



NIGHTLIGHTS

SPRING 2018

Youth Programs Respond to Mental Health Needs of Clients

Nearly 70% of young people experiencing homelessness face mental health issues, according to new research conducted by The University of Chicago. Helping young people address these challenges is part of the comprehensive continuum of care provided by The Night Ministry's Youth Housing Programs.

"All of our youth deal with trauma. Even if there hasn't been any specific trauma in the past, becoming homeless is traumatizing in itself," said Neal Marie Ross, Manager of Supportive Services, Youth Programs, at The Night Ministry. "That trauma can manifest in ways such as depression and anxiety."

Ross said mental health issues can also be contributing factors in youth homelessness. "Many times family members are uninformed about mental illness, and they view symptoms as defiance, anger issues, or laziness, so they kick the young person out of the house."

Through a partnership with Rush University Medical Center, residents of the Interim Housing and the STEPS Transitional Living Programs at The Night Ministry's Open Door Shelter – West Town have access to in-house mental health services, including counseling with post-doctorate fellows.

Anthony Monterroso, Case Manager at STEPS, said scheduling and transportation issues have been barriers to connecting youth to mental health services. "Now they don't have to travel very far—it's just a trip down the elevator."

West Town staff said the services offered with Rush, which are expanding to The Night Ministry's Response-Ability Pregnant and Parenting Program (RAPPP), have resulted in a decrease in symptoms and an increase in client motivation.



The Night Ministry provides Youth Programs staff with resources to help young people experiencing mental health issues.

A STEPS resident who sees a counselor regularly said she finds it beneficial. "The therapist I work with has been understanding, and the additional services have been more than helpful."

Staff with The Night Ministry's Youth Programs are acquiring additional resources to assist residents with immediate mental health needs. Monterroso and Ross are leading trainings in Mental Health First Aid, which Monterroso said is designed to help staff recognize signs of a mental health issue and provide initial help to a young person experiencing one.

"If we can identify the symptoms early, then we may be able to avoid a full-blown mental health crisis," he said. "The more aware people are of what effective supports and treatments exist, the more young people will get the appropriate help that they need."

Mental Health First Aid training will eventually be offered to staff throughout The Night Ministry. ◇

"If we can identify the symptoms early, then we may be able to avoid a full-blown mental health crisis."

*-Anthony Monterroso,
STEPS Case Manager*

HOUSING • HEALTH CARE • HUMAN CONNECTION

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The Associate Board: Passion, Diversity, and Service

By Travis Schmitz, Associate Board President

It's really easy to be passionate about The Night Ministry, isn't it? Look at the incomparable work we are doing, the communities we are serving, and the incredible staff members who inspire so many of us on a daily basis. But what really puts it over the top for me is serving alongside an unbelievably passionate, diverse, and committed group of Associate Board members who work tirelessly to have a positive impact on The Night Ministry's clients and the organization's ability to fulfill its mission.

The Associate Board began in 2012, and, through the leadership of past Presidents Michael Baran, Lindsay Zimmerman, and Ellen Rosenwinkel, we currently stand 30 members strong. Our membership reflects one of my favorite things about Chicago—its diversity. We are diverse in demographic makeup, diverse in personality, and diverse in how we engage with and give back to The Night Ministry. Whether it is organizing school supply drives and the annual warmth initiative, participating in Chicago's Pride Parade, or working to onboard and welcome new members, we have an incredibly driven and committed group of members who find a way to plug in.

"We are diverse in demographic makeup, diverse in personality, and diverse in how we engage with and give back to The Night Ministry."



Associate Board President Travis Schmitz welcomes guests to the annual Night Lights gala.

But do you want to know what has excited me the most? This group of volunteers raised more than \$100,000 in 2017. In

just five years, the Associate Board has gone from raising around \$10,000 a year to over \$100,000 in support of The Night Ministry's work. That sort of money doesn't come from just having a bigger group. It comes from a passionate, committed group of people who are making a difference.

So, just as much as anything else, in 2018 I'm incredibly excited to continue recruiting passionate Associate Board members to help us serve the individuals who benefit from the work of The Night Ministry. I would love to talk to you if you would like to join our group or if you know of someone who might be interested. Email me at associateboard.tnm@gmail.com. ♦

Join the Associate Board!



In 2017 The Night Ministry's Associate Board exceeded its fundraising goals for Night Lights, its annual gala.

The Associate Board (AB) supports the overall mission and activities of The Night Ministry. Acting as ambassadors of the agency, Associate Board members engage the community through volunteering, fundraising, networking, and advocacy opportunities targeted towards young professionals. To join the Associate Board or to receive information about membership, email associateboard.tnm@gmail.com. ♦

SAVE THE DATE: Upcoming AB Events

EMPORIUM ARCADE FUNDRAISER

Thursday, March 22
7:00 - 9:00 pm
Emporium Arcade Bar
1366 N. Milwaukee Ave

BREWS & BITES

Tuesday, May 22
6:30 - 8:30 pm
Revolution Brewing
2323 N. Milwaukee Ave

NIGHT LIGHTS

Thursday, November 8
6:00 - 9:00 pm
River Roast
315 N. LaSalle St.

Bringing Nourishment to the Streets



Not knowing where the next meal is coming from, or if there will be one, is a day-to-day reality for many individuals experiencing homelessness or poverty. In The Night Ministry's 2017 Outreach and Health Ministry Survey, more than 20% of guests at the Health Outreach Bus reported that they had not eaten anything that day before coming to the Bus, while nearly half said they had eaten but had not had enough food.

Volunteers play a huge role in providing the nourishment and comfort that food brings, last year serving 88,275 meals to clients of The Night Ministry.

Groups from across the Chicago area—congregations, civic and community organizations, businesses, schools, and more—volunteer to prepare and serve meals alongside the Bus in the seven neighborhoods it visits, with the Youth Outreach Team in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood, and at The Crib, The Night Ministry's emergency overnight shelter for young adults.

To sign up your family or group to serve a meal or for more information, contact David Goodwin, Congregational and Community Relations Coordinator, at (773) 506-6004 or davidg@thenightministry.org. ♦

JOIN US **TUESDAY, JUNE 12, AT 5:30 PM**
FOR **LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT**
Our Annual Awards Dinner & Auction,
at Loews Chicago Hotel.

Enjoy cocktails, appetizers, dinner, and live and silent auctions with unique travel, dining, and entertainment packages. Sanjay Shah, Founder and CEO of Vistex, is chairing this year's event, which will be emceed by retired WGN-TV news anchor Robert H. Jordan, Jr. Rush University Medical Center will be honored for its work providing mental health services to young people in The Night Ministry's Youth Housing Programs.

Sponsorships and tickets are available at www.thenightministry.org. For more information, contact Charlotte Whitley, Special Events Coordinator, at (773) 506-6009 or charlotte@thenightministry.org.

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The Night Ministry is proud to be a recipient of the Thrivent Choice charitable grant program. If you are a Thrivent Financial member, you can direct your Choice Dollars to The Night Ministry and make a lasting difference for the homeless in our community.

Visit www.thrivent.com and search for "Thrivent Choice" for more information.



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SAVE THE DATE: Monday, September 24
THE NIGHT MINISTRY GOLF OUTING

Kemper Lakes Golf Club, Kildeer, IL

Home of the 2018 KPMG Women's PGA Championship

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE STARTING AT \$500

For more information, or to join the Golf Outing Committee, contact Charlotte Whitley, Special Events Coordinator, at (773) 506-6009 or charlotte@thenightministry.org

New Chicago City ID Program Gets Input from The Night Ministry and Its Clients

How often do you use your driver's license or state ID to prove your identity? Would you be able to get a job, enroll in school, or find a home without one?

Yet, for individuals experiencing homelessness, the process of obtaining identification required to find work, secure stable housing, and access public services is often complex and confusing.

For almost two years, The Night Ministry has been participating with partners from the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights to ensure that Chicago's new optional municipal ID program is accessible for all Chicago residents who struggle to obtain photo identification. City Clerk Anna Valencia has announced that the program, called CityKey, will launch this spring.

"We have been encouraged by the community-centered process that Clerk Valencia has implemented to develop this ID program and appreciate that she spent an afternoon at The Night Ministry discussing the program with young adults experiencing homelessness and with our staff," said Tedd Peso, Manager of Advocacy and Community Affairs at The Night Ministry.

"Young people often arrive at our programs without the paperwork they need to obtain a state ID and, often, it takes time to gather that official paperwork—time which they could

instead be using to look for and start employment or pursue other goals," said Peso.

Youth leaders from The Night Ministry's Youth 4 Truth advocacy group told Valencia about the challenges of not having an ID. For example, they cannot access food pantries because they didn't have an ID, and the ID's they might have, such as those issued by a school, have expired. Others shared concerns about being stigmatized if they had to list a shelter address on their ID or not feeling safe revealing their address.

"Young people often arrive at our programs without the paperwork they need to obtain a state ID and, often, it takes time to gather that official paperwork—time which they could instead be using to look for and start employment or pursue other goals."

- Tedd Peso,

Manager of Advocacy and Community Affairs



Members of The Night Ministry's Youth 4 Truth leadership development group met with Chicago City Clerk Anna Valencia to discuss plans for the City's new ID program.

The CityKey regulations announced by Valencia do address many of the issues that individuals experiencing homelessness face when trying to obtain government-issued identification. For example, a very broad list of documents can be used in order to prove identity and residency, including an expired photo ID from a school. In addition, individuals who are living in a shelter program can opt to not have an address listed on

the ID. Applicants can also self-select their gender, choose a non-binary option, or elect to have a gender marker left off.

"We plan to continue the discussion with her office as the CityKey program rolls out, to make sure that this is a program that helps homeless individuals access identification and begin to take the first steps toward independence," said Peso. ♦

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Nurse's Corner: Meet Sandra Collins, Firefighter and Nurse Practitioner



Street Medicine Nurse Practitioner Sandra Collins discusses the use of medication during a consultation with a client.

Sandra Collins's job as a Nurse Practitioner with The Night Ministry's Street Medicine Program dovetails with her work as a firefighter with the City of Chicago. "Both careers put me in the position to help people in times of distress," Collins said. "At the firehouse, I am also a paramedic and see some of the same health issues and even some of the same people."

Collins is part of a team that also includes a Case Manager and Outreach Professional. Together they travel the city, visiting individuals living in encampments. Collins provides immediate medical care for such health issues as asthma, sinus and skin infections, and body aches. "We also educate people on proper hand hygiene and use of medication," she said, "and we talk about signs of worsening illnesses such as fever or difficulty breathing."

According to Collins, there is no typical day for the Street Medicine Team. "We get calls throughout the day letting us know about clients who need medical care or supplies, and we change our route," she said. "We also sometimes have to take people to the emergency room."

"Both careers put me in the position to help people in times of distress."

*- Sandra Collins
Street Medicine Nurse Practitioner*

"We even have days where clients have relocated," she said, "and we look for them based on what other people tell us. We also search for new encampments based on word of mouth or things each of us has seen on our off days."

Collins said she has developed trusting relationships with the clients she encounters on a regular basis. "We discuss how and why they got to where they are today. We discuss family life and talk about the last time they called their parents or loved ones to let them know they are okay."

"Several people have even called and talked to their loved ones on our phones," she added.

Street Medicine began as a pilot project in 2016 and is now a permanent part of The Night Ministry's Outreach and Health Ministry Program. ◇

How will you leave your legacy?

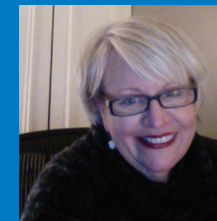
After securing economic stability and providing for the needs of your loved ones, you may choose to make a lasting charitable impact with a bequest to The Night Ministry. If you have already included The Night Ministry in your will, please let us know — we would like to acknowledge your generosity and welcome you as a member of The Legacy Society.

Contact Christy Prassas

Vice President of Development & External Relations

christy@thenightministry.org

or (773) 506-6023.



"I've long been struck by the compassion and creativity of The Night Ministry, and by the courage of those who depend on it for a safe and supportive community. Sharing my estate with The Night Ministry is my way of helping young people become the people they are called to be."

- Sharon Johnson,
Legacy Society Member

Brand New Desks at STEPS



Eight new desks and chairs are helping STEPS Transitional Living Program residents stay on top of school work, job searches, and personal projects. A generous donation from the Allstate Foundation provided funds to purchase the furniture for all of the residents' rooms.



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Mobile Pet Care at the Health Outreach Bus



Veterinarian Stacy Lempka gets to know the needs of both pets and their owners alongside The Night Ministry's Health Outreach Bus in Humboldt Park.

When Stacy Lempka pulls up in her red van next to The Night Ministry's Health Outreach Bus, she receives a warm welcome from guests, including the four-legged kind.

"They come and greet me as soon as I get to the sidewalk," said Lempka, a veterinarian who provides free basic health care for the dogs and cats of Bus guests in Humboldt Park. From the back of her van, she performs wellness exams, administers vaccinations, and offers preventive medicines and treatments.

It's estimated that 5 to 10 percent of Americans experiencing homelessness have an animal companion. For many, their pet is a main source of physical, emotional, and social support, providing protection, unconditional love, and another life to care for.

Lempka witnessed this bond firsthand six years ago when she was asked to see the dog belonging to a Health Outreach Bus guest.

"It was evident how much the owner loved his dog. He was willing to put the health and well-being of his pet over his own," she said. "I knew how important it was, from a social, psychological, and physiological stand point, to keep this pet healthy."

In Humboldt Park, many Bus guests bring their pets back to Lempka for follow-up visits.

"I have learned how they acquired their pet, why they have given them specific names, and the tricks they have taught them. And I've heard personal accounts of how their pet helped them through some difficult times," she said.

"The pet owners I see at the Bus face different challenges than those I see in an office, but their level of attachment and commitment to their pets is just as strong," she added.

Lempka currently relies on her own resources and the generosity of friends to provide her services alongside the Health Outreach Bus. If you would like to support her work, contact Krista Kutz, Individual Giving Coordinator, at (773) 506-6006 or krista@thenightministry.org. ♦

Thank you to those who generously gave at the \$250 level or higher between November 1, 2017 - January 31, 2018



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