



Shelter expands operations as S3 celebrates 1 year

by Zachary Horner 6/21/18

As the S3 Housing Connect task force celebrated its first “birthday,” a local homeless shelter announced a major shift.

Outreach Mission, which offers men’s and women’s shelters, announced to the task force Thursday afternoon that it would be shifting its operations to 24/7 instead of overnight and would change to a low-barrier shelter.

“What we will be mainly focused on is the housing, providing the shelter, providing a safe place for them to be, two meals per day,” said Marcia Johnson, who works with Outreach Mission. “The shelters are not permanent homes. We want to get them in, save their lives, give them a safe place, a safe place to start. Everybody’s lives need more than a safe place to sleep and some food.”

The mission, which is supported by several churches in Sanford, has already begun providing some of those services. Johnson said that there has already been some misinformation floating about the change. Letters to the participating churches and a letter to the editor to be published in The Herald with more about the switch have already been drafted to provide more clarity.

Johnston stressed that the change came about after seeing a need for more than what the shelters currently offered.

“We want to take whatever steps necessary to make the shelters open and available, low-barrier and available immediately,” she said. “The support that we have received from S3 task force members has really been encouraging, has really kept us uplifted as we move forward.

“You don’t have to be prequalified and you don’t have to meet certain requirements. We want you to be cared about first.”

The announcement was met with applause from the S3 members in attendance.

Also on Thursday, Terry Allebaugh with the N.C. Coalition to End Homelessness, who has been working with the task force since the beginning, gave encouragement to the group.

“I’m so taken by how you all have addressed, taken up the cause of addressing homelessness,” Allebaugh said. “When it gets in you – when people get their own home and their own sense of

themselves — then something incredible happens, and people want to be a part of it. I love it when a community says, ‘We’re not OK with homelessness.’ But it’s even a greater thing when you start working on it.”

Karen Kennedy, community development manager with the City of Sanford, added that she and Bill Hicks with Bread of Life Ministries are working on getting the current emergency shelter ready for summer heat by adding showers with new plumbing and an air-conditioning unit.

“We hoped to have had that done by now, but there have been some hiccups with the contract and the architect,” she said. “The city has agreed to fund those items.”

The shelter has been the beneficiary of funds from the city, Lee County Government and the N.C. General Assembly.

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http://www.sanfordherald.com/news/shelter-expands-operations-as-s-celebrates-year/article_a879232a-759f-11e8-af3b-eb296d8a192d.html