



United Way of Anchorage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Emergency Cold Weather Shelter system opens October 1

Supply kits for families assembled by volunteers on September 30

Anchorage AK – For the 10th consecutive season, local churches, Abused Women’s Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), the Municipality of Anchorage, and United Way of Anchorage will work in tandem to offer Emergency Cold Weather Shelter to families with children when regular shelters are full. The system is activated from October to mid-May. The first night of shelter will be Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Families in need can call Alaska’s 2-1-1 helpline, which will refer them to the AWAIC shelter. AWAIC staff then coordinate with the church providing shelter that night to let them know when families are en route and how many guests they’ll have. A grant from the Key Bank Foundation provides families transportation to shelters when needed.

When families sign in, they’ll receive referrals to the Coordinated Entry system if they aren’t already registered. The Coordinated Entry system, managed by the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, aims to help people find permanent housing.

Volunteers at the 10 churches (an increase from 9 in 2018) offer a warm welcome along with sleeping pads, blankets, pillows and snacks. The goal is that no family with children sleeps in an unsafe place during the coldest months of the year. “As faith communities, we are called to shelter the homeless and feed those who are hungry,” said Danna Larson, a volunteer and faith formation director at First Presbyterian Church of Anchorage. “Through this ministry our volunteers get to know the families personally and can better understand the challenges they face in trying to find affordable housing here in Anchorage. Providing emergency housing is the first step on the journey for these families.”

Last winter (2018/2019) 2,023 shelter nights were provided to 84 families that included 131 children.

For more details on Emergency Cold Weather Shelter, [click here](#)

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: At noon on Monday, Sept. 30 First Presbyterian (616 West 10th Ave.) will host volunteers to assemble 500 supply kits for sheltered families. Adult kits will have a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, comb, tissue pack and socks. Children kits will also include a deck of playing cards and a coloring book or word search game.

Below are statistics tracking the Emergency Cold Weather Shelter system, both last year’s and the cumulative numbers since 2010.

Emergency Cold Weather Shelter

2018-19

Churches sheltered:

84 families

131 children

125 adults

Churches provided:

194 nights in operation

2,023 bed nights (bed night = 1 person, 1 bed)

100 volunteers (est.)

2010-2019

Churches sheltered:

558 families

837 children

811 adults

Churches provided:

1,269 nights in operation

10,686 bed nights

About United Way of Anchorage

United Way of Anchorage is a community of donors, advocates, volunteers, and partners who fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. LIVE UNITED