



PADS Lake County Partner Communication

RE: Fall Shelter Season

Dear Community Partners,

This is Allen Swilley, PADS Lake County's new Executive Director.

I would like to first introduce myself and let you all know that I am anxious and excited to meet with you all in person over the coming months. In our collective work of serving our neighbors struggling with homelessness, we realized that we share the same challenges (and solutions), and that our individual visions cannot be achieved by working in silos. I am interested in learning how PADS can be a better partner as we work to create an ecosystem of resources and opportunities for the populations we serve. Additionally, in this email, we would like to communicate with you our Fall and Spring operations, how we will support those experiencing housing crises this season, and what you can expect when engaging with us.

Changes to Our Service Delivery

- There will be no rotating church shelter sites this season.
- Starting October 17, we will extend our day site hours to 9pm at our 1800 Grand location.

Current Operations and Rationale Behind Changes

- We are serving more families than ever before. Of the 200 clients we currently have in our hotel shelter, half are children. **As an agency, we have decided that no matter what our funding challenges are, we will not allow children to go unsheltered.** We hope that the community rallies behind us on this.
- Prior to COVID there was a slow drip of decline in church participation that was then exacerbated by COVID. Over the last 12 months we have lost six church shelter sites who tried their best to pull together volunteers and make space for the shelter season but were unable to do so. We recognize this as a growing trend as our volunteer population ages and volunteer motivation shifts to identifying safer engagement opportunities due to COVID.
- We calculated the average nightly capacity of our church shelters to be approximately 50 beds. Because of recent and unexpected resources from the state, we can offer 40 additional rooms/80 additional beds (or more, depending on household size), exceeding our church capacity by 30 beds or more. While we have added extra capacity, just like church shelter, we anticipate delicately managing this capacity and potentially not being able to meet everyone's shelter needs, but we recognize that this approach drastically reduces the need for the unpredictable lottery system that we have used in the past.

- While PADS undergoes a process of adjusting our internal systems and practices to serve more clients at our day site and funnel them into our hotel shelter, we have also weighed on the operational and logistical challenge of supporting our church sites vs. expanding hotel sites - where we are able to centralize operations and have better access to our clients to engage them in ongoing case management for the purpose of ending their homelessness.

Next Steps

- We have developed a new intake and assessment system that will allow us to serve more clients and assess their needs immediately; as opposed to scheduling appointments for them to return later, allowing us to prioritize our clients' needs. Additionally, beginning October 17th, we will have hours at our Day Resource Center that extend into the night hours (9pm) to accommodate any police drop-offs of individuals presenting with literal homelessness. Clients no longer have to wait until the evening to access shelter as they can now come to PADS at any time and be assessed immediately for shelter or other services. Because of our new process and our extended hours, we will no longer respond to middle-of-the-night emergencies.

It should be said that while we have dedicated ourselves to serving those experiencing housing crises, we cannot do this work alone. We continue to need the support and close partnerships of our fellow nonprofits, churches, volunteers, police, and governments. Over the coming weeks I seek to invite a cross-section of all stakeholders to a collaborative meeting about how we can collectively address our shared challenges and brainstorm ways that we can support one another in creating a shared vision for the future as it relates to housing and homelessness. More to come on this.

Current Hours of Operations at 1800 Grand

9am to 5pm (open case management and shelter assessment -10am to 4pm)

Hours of Operations at 1800 Grand, Starting October 17th

9am to 9pm (open case management 10am to 4pm, shelter assessment 10am to 9pm)