

Inn from the Cold – Kelowna Final Report April 2008

This report is dedicated to the volunteers of Inn from the Cold-Kelowna. It is their generosity, dedication and initiative which make the program possible.



Submitted by: The Board of Directors of
Inn From The Cold – Kelowna,

Heather Karabelas
Cathy Farrow
Renee O'Fee
Delma Evans
Peggy Salaberry

With the invaluable assistance of
Volunteer and Shelter Coordinator, Karin Bauer

www.innfromthecoldkelowna.org

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Introduction

From its beginnings in 1999, Inn from the Cold–Kelowna has been a volunteer-based program which offers people in our community a safe, secure, simple place of refuge from the elements and harmful situations during the coldest winter months. (For those wishing a more comprehensive background on this program over previous years, please direct your attention to the Final Report, 2007, also available on our website.)

Purpose of the Program:

The purposes of Inn from the Cold-Kelowna - stated in the Constitution drawn up when the organization became a society in September, 2007 - are as follows:

- . To provide emergency overnight shelter to adult people living on the street;
- . To offer an environment of respect, compassion and caring;
- . To continue to establish community relationships with individuals, agencies or groups to advocate for the needs of our guests.

Principles and Practice

The guiding principles for volunteers incorporate a strong sense of the intrinsic worth of all individuals and a commitment of service to others, particularly the disadvantaged and the marginalized. We strive to accept and welcome each guest warmly and without judgment. This is emphasized in recruitment, orientation and celebration of our connection to our guests at the end of the session. It should be especially evident in simple night and morning routines. We know that nothing so impacts our guests as a genuine attempt to demonstrate love and respect. Although the founding motivation and the continuing service stems from Christian principles, and many of the volunteers are Christian, volunteers do not preach Christianity as a body of doctrine, and there is not a faith requirement nor a faith expression required to participate in Inn from the Cold, either as a volunteer, staff person or a guest.

Guests

It is our intent to find ways to allow people in, not keep them out - as long as we feel we can assure the safety of and respect for all involved.

Over the years in operation, coordinators have recognized that the project fills a particular need regarding the people we serve. Other agencies which serve people who live on the street may see fit to limit accessibility to their program in different ways. For example, some shelters and agencies

- cannot accommodate women (therefore, both single women and traditional couples have been excluded);
- do not allow self-referral;
- do not allow access to anyone who has been using alcohol or drugs.

While recognizing the value of an array of approaches to address homelessness and to provide shelter, the Inn from the Cold model, especially because of its response to cold

or extreme cold weather conditions, must be somewhat flexible and describes itself as a “low barrier” program. In spite of this designation, many of our guests find the Inn from the Cold-Kelowna a viable option because, along with slightly more lax restrictions, we have managed to avoid a “drug scene” atmosphere in the environs of the shelter. In many cases, this has allowed our return guests enough respite from a substance abuse situation to foster their plans to get into detox, discontinue unproductive associations or, especially in the case of some younger guests, to return home, or at least to their hometown, where there are usually more supports in place.

As the winter unfolded this year we also tried to allow returning guests to come back night after night so they might have some security about having a place to stay. On the occasions that we had to turn people away, we attempted to arrange alternate refuge, often at the Gospel Mission, at Alexandra Gardner Safe Centre for women (when -5 Celsius or below) or sometimes at the house of a friend of the guest. Other times, we know, shelter seekers were back on the street or incarcerated. As in previous years, except for rare exceptions, guests had to arrive at the shelter on the bus after an intake process downtown. Priorities for admission evolved slightly over the year and resulted in this list:

1. Women,
2. Couples,
3. Working people – especially those going to jobs or job marts in the early morning,
4. Seniors or people with health challenges (too ill to be on the street, but not sick enough to be in hospital).

We were generally able to admit all guests in these categories. On especially cold nights, or nights well after the issuance of social insurance or disability checks, we faced the agonizing choice of trying to decide who else could come after these priorities were served. We started with those who had come most frequently, but as the season wore on, we quite often had to disappoint even returning guests. It helped somewhat that we were able to take more guests than in the previous season because the church responded to the need for more accommodation and expanded their concept of full capacity. Staff persons had the set-up and the routines well-established, so things ran smoothly even with more people.

We had good rapport with the emergency room at KGH, Interior Health, Canadian Mental Health and the RCMP. In this way, these organizations could make referrals of people they knew in need, and we could call on their services when that was the best option.

Even with more liaison and supports in place, the uncertainty of what would happen to a given client if he/she was not able to go to Inn from the Cold caused tremendous anxiety for intake workers as well as prospective guests.

Support from Government

- A \$44,000 grant from Service Canada provided for the shelter and volunteer coordinator on a year-round basis.
- The Interior Health Authority authorized linen service through the laundry workers at KGH, so we had clean sheets, towels and pillowcases daily – no charge! This was a tremendous lift to morale and greatly reduced contagion from flu, colds and other ailments.

Local Community Participation

- A very encouraging gift was that of \$44,000 from an anonymous benefactor. This allowed us to hire staff for the shelter which in turn allows consistency and sustainability for the program. Efficiency was one of the first obvious advantages. We could shelter 5-6 more people on a consistent basis.
- Another crucial source of funding was a \$13,000 grant from the Central Okanagan Foundation. The Foundation, our first ever significant financial backer, exceeded their usual funding level in their grant to us this year. Their support assisted greatly in extending the shelter season from three to four months, paying for additional transportation costs because of the extended season and bus maintenance and repairs, launching the evening reception program and subsidizing some communication costs related to coordination of programs.
- The Salvation Army donated \$1000 for fuel for the bus that transported the guests to and from the shelter. Every Wednesday, two volunteers from the Salvation Army again graced us with their presence, generous and delicious meals for the guests and expert food service.
- The Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna and two Anglican Churches held events that brought in sizable money donations. In one event, the UBCO Creative and Critical Studies professors gave a wind instrument concert at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, with proceeds to Inn from the Cold–Kelowna. The children of the Unitarian Fellowship organized an Angel Tree activity. They motivated their parents to provide items for Inn from the Cold by means of a skit about what it must be like to have no home. Parents selected a card from a Christmas tree suggesting an item to provide (e.g. socks, band-aids). When all contributions were in, the children sorted and packed boxes to be delivered to the shelter. St. Michael's and All Angels Cathedral again donated the good will proceeds from their beautiful Christmas Carol service
- Church groups, notably United Church, Unitarian Fellowship, Catholic and Anglican congregations, as well as other community groups and individuals

contributed food, linens, clothing, toiletries, gas money, swim passes and Christmas gifts.

- The board of the Columbus Holding Society has been extremely helpful in facilitating the rental of Columbus Hall for the evening reception time which began in February.
- The Gospel Mission and Alexandra Gardner Safe Centre maintained open communication with the Inn from the Cold, ensuring accommodation as possible for overflow individuals from the Inn from the Cold. The Gospel Mission also worked diligently to fill service gaps for our guests by allowing them into the Mission outside of their regular hours, both morning and evening.
- The Canadian Mental Health Association, the Kelowna Drop-In Centre, Outreach Urban Health, the Salvation Army, KGH social workers, Gospel Mission, Ki-Lo-Na Friendship center provided useful liaison to help support guests. Inclusion of Inn from the Cold–Kelowna in active membership of PICC and PHATCO has been especially helpful.
- On Saturday mornings in February and March, the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society invited our guests to their centre for breakfast. On cold mornings toward the end of January until the project closed, the Willow Bridging Project reserved a space for our guests to come in the morning before other service providers opened up.
- The United Church hosted our closing celebration, donated beverages and helped to serve at this function.
- The Society of St. Vincent De Paul embraced the idea to join the Inn-Home Support & Eviction Prevention Program. An orientation meeting took place in March in order for outreach workers to introduce the service parameters. Approximately 40 people participated in the panel presentation put on by representatives from Canadian Mental Health, Urban Outreach Health, the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, Okanagan and Metis Children and Family Services and Inn from the Cold–Kelowna.
- The mainstay of our transportation system was the use of the bus belonging to the Kelowna Public Catholic School District provided by the Clubhouse Childcare Society. When this aging bus failed, we were fortunate to have a bus from Trinity Baptist at our disposal. On occasion, we used a bus from Heritage Christian School. Bus service for our guests was a great example of ecumenical cooperation!

- The expert book-keeping services of Wendy Burns of Priority Business Services have been a tremendous asset to Inn from the Cold-Kelowna.
- The pivotal in-kind donation continued to be the use of the church hall at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Rutland. The accommodation included access to the church hall, kitchen, meeting room, entryway and washrooms. Holy Spirit Church allowed the placement of a large rented storage unit at the end of the parking lot close to the church entrance. It must be noted that the considerate and open communication of church representatives to Inn from the Cold staff and board members made our program flourish where there was occasionally a potential to break down. Parish Council members were a supportive liaison with the congregation and neighbours on our behalf and smoothed over trouble spots before problems became serious.
- This year, the Inn's success in providing refuge for 2866 overnight stays (compared to 1737 last year) was the result of 1017 incidents in which volunteers gave time, care and support (up from 860 last year). Many volunteers represented faith-based communities: Anglican Churches, United Churches, the Unitarian Fellowship, Pentecostal Churches, Roman Catholic Churches and the Salvation Army. Many others came from the community-at-large. The initiative, compassion and commitment of these volunteers renew awareness of the goodness of mankind. The good will and energy create a positive environment which promotes healing.
- Public attention came about on many occasions, but one notable, unsolicited one was when several Kelowna citizens started discussing the issue of homelessness on the public forum of Castanet.net. They were sharing their personal thoughts on the issue (some of which were becoming negative), when another citizen intervened and said they "should volunteer at Inn from the Cold to get a true picture of who homeless people are and what they go through" - basically asking them to be more compassionate.

Operation of the Program

Season

Inn from the Cold extended the season of service from 3 to 4 months, adding two weeks at the end of November and two weeks at the beginning in March.

Initial Intake Arrangements

From the beginning of the program to mid-February, guests came to a central meeting place in front of the Kelowna Centennial Museum at about 8:30 pm. After a brief intake process, they boarded a bus at 9:00 pm and were taken to the church in Rutland. This procedure presented challenges to both the intake volunteers and the guests. With higher numbers of guests, many were crowding around the dark, cold place and the intake workers could not always get everyone's name. Intake workers reported concerns that people were tired, cold and extremely anxious about obtaining accommodation.

Staffing

The most significant change in operations was the hiring of staff. This stemmed from a recommendation in last year's final report where the need to have consistent personnel was deemed desirable, if not essential, for a coherent and sustained effort. Two awake overnight workers and two early morning workers were hired through the generosity of a private benefactor.

Also of great benefit was the grant from Service Canada which provided funds to hire a Volunteers and Shelter Coordinator. These staff members were models in the dedication, service and special areas of expertise they provided to our guests and the program.

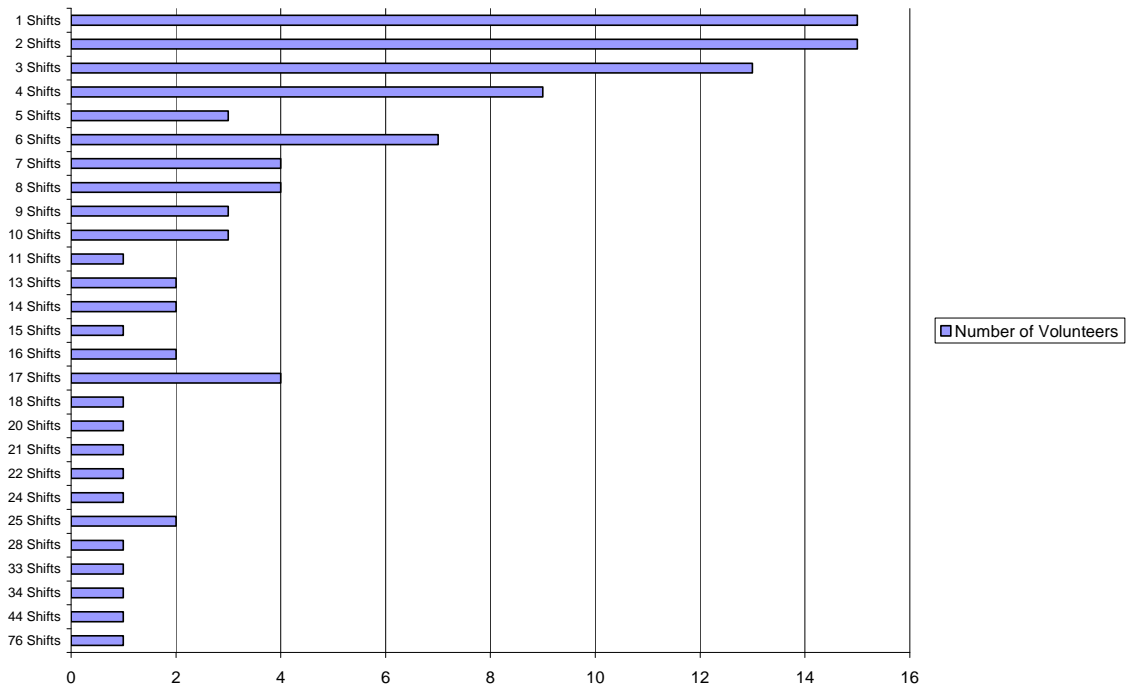
Organization of Volunteers

Shifts for volunteers were re-organized following recommendations from volunteers from the previous year. The Volunteers & Shelter Coordinator arranged 5 persons per night: an intake worker, a set up person (sometimes more than one) to assist overnight staff with setting up mats, a person (or more) to provide a snack or meal, one volunteer to stay overnight and one morning clean up volunteer to help the morning staff. Two licensed bus drivers (am/pm) served each day. In February, two more volunteers were arranged for reception and intake, bringing the total of volunteers to an average of nine per night. Because of the arrangement with Interior Health for washing linens at KGH, we did not need volunteers to do laundry. However, on week-ends, a volunteer went to the hospital to pick up laundry. During the week, delivery and pick of laundry were covered by the early morning worker.

Our coordinator sought out assistance and built a data base to track volunteers and service for our programming.

- We had 176 volunteers in our volunteer database. Total volunteer jobs came to 920 - considerably higher than last year, when it was 580 volunteer jobs.
- We provided shelter for 104 nights, exceeding last year by 21 nights.
- The average number of shifts per volunteer was 2 to 3 shifts. The highest number of shifts was 76 shifts for one volunteer. Some did as many as 34 or 44 shifts. The following graph shows the number of shifts per volunteer.

Shifts Per Volunteer



Recruiting Volunteers

A campaign for attracting and recruiting new volunteers included ads on the internet, in locations such as Castanet.net and Craigslist. One ad on Castanet.net received as many as 600 visits. Several new volunteers resulted from these ads. A volunteer also posted many flyers in public places, such as the library and other public bulletin boards.

The Work

The awake night workers made sure the church was open in time, greeting volunteers and organizing all activities. Volunteers and staff at the church set out food, beverages, mattresses and linens for the number of people as reported by the intake person.

Basic rules and expectations were reviewed: “Treat the other guests and the staff and volunteers with respect; treat the bus and the building respectfully; smoke outdoors only, and remain in the designated areas of the church facility.” These rules were repeated on the bus each night as necessary and always when we had new guests. They were posted in the church hall as well. (Needless to say, there was a taboo on drugs, alcohol, swearing, sexual activity, weapons or violence, but the emphasis on respect avoided the negativity of itemizing these.) Anytime the tone or behaviour of the guests deteriorated, the issue would be discussed before bedtime – either at intake, on the bus, in the hall or privately with individuals involved.

Upon arrival, guests made their beds and had a hearty snack. Food preparation and service by volunteers was remarkable. They donated large portions of time, groceries,

planning and energy to guests night after night after night. After eating, guests socialized for a few moments, washed up and got ready for bed.

Women had a portion of the room divided off by office partitions. This was mostly to offer privacy, but it also helped to remind people that, although couples are permitted at the Inn, they sleep apart from each other in consideration of the overall group housed in such close quarters.

Persons ill with digestive or respiratory problems were put in a separate part of the facility, if possible. A group of younger guests seemed to enjoy a small board room (the “blue room”). They were occasionally rowdy, but the staff kept an eye on them.

On a few occasions, a person showed effects of inebriation or withdrawal which had not been evident at intake, and staff called the police/ambulance to assist by removing the guest for the remainder of the night.

New Programs

Evening Reception

In February we rented an upstairs gymnasium space from the Columbus Holding Society building on Sutherland Avenue. This was a thrilling opportunity for us. It offers the opportunity to build significantly on services to those experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. First of all, it responds to a recommendation from last year that we find a way to take people off the street in the evening. It was a small step to realize that we could offer valuable programming during that time, bringing together nurses, outreach workers, job counsellors, social assistance advisors, tutors, musicians, dramatists, cooks and many others to engage guests in positive interpersonal activities and life-skills training.

Starting on February 11, 2008, guests met upstairs at 1159 Sutherland Avenue between 6:30 pm and 8:30 pm. We hired three intake staff persons, to rotate through the week, who were assisted by two volunteers each night. An intake schedule and log, like the shelter equivalent, were added to on-line services. Intake staff members were given secure password access. Intake became more relaxed and smoother – the stress level went way down. What a difference the light, heat, furniture, extra volunteers and warm beverages made! The time and space also made it possible for guests, volunteers, intake staff and the coordinator to get to visit and know each other better. This has far-reaching possibilities for referrals and Inn-Home Support. After initial schedule and transportation adjustments, the guests responded positively, with some literally begging us not to discontinue this service in the future.

Inn-Home Support

Another innovation is the introduction of Inn-Home Support. In this case, Inn from the Cold-Kelowna’s enthusiasm is shared by outreach workers in the downtown area, local groups of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, as well as volunteers from Inn from the Cold and other interested parties. In the big picture, government groups like Service Canada, the Cities of Kelowna, Portland and Vancouver, among others, cited the need of persons at risk of homelessness to have a mentor-like connection to the community.

Locally, this same concept was identified in talks with outreach workers who were commenting on the phenomenon that, too often, when a person recently homeless or at risk of homelessness was placed in housing, he/she lacked continuing support to remain in their home. Outreach workers had to move onto new crises, leaving the newly settled clients to fend for themselves. Generally, there is no one in place to fill in the gap. To this end, the Inn-Home Support/Eviction Prevention program was created. Our year-round coordinator was funded by Service Canada on the basis of this initiative. Members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, because of their mandate and experience in non-judgemental service to the poor were invited to be among the first “advocates”. Other persons of good will are also welcome to apply as advocates. Orientation occurred on March 3, 2008. Service will begin in May, 2008 with clients identified by outreach workers and matched with a pair of advocates selected by the Coordinator of Inn from the Cold. Outreach workers and the Inn from the Cold-Kelowna coordinator will provide training. This will be an on-going, expanding program, with at least two new clients per month added to the existing client base. Evaluation tools are envisioned and will be integrated with the secure data base.

Base of Operations for Inn from the Cold-Kelowna

As this report indicates, Inn from the Cold-Kelowna has become more stable and recognized in the area of emergency shelter. The shelter program has gained much credibility among people who live in the street, care providers, city officials, the public and the media. With the establishment of a webpage, we have a presence in the community, but we lack a physical location to call home, which, we realize with some humour, is the same plight of those we serve. There may be some sort of cosmic appropriateness to this situation, but in this reality, a base of operations would be a valid service for the people who have come to us seeking shelter. It would provide

- a sheltered, private place for intake,
- a facility to conduct evening reception and activities,
- an opportunity for those experiencing homelessness, Inn from the Cold staff, volunteers, outreach people and other service providers to meet and get to know each other,
- a place for Inn-Home support participants: advocates, outreach workers, clients and the coordinator to meet and discuss needs and plans,
- a place for meetings of all kinds: board, staff, standing committees, ad hoc committees, advisory groups, orientations, training, celebrations, planning, ...
- an office space for program coordination,
- an area for secure records storage,
- a room for counselling and private consultation,
- ability to organize space to suit program needs: shelter, showers, activities, storage,
- a frontage site in Kelowna which is connected with homelessness here and now. This would have at least two worthwhile outcomes: to raise awareness of the plight of those who have nowhere to live and to offer a standing invitation to community members to join in an effort toward positive change.
- A reminder to those in need of shelter that they are not forgotten.

Community Management of Initiatives

- Guests would often assist volunteers with set-up and clean-up. One gentleman in particular, who had been working as a carpenter, but suffered an injury mid-way through the winter, stayed on in the morning to clean up the church – doing mopping, cleaning washrooms - anything that was needed. He was pleasant and extremely helpful. He also participated in the season-end clean-up of the church.
- One guest always brought tips from Social Assistance and job search information to share with guests at the reception time.
- One of our guests was a cancer patient, with nowhere else to stay in Kelowna during treatments but at Inn from the Cold-Kelowna. She quietly and repeatedly took it upon herself to help another woman get organized when some guests started to give her a hard time.
- Various times, former guests sent a friend to get his/her belongings they had left with us. The friend would bring news and thanks from the one who had moved on.
- Guests kept good track of their belongings stored with us and removed all but a very few by the time we closed. The remaining bags were taken by friends to distribute at other gathering places where they would see the owners.
- There was, for the most part, a spirit among the guests of looking out for one another and for the program. Many played the role of peacemaker, reminding others to stay calm, to let go of annoyances.
- Even though bus breakdowns caused considerable anxiety for many, guests were remarkably patient with the situation and cooperative with alternatives.
- Over-all, guests were very reluctant to give up their accommodation to go elsewhere, but when asked, there were generous individuals who would forego their spot to allow one more to be sheltered. Likewise, some would give up a serving of a meal to assure all would have something.
- Guests would add their private supply of food to what was available for all.
- At the reception site, there was a sign-out list for smoke breaks. Guests were conscientious and respectful of this practice.

- Volunteers and staff enabled the Inn from the Cold – Kelowna to communicate a message of care and respect for guests.

Relationship Building

- Guests, volunteers, staff and board members came to our March 9, 2008 wrap-up celebration and spent an afternoon talking and sharing with each other, expressing gratitude over the time spent together and offering good wishes for the future.
- Many guests, volunteers and staff persons have found ways, through mutual agreement, to remain in touch via e-mail, by arranging meeting times/places or through a voice mail number.
- The Inn-Home Support program has been initiated because of the desire of volunteers to see former guests obtain and remain in decent homes.

Increasing Community Involvement

- Prior to program start-up, notices were placed in church bulletins and at church doors, announcements were made at meetings, pleas went out to church congregations, to friends and to associates through workplace communication networks. Public Service messages went out on CHBC, Shaw Cable and radio. As a result, Inn from the Cold was able to recruit many more volunteers. Coordinators held a two hour orientation for all volunteers on November 18, 2007 at Holy Spirit Church. We talked about the tasks of the volunteers, the attitude of caring and respect, and we gave a demonstration of the set-up of the hall.
- The Holy Spirit Church Council was a key player in maintaining good neighbourhood relations and in reminding church groups that inconveniences were small in relation to the service their church was offering to homeless people.
- Church groups, unable sometimes to come to the church to help, sent along baking, socks, scarves, mittens, blankets and Christmas gifts – many of which were hand-made.
- When surveyed, volunteers, staff members and guests confirmed the value of this encounter.

Improvements Over Last Year

Communication, log reports and stats

N.B. All improvements are a direct response to recommendations drawn up last year by the directors after a thorough debriefing, including an extensive review and discussion of verbal comments and written evaluations.

- Communications and Continuity:
A computer database was created and implemented in December. An on-line scheduling and communication log was set up for staff, coordinator and board members. This was a monumental assistance. Keeping the staff and over 170 volunteers updated on changes and guest situations was much easier with the online database, calendar and log. We kept a communication binder at the shelter site, but it became obsolete once we added a laptop computer for overnight staff to enter and read logged reports and to keep track of which volunteer was scheduled for which shift. It provided detailed and up-to-date information, and staff could read the logs from their home computers to stay informed. It was especially important for knowing what supplies were needed at the shelter and for informing staff and involved volunteers of specific situations regarding guests, e.g. health concerns or a person arriving late because of work. A group email feature kept volunteers, board and staff updated on everything from open shifts to changes, e.g. late start due to a parish activity at the church hall. This saved hundreds of phone calls, although the coordinator or a volunteer still makes calls to those who do not have computer access at home (about a dozen for each message).
- Central Phone Number, Email and Website:
Through the coordinator, we have set up a central phone number, 448-6403. She also arranged for the design and maintenance of a Website:
www.InnfromtheColdKelowna.org
and email: info@innfromtheColdKelowna.org
Volunteers, service providers and interested public can easily locate and contact Inn from the Cold-Kelowna. The website raises awareness of the presence of individuals in our midst who have nowhere to live and informs people of support they can provide. The coordinator also has a business card for professional and volunteer associates.

Advocacy for Guests:

The guests often arrive needing more assistance than simple shelter. This year, through the liaison with agencies, more consistent staff and better communication with volunteers, we were able to provide more advocacy and referrals for guests. We kept a list of guests who found housing and jobs, went into Detox or moved. Although we are still learning the resources in the area

and not every guest is ready or openly communicates his/her needs, we attempted to address their needs with better results this year. It helped to have the expertise of regular personnel and a clearer mandate, with more resources, to provide adequate support.

Laundry

Clean sheets are essential for health and morale. Many thanks to Interior Health, Cathy Farrow, IFTC board member, and Andrew Hughes of Outreach Urban Health for help in making this possible.

Physical illness, mental illness, addiction

Having an option for the housing of a person who is too intoxicated or is not ambulatory remains a problem. However, last year, it was difficult when a guest became agitated, and volunteers could not determine the cause or the seriousness of their discomfort. This year, the staff did a great job with diffusing or referring such situations.

Storage of program materials

Storage of mats in the hall made a huge difference in the time and ease of set-up. Many thanks to the Holy Spirit Church council for making this possible.

Society status/board of directors/members

Last year, a small group of committed volunteers filled the roles required to organize and schedule volunteers and keep the program running. For 2007-08, the Volunteer Coordinator did the scheduling of the volunteers and kept this basic part of the Inn from the Cold-Kelowna functioning effectively. Inn from the Cold-Kelowna was incorporated as a society in the province of British Columbia on September 11, 2007. A formal board of directors, operating in conjunction with the coordinator, assists in external and internal communication and in making things work, mostly through the committees: transportation, shopping and supplies, laundry, intake and reception and personnel. We have engaged the services of a book-keeper (Priority Business Services), who volunteers her time and know-how, and a payroll clerk, also a professional. Our first Annual General Meeting will take place on April 21, 2008. Eight people have let their name stand for board membership. We have applied for charitable status, and our president has received acknowledgement that our application has arrived at the registry.

Description and organization of volunteer tasks

This program requires many volunteers to make it work. In particular, last year, the duties of the overnight volunteers were excessively demanding. This year, the tasks were split up into shorter, more manageable shifts and more volunteers were able to get the job done. Set up was one shift, refreshments another, intake/reception another shift; overnight volunteers were allowed to

sleep while staff stayed awake, morning clean up was the last shift, in order to help the morning staff. Many returning volunteers reported that it was much easier this year.

Hours and days of operation

Improvements were made in February, with the opening of the evening reception site on Sutherland Avenue. Prior to that guests, staff and volunteers alike were still troubled by time constraints of nightly hours of operation.

Challenges

- Overnight Premises:

Location: As last year, being far away from downtown helped remove vulnerable guests from at-risk street behaviour. However, it was difficult for guests if they had to access services overnight or if they had to get back downtown early in the morning for a job call or a current job. More often than we liked, we had guests show up at the church after intake was complete. We tried to discourage this, but it was unavoidable now and again.

Facilities: Washrooms in the church could not accommodate people needing to bathe.

- Transportation:

As last year, we truly appreciated the generosity of the Clubhouse Daycare in lending us their bus. However, it became costly to run because of gas prices and the frequent need for repair. Breakdowns caused anxiety and hasty regrouping for both volunteers and guests.

- Intake site and other complexities:

Our original intake site itself was unsheltered, often windy and cold. It was very difficult to gather information or make any assessment of guests' condition. We needed to make a change.

Capacity: Selection of guests in a fair and equitable way was especially challenging before we got the Sutherland site. Turning people away was extremely difficult this year for the volunteers, particularly on very cold nights. Many volunteers complained it was just too hard. This led to overcrowding at 'The Inn' on some occasions or scrambling to find alternative accommodations.

- Storage of personal belongings for guests:

One of the facets of living on the street is that guests have nowhere to store their belongings and have to carry all their possessions with them throughout the day. This increases fatigue and suspicion of theft and inhibits job search. Storage was discouraged, but staff and volunteer willingness to add shelving and spend extra time sorting and supervising materials facilitated some storage for guests. We were pleased to find that guests were cooperative in limiting, labelling and removing their belongings at the end of the winter season.

- Length of the Season:

Although an improvement was made by opening earlier and closing later, the cold weather did not fit neatly within the set dates. It was freezing and snowing before opening in mid November and after closing in mid March.

Outcomes for guests:

As of March 14, 2008:

We had had 243 individual guests stay with us this season.

- A few have entered detox facilities.
- 42 guests found housing or are in some sort of accommodations (with a family member, shared or transitional housing or with a friend.)
- 10 percent of our guests were working, which equates to 24 working people living in the street except for shelter with Inn from the Cold-Kelowna.
- A number have gone to stay at the Gospel Mission.
- Several have drifted back onto the streets or are camping in and about Kelowna.

Recommendations/Ideas for Next Winter

N.B. Although these are grouped by roles, there is obvious overlap of categories.

Re volunteers:

- Establish written standards of conduct for all volunteers. Have all volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Continue to hold volunteer orientation at the start of the season; add on-going training throughout the season.
- Draft a short and to-the-point reference binder for all staff and volunteer shifts.
- Introduce a system for volunteers to fill and swap their own shifts. Provide relevant training. Consider appointing team leaders for each job to help with coordinating. Provide each volunteer with a list of back-up volunteers. If a volunteer is obliged to cancel a shift, he/she would be asked to call for a replacement. (Coordinator or team leader could be a fall-back in case of emergency.)
- Solicit volunteer assistant(s) to enter volunteer data and shifts on the online calendar.
- Encourage volunteers to pick a regular night if possible.
- Establish a reasonable amount of food for volunteers to provide evening or morning. Some brought banquets, others brought snacks. A hearty soup and a bun *or* a baked potato with a few trimmings (e.g. grated cheese, chopped green onion, sour cream) are good examples as a guideline. Morning items might be banana or zucchini bread or

boiled eggs. Some volunteers were beginning to feel great expense and time were necessary to be a food volunteer. 'Tain't so!

- Begin a screening process for volunteers following established screening guidelines (Application, Agreement to Expectations, Criminal Record Check, Interview, Acceptance). Set a target date to have this process in place for all volunteers.

Re board/admin:

- Keep the Sutherland site in order to do away bus transportation and provide much needed space for indoor intake and other activities of Inn from the Cold-Kelowna.

- Discuss meal service with the Salvation Army so that times and meal requirements are coordinated.

- Be familiar with programming of Gospel Mission, Drop-in and Ki-low-na Friendship Centre when organizing and scheduling events and regular activities.

- Secure the indispensable laundry services of KGH for the coming year.

- Re-examine intake procedures in light of criminal activities of prospective guests. Do we need to be more informed? Consult with RCMP? NOT consult with RCMP?

- Distinguish clearly between *policies*, to which there are no exceptions (e.g. couples sleeping together) and *guidelines*, where there may be leeway for specific situations (e.g. a guest arriving from work after intake time is over).

- Write up the guest rules and post them up at the shelter and the reception site. Include rules about storing belongings.

- Plan and begin to set evening reception programming before opening. Have weekly/nightly presentations organized with agency workers (i.e. street nurse, AIDS resource educator, A&D counsellor, social assistance counsellors). Make contacts with and schedule other community presenters: musicians, tutors, life skills trainers, job search consultants, project literacy, et al.

Re: staff

- Provide training for all staff members on how to refer guests to appropriate agencies.

- Hold staff meetings as appropriate for shelter workers and intake workers. Consider inviting staff members to PICC meetings.

- Provide a training manual for all staff including IFTC policies, tasks, responsibilities and professional conduct. Highlight important protocols for "What do you do when ...".

- Give intake and night staff written criteria on which to base day-to-day disciplinary decisions. Streamline consultation with the board for extraordinary circumstances.
- Make criminal record checks and the Food Safe course a requirement for all staff persons before they begin to work with guests.
- Establish written standards of conduct for all staff persons. Have all staff sign a confidentiality agreement.

A Closing Thought – On Serving Others

Excerpt from the President’s report given at the first Annual General Meeting, April 21, 2008, of Inn from the Cold-Kelowna:

Compassion, acceptance and love need to continue and personify our organization among staff, volunteers and those we serve.

... On behalf of the IFTC-Kelowna Board I wish to extend my sincere appreciation and thanks to both the IFTC-Kelowna staff and volunteers. Volunteers are an integral part of our program. With them, we are able to enhance the quality of life for people who are homeless.

-The Reverend Heather Karabelas
Founding President, Inn from the Cold-Kelowna

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## **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Financial Report**
- Appendix B: Summary of Evaluation Responses**
- Appendix C: Pertinent Data**

# Appendix A: Financial Report

Inn from the Cold – Kelowna

Balance Sheet As at 03/31/08

## ASSETS

### Current Assets

|                          |          |
|--------------------------|----------|
| VFCU - Chequing Account  | 2,806.46 |
| VFCU - Membership Shares | 25.00    |
| Accounts Receivable      | 0.00     |
| Payroll Advances         | 0.00     |
| Purchase Prepayments     | 0.00     |
| Prepaid Expenses         | 0.00     |

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|                             |                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Total Current Assets</b> | <b>2,831.46</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|

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### Capital Assets

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Computer Hardware               | 456.38 |
| Accum Amort - Computer Hardware | 0.00   |

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|                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Net - Computer Hardware | 456.38 |
|-------------------------|--------|

|                            |      |
|----------------------------|------|
| Furniture & Equipment      | 0.00 |
| Accum Amort - Furn & Equip | 0.00 |

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|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Net - Furniture & Equipment | 0.00 |
|-----------------------------|------|

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|                             |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Total Capital Assets</b> | <b>456.38</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------|

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|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b> | <b>3,287.84</b> |
|---------------------|-----------------|

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## LIABILITIES

### Current Liabilities

|                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Accounts Payable     | -1,481.94 |
| GST Charged on Sales | 0.00      |

|                                   |                 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| GST Paid on Purchases             | 0.00            |
| <hr/>                             |                 |
| GST Owing (Refund)                | 0.00            |
| Vacation payable                  | 494.04          |
| EI Payable                        | 223.87          |
| CPP Payable                       | 461.60          |
| Federal Income Tax Payable        | 626.41          |
| <hr/>                             |                 |
| Total Receiver General            | 1,311.88        |
| WCB Payable                       | 0.00            |
| PST Payable                       | 0.00            |
| <hr/>                             |                 |
| <b>Total Current liabilities</b>  | <b>323.98</b>   |
| <hr/>                             |                 |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>          | <b>323.98</b>   |
| <hr/>                             |                 |
| <b>EQUITY</b>                     |                 |
| <b>Owners Equity</b>              |                 |
| Retained Earnings - Previous Year | 0.00            |
| Current Earnings                  | 2,963.86        |
| <hr/>                             |                 |
| <b>Total Owners Equity</b>        | <b>2,963.86</b> |
| <hr/>                             |                 |
| <b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>               | <b>2,963.86</b> |
| <hr/>                             |                 |
| <b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>     | <b>3,287.84</b> |

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Generated On: 03/27/08

**Inn from the Cold - Kelowna**

**Income Statement 01/01/07 to 03/31/08**

**REVENUE**

**Revenue**

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Donations             | 57,545.67 |
| Grants                | 18,524.01 |
| Fundraising           | 1,189.50  |
| Miscellaneous Revenue | 0.00      |
| Interest Revenue      | 20.90     |

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**Total Other Revenue**

77,280.08

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**TOTAL REVENUE**

77,280.08

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**EXPENSE**

**Payroll Expenses**

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Wages & Salaries | 42,900.49 |
| EI Expense       | 1,001.22  |
| CPP Expense      | 1,725.74  |
| WCB Expense      | 325.87    |
| Payroll Services | 386.15    |

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**Total Payroll Expense**

46,339.47

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**General & Administrative Expenses**

|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Accounting & Legal       | 0.00   |
| Advertising & Promotions | 561.43 |
| Bad Debts                | 0.00   |
| Criminal Record Checks   | 205.00 |
| Amortization Expense     | 0.00   |
| Donations                | 25.00  |

|                                            |                  |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Honorariums                                | 155.00           |
| Incorporation Costs                        | 250.00           |
| Insurance                                  | 1,250.00         |
| Interest & Bank Charges                    | 131.89           |
| Office                                     | 489.18           |
| Operating Expenses - Bedding               | 4,804.41         |
| Operating Expenses - Kitchen/Food          | 2,214.11         |
| Operating Expenses - Build/Storage         | 3,029.69         |
| Operating Expenses - Miscellaneous         | 3,607.26         |
| Rent                                       | 3,900.00         |
| Repair & Maintenance                       | 0.00             |
| Telephone                                  | 373.36           |
| Training                                   | 70.00            |
| Utilities                                  | 248.97           |
| Vehicle/Transportation                     | 5,660.14         |
| Web Page                                   | 1,001.31         |
| Suspense                                   | 0.00             |
| <hr/>                                      |                  |
| <b>Total General &amp; Admin. Expenses</b> | <b>27,976.75</b> |
| <hr/>                                      |                  |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>                       | <b>74,316.22</b> |
| <hr/>                                      |                  |
| <b>NET INCOME</b>                          | <b>2,963.86</b>  |
| <hr/>                                      |                  |
| =====                                      |                  |

**Generated On: 03/27/08**

## **Appendix B: Summary of Evaluation Responses**

### **Evaluation**

#### **Guests**

Guests in the program were given the opportunity over the last two nights of the program to complete an evaluation. There were a total of 18 guests who responded.

#### **Summary/Overview/Highlights of Guest Feedback:**

- Overall, the guests reported they liked staying with us because we provided friendly, kind, compassionate, warm and caring hospitality. They felt the home cooked meals were wonderful. They made new friends and felt that the volunteers and staff were great and treated them with dignity. They enjoyed being at Sutherland in the evening.
- What guests didn't like about staying with us included the drive to the church, getting up so early, standing and waiting for the bus and some personal conflicts with guests.
- When asked what we could improve, guests stated: Perhaps distributing food more evenly, having sections for family\* and couples, being able to stay more months, getting showers or baths and fixing the bus.
- Other comments from guests were that we (everyone who helped) are wonderful people, to keep up the good work and many thanks from everyone.

\*We had one family - a couple with an adolescent son, referred by an agency on a very short-term, emergency basis.

#### **Volunteers**

We held a wrap-up debriefing and celebration on Mar 9, 2008. Volunteers were asked to share memorable experiences, and as part of the debriefing, they also had the opportunity to complete a questionnaire to which 19 people responded.

#### **Summary/Overview/Highlights of Volunteer Feedback:**

- When asked what worked well, volunteers answered: Organization and routines worked great this year. Paid staff were excellent, provided continuity, routine, organization. Kudos also to board of directors. Volunteers felt that everyone pulled together for the cause.
- As for the challenges we faced, overall comments were: it was difficult to send people away at intake, the many break downs of the bus, the high number of guests, and the outside intake area being cold and windy. They also felt that rules needed to be applied more consistently, we need to have enough food every night, and it was difficult not having enough beds at times for numbers of guests.
- When asked what they learned through the program, volunteers said: Insight, understanding, gratitude and compassion were gained; having a better understanding of

the needs of people who are homeless increased, and knowing that even small acts can make a big difference.

- For improvements this year over last year, volunteers commented: it was less stressful; the shifts were shorter; it was more organized. Having full time staff was effective, the online website helped, and the organizing from the coordinator made things run smoothly. The new linens were nice, and the laundry done by the hospital was a blessing. Being able to leave the mattresses in the corner of the hall helped a lot and having the names on the sign in sheets also made things easier. Communication was great too.

- As for what we should continue, volunteers said: the evening program was very good; keep the full time staff and coordinator; keep separating couples in sleeping areas, and the emphasis should stay on the guests.

- In terms of what we must change, volunteers answered: the bus must change; having our own location would be good, and be more firm with the policies. Someone wished for an exploration of the storage for belongings and follow up transition or a communal home for guests. Recruiting of more volunteers was also stated.

- Suggestions to raise our profile/awareness of the program included: newspaper articles, word of mouth, more info to churches, media and mayor.

- Suggestions for fundraising included: auctions, dinners (like Dining out for Life), raffles, lottery, city contributions, United Way, corporate sponsors, grants.

### **Staff:**

Individual Exit Interviews were held with each of the seven staff members. The Volunteer Coordinator interviewed the three intake workers as a group and the other four staff members separately.

Following are three overview summaries from three intake, two morning and two night staff persons grouped together. Last, there is an overview summary from the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Summary/Overview/Highlights of Intake Staff Feedback:**

It is important to note that the intake shifts were done by eight different volunteers, each doing a specific night until we opened the Sutherland Intake/Reception hall. Three volunteers were then hired as paid staff. The consistent negative feedback for the outdoor location from volunteers is one factor that led us to open the Sutherland location for indoor intake and an earlier reception time. A recommendation from our 2006-07 final report also suggested strongly that guests needed to be off the streets during vulnerable evening hours

- Intake staff commented on what worked well in the new location: movies, popcorn and any activities to keep guests occupied. The online intake log worked well, providing everyone read it. The intake inside was more humane, less traumatizing and stressful.

- What needed to improve was: if we keep the Sutherland location, we will need trained volunteers for emergency situations. Opening and closing duties for intake workers should be posted. Training for referring guests would be appreciated. Staff meetings (bi-weekly) would be helpful. We need to be consistent with rules about intoxication,

alcohol. Staff would like training in boundaries and troubleshooting and training of volunteers. Three volunteers for intake are needed for sure.

**Summary/Overview of the Morning Staff:**

- What worked well in the job, enjoyed: the half hour overlap was beneficial, made it feel like more of a team effort. The early hours worked for morning worker's personal situation at the time; meeting new people, both volunteers and guests; great consistent volunteers. The log worked well for communication, praise from board was nice.

- Improvements and what was not enjoyed: didn't like picking up cigarette butts. One said, "More staff meetings". Another said that the one staff meeting was enough.

Individual files for each guest who is being referred would help. A system for the fridge would be good. Less frustration with the bus!

**Summary/Overview of the Night Staff:**

- What worked well in the job, enjoyed: the online log improved communication - better than the binder; getting to know guests and gaining their trust, organization was well done. Liked the 9 hour, 3 or 4 days/week shifts. Great place to work.

- Improvements, and what was not enjoyed; having to make tough decisions of turning guest away. Having someone not come 3 times to open the church – should have had a key. Learning about how to make referrals would help. Being accepting and using harm reduction model as it works for guests who are in recovery or relapsing. Not having enough duties at night to pass time with. More staff meetings would be good.

**Summary/Overview of the Volunteer Coordinator:**

- What worked well in the job, enjoyed: really enjoyed talking to the volunteers on the phone and meeting them; enjoyed meeting the guests and staff; liked the flexibility in hours, to be able to work from home and to have on hand experienced board members. The online schedule made the job more efficient, quicker and easier to oversee. The admin part of the database made it possible to see who was already slotted in for how many or which shifts. The ability to send out group emails to all volunteers made it much easier. The communication with staff and board through the log, phone calls and email about clients worked extremely well.

- Challenges, improvements: biggest challenge was feeling torn (because of time constraints and priorities) between the need to fill open shifts (coordinating) and the need to actually meet guests in person (casework). Volunteer coordinating and casework are also two different mind-sets; it's hard to switch back and forth. Logistically, filling volunteer shifts keeps the coordinator tied to the computer/phone/desk; whereas with casework, times, locations and tasks require one to be flexible, mobile and away from the office. Both always need doing, so it's hard to be in two places at once.

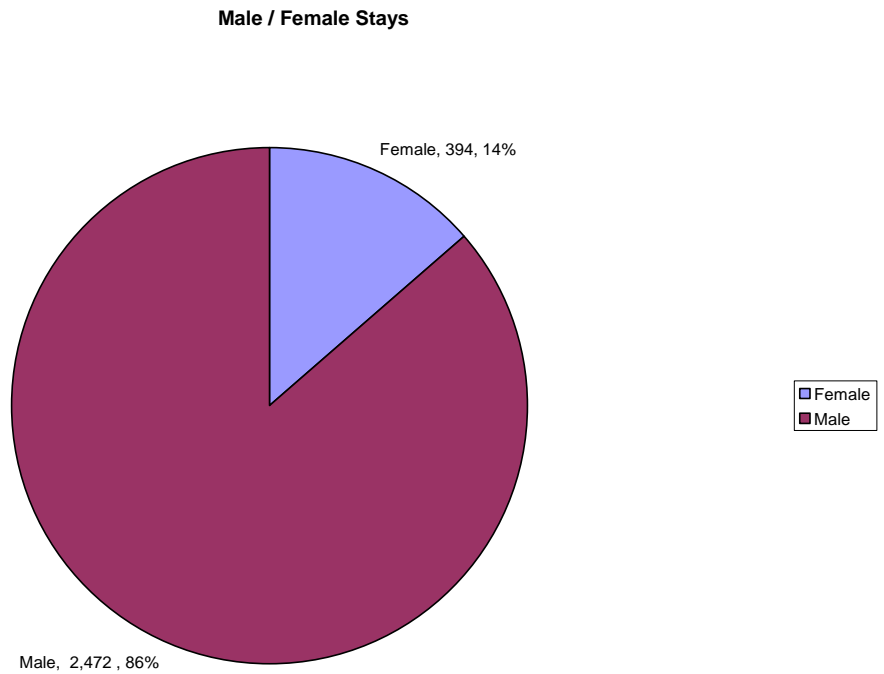
## Appendix C: Pertinent Data

### Statistics and Numbers of Participating Guests

#### 1. Participation

Over 104 nights, Inn from the Cold had 2866 overnight stays, of which:

- 2472 stays were male
- 394 stays were female



## 2. Priority Stays

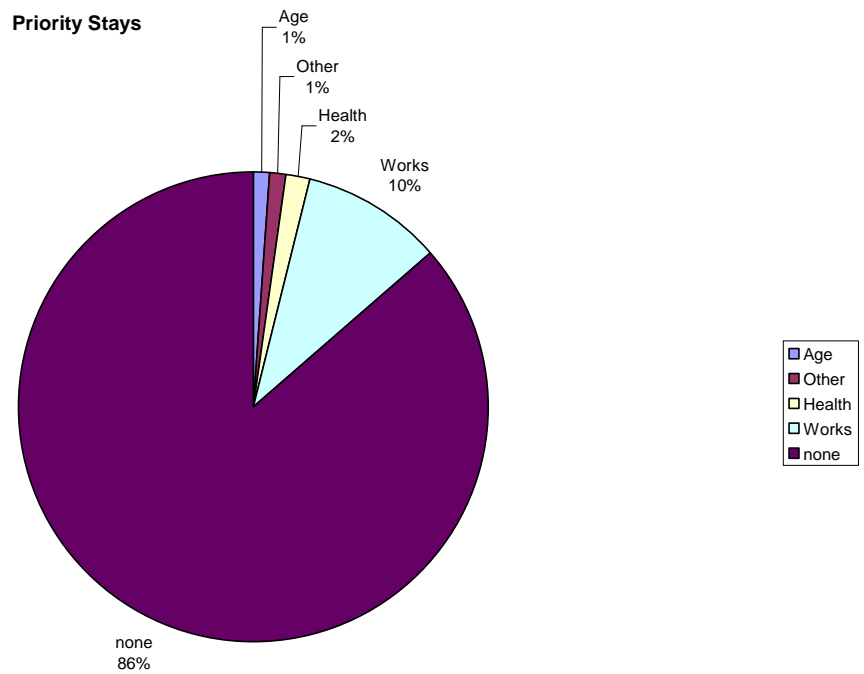
Of the many guests that stayed with us, we gave priority to guests who worked, had health issues, or other priorities/concerns.

10% of guests had jobs or worked.

2% of the guests had health issues.

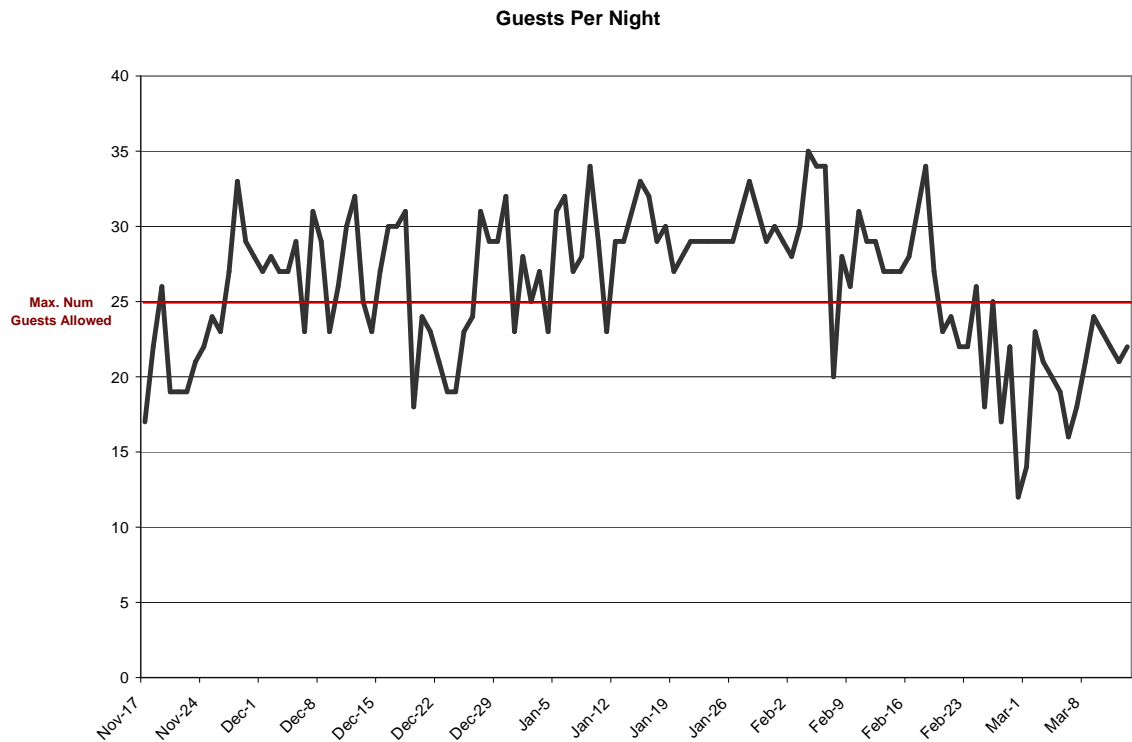
1% of the guests had other priorities.

86% of the guests had presented no specific priorities.



### 3. Shelter Capacity, Number of Guests over Limits

Our set out limit of guests was 24 per night. However, this season we went over the limit of 24 consistently. The average number of guests per night was 27. The highest number of guests per night was 34, and the lowest number of guests was 12 per night. Most guests stayed at least one night, and the highest number of stays was 95 nights. The following graph shows that we were over our limit of 24 guests per night for most of the duration of the program.



#### 4. Number of Guests in Relation to Outdoor Temperatures

It was a cold, long winter. The coldest temperatures dipped below  $-20$  degrees Celsius in January. However, even in December, January, February and March we had temperatures at around  $-15$  to  $-10$  degrees Celsius. To be outside at night during these temperatures is unimaginable. Plus, we had a number of snow storms which this graph doesn't show. Nevertheless, the following graph shows that the number of guests that stayed any given night was directly in correlation with the colder temperatures outside. The colder it was, the more guests we would have. The blue line is the temperature, the black line the number of guests.

