

Dr. Huggett and his work with Franciscan Outreach were featured in the *Wall Street Journal* article “Homelessness and Coronavirus: A Day in the Life of a Doctor Treating the Vulnerable” and a video. See the article and video at www.franoutreach.org/in-the-news.



From Lower Wacker to Lower West Side

Cory Robertson lived outside in an encampment under Lower Wacker Drive until April 30, 2020 when he was referred to Franciscan Outreach. Since then, he has stayed at the Franciscan Outreach shelter in the Pilsen community on Chicago's Lower West Side.



Cory Robertson and Rebecca Carter

Cory is grateful to be in a place where he feels secure. “They have been trying really hard to keep everyone safe and healthy,” says Cory. “We have to fill out a little survey on how we’re feeling, if we have a fever or cough. Then they take our temperature and write it down each day.”

Rebecca Carter is Cory's case manager. She is helping him to access the resources he needs to gain stability in his life, such as an ID and Medicaid. She also makes sure that Cory has everything he needs to remain healthy.

“Everyone is required to wear a face mask in the shelter and when they go out,” says Rebecca. “Guests are washing their hands more frequently.” “Every day, guests are screened for symptoms of COVID-19. If people are experiencing symptoms, we have an isolation room where they can go.”

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Guests are screened, monitored and tested for COVID-19.

COVID-19 Screening, Testing & Treatment

Dr. Steven Rothschild and the Rush medical team work side by side with Franciscan Outreach’s staff at our shelter locations to screen guests for signs of COVID-19. Each day, shelter guests have their temperatures taken and are screened for symptoms of the illness. If guests have symptoms of COVID-19, they are isolated in a separate room. As soon as COVID-19 testing became available, all Franciscan Outreach guests and direct service staff were tested and they continue to be tested as concerns arise.

Franciscan Outreach guests, who test positive for COVID-19, are taken to one of two isolation centers, including A Safe Haven, where Rush provides the intake and medical support, and the South Side Respite Center, a YMCA, where Cook County Health provides the medical coordination. If people are severely ill, they’re taken to the emergency room of a local hospital.

Lawndale Christian Health Center has started offering COVID-19 testing through a mobile testing unit. Medical professionals operate the testing device from a van. They’re able to test shelter guests and run the test through the mobile unit, which can provide the results within 30 minutes.

“This mobile testing unit is a tremendous help in protecting our guests against COVID-19. If we can test people right away and reduce the spread of the infection, that will help us save lives,” says Luwana Johnson.

A Commitment to Our Vulnerable Neighbors

The COVID-19 crisis continues to be a major threat to all of us, but it remains most hostile toward those who are most vulnerable. Franciscan Outreach is dedicated to protecting our most vulnerable neighbors. With the unwavering commitment from our staff, board of directors, community partners and all those who support Franciscan Outreach, we will continue to do everything we can to ensure the health and safety of the hundreds of men and women we serve each day.

Dedicated Frontline Staff

During these critical days of the crisis, Franciscan Outreach’s dedicated frontline staff has been working tirelessly to provide care and support to hundreds of extremely vulnerable men and women each day. At the same time that our frontline staff is screening individuals for COVID-19, they are also helping guests to navigate through this crisis.

Franciscan Outreach case managers continue to meet regularly with guests at our shelters and at our Day Program in East Garfield Park. They meet with guests either in person, wearing personal protective equipment, or via phone. Now, more than ever, our guests need guidance and support to address the many overwhelming challenges they face.

Although it’s difficult during this crisis, case managers work one-on-one with guests to help them identify the root causes of their homelessness, set goals and address long-standing life issues so they can get the assistance they need to gain stability and prepare to move into housing. Case managers connect guests with the resources and benefits they need but are unable to access on their own. With the assistance from case managers, guests can access: identification documentation; Social Security benefits; public aid resources; veterans’ benefits; employment opportunities; health care; mental health counseling; substance use disorder treatment; legal aid; and more.

Case managers continue to provide guests with the assistance they need so they can transition into permanent housing. They help guests access the required documentation and they enter them into Chicago’s Coordinated Entry System (CES). CES is a centralized system, required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to help the most vulnerable individuals in our community connect to the housing and services they need.

“Our case managers are doing a phenomenal job meeting the critical needs of our guests during this crisis. All of our case managers have been trained in trauma-informed care, which is vital every day but even more during a time when all of society is experiencing so much anxiety. Throughout this crisis, our guests have been worried about what will happen to them, and the presence of a friendly face, especially someone who can make sure their needs are met, can make people feel so much more secure,” says Abbie Beato, director of the Franciscan Outreach Case Management Program.



Franciscan Outreach exists as a safety net for those in need.

MAKE A LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT

Franciscan Outreach is deeply grateful to all our generous supporters who are standing with us during this time of tremendous need by providing critical support to the hundreds of men and women we serve each day who are experiencing homelessness.

Please join us in protecting our city's most vulnerable residents. We serve our guests 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our frontline staff are providing for the needs of our shelter guests, while also trying to protect their health and safety.

At Franciscan Outreach, our guests have a safe place to sleep each night, three meals a day and

access to case management services. They are also screened and monitored daily for COVID-19.

With each day that passes during this crisis, our concern for the health and safety of the people we serve increases. We're doing everything we can to protect our neighbors in need but we need help.

There are a number of ways that you can help Franciscan Outreach provide relief to men and women experiencing homelessness during this crisis. Below are the top five ways you can make a meaningful impact.

Top 5 Ways to Make an Impact

Thank you for standing with Franciscan Outreach during this COVID-19 crisis. With your help, we can continue to protect the health and safety of our city's most vulnerable residents.



MAKE A DONATION

A donation to Franciscan Outreach will provide meals, shelter and critical resources that will protect the health and safety of those we serve each day. You can make a contribution by using the enclosed envelope or online at: www.franoutreach.org/donate-funds.



GIVE AN IN-KIND GIFT

With increased disinfecting, our shelters need cleaning supplies. And, the immediate needs of the men and women at our shelters has grown tremendously. You can provide an in-kind gift from our Immediate Needs List on our COVID-19-Response page at www.franoutreach.org/covid-19-response.



MAKE A FACE MASK

Franciscan Outreach direct service staff are working tirelessly around-the-clock to serve our neighbors in need. Our guests and staff need personal protective equipment like face masks. You can make face masks by following CDC instructions online at: bit.ly/CDC-Mask-Making.



GATHER FOR GOOD

During this time of social distancing, we're not able to gather together with friends and family. However, you may be able to "Gather for Good" for Franciscan Outreach. Please see our "Gather for Good" flyer that you can share. You can access the flyer online by going to: www.franoutreach.org/gather-for-good/



VOLUNTEER

Because of COVID-19, we suspended all community volunteer activities. However, the City of Chicago is offering volunteer opportunities at shelters, including Franciscan Outreach, on its website. You will need to complete the Homeless Shelter Staff Support form online at: bit.ly/City-Volunteer.



Franciscan Outreach

717B W. 18th St.
Chicago, IL 60616

Our Mission

To provide healthy meals, safe shelter and critical services that affirm the dignity of men and women who are marginalized and homeless and empower them to gain the stability they need to transition into permanent housing.

We are supported in part through grants from the Department of Family and Support Services, through the following funding streams: Corporate Funds, Community Development Block Grant, Emergency Solutions Grant, and Aviation.

In accordance with the Federal Law and US Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the bases of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write the USDA, office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Bldg., 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD.) The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

In-Person Events Postponed to 2021



See What's Happening Virtually!

Sign Up for Franciscan Outreach's eNews

www.franoutreach.org/join-our-email-list



SERVICE SITES

East Garfield Park

At Garfield Community
Service Center

10 S. Kedzie Ave.
312.746.5695

Case Management
Support Services
Specialized Services
Housing Programs

East Garfield Park

At Walls Memorial CME Church
200 S. Sacramento Blvd.

Healthy Meals
Safe Shelter
Guests have access to full
services at the shelter on
Harrison Street.

North Lawndale

2715 W. Harrison St.
773.265.6683

Healthy Meals
Safe Shelter
Case Management
Support Services
Specialized Services
Housing Programs
Volunteer Programs

Pilsen

1856 S. Loomis St.
312.624.8296

Healthy Meals
Safe Shelter
Case Management
Support Services
Specialized Services
Housing Programs

The Loop

At St. Peter's Church
110 W. Madison St.
312.628.1253

Case Management
Support Services
Housing Programs



A Path from Help to Hope

Administrative Office

717B W. 18th St.
Chicago, IL 60616
773.278.6724

www.franoutreach.org