Yes! There is Room at the Inn
Winona Warming Center Remains Open at Christmas
Dedicated Volunteers Make It Happen

Unlike Mary and Joseph in the Nativity story, there was room at the inn this Christmas for homeless adults in Winona. This was true for Christmas Eve, New Years Eve, and Thanksgiving too. The dedicated volunteers of the Winona Community Warming Center have staffed the Center each night since it began its second season on November 1, 2017.

What they do is not easy. They staff the Warming Center from 9:00 PM through 7:00 AM each night offering guests fellowship, safety, and support in a non-judgmental manner that affirms human dignity.

The Warming Center, which has a capacity of ten guests, is located at the Community Bible Church, 69 E. 3rd St. in Winona. It offers a safe, warm place to sleep, showers, laundry facilities, healthy snacks and beverages, and referrals for additional help. Without the Center, homeless persons would risk illness, injury, or, even death, because they lacked shelter in winter.

Guest numbers continue to grow during the Center’s second season which will run through March 31, 2018. Lynette Johnson, the Warming Center’s Coordinator, stated, “We averaged approximately four guests per night in December, with six guests being our largest night so far. Having housed thirty different guests in November and December, we have already surpassed the number served all last season.”

The Warming Center enjoys great support from the Winona community in terms of volunteers, volunteer partner organizations, and donations. Johnson adds, “The work of the Warming Center is truly the work of the entire Winona community!” Learn more at www.ccsomn.org or contact Lynette Johnson at ljohnson@ccsomn.org.

Health and Wellness Programs Soar in 2017
Older adults gain strength, flexibility, balance, and friends
Active Aging programs, offered at no cost to participants, will expand in 2018

“I don’t have as much stiffness and pain. It seems like I have more energy too!”

“This class gave me the initiative to move and keep moving.”

“This is a great program! Our instructor has done a terrific job of leading us and creating a supportive community around exercise.”

“I am able to do more activities with my grandchildren now.”

These comments represent those of just over 1,000 older adults who participated in a health and wellness program offered by Catholic Charities’ Active Aging Programs in 2017. Coming off a stellar year, the program is poised for significant expansion in 2018 due, in part, to a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services.
Provided by trained staff and volunteers, the programs are offered at no cost to participants. The programs support high-risk older adults to better manage their chronic conditions, improve their quality of life, lower health care costs, reduce the risk of falls, and better manage caregiver challenges.


To learn more or to register for a program near you visit the Catholic Charities website at https://www.ccsomn.org/active-aging-programs/wellness-programs/.

If you have questions, or to request a class in your community, please contact Jennifer Halberg, Active Aging Programs Director at 507.454.2270 or jhalberg@ccsomn.org.

MARY’S KITCHEN TABLE
Mary Alessio, Director of Advancement answers questions around Mary’s Kitchen Table.

A donor/friend recently asked me, How do I encourage philanthropy and a spirit of giving with a child?

I often save great articles that inspire me and I remembered an article entitled, “Five Ways to Raise a Kid Who Gives Back” by Beth Kobliner that appeared in the March 2017 issue of Family Circle magazine. I’ve taken the liberty of sharing the basics of her article with you:

1. Start a charitable matching plan. Let your child know if they find a charity dear to them and want to share a blessing you will “match” their donation.
2. Don’t ignore people who ask for money on the street (i.e. those I recently saw on Michigan Avenue while visiting Chicago). Even if you feel giving to panhandlers is not where you want to donate—don’t pretend you don’t see them. Even saying, “Sorry, not today” as you walk by is a compassionate response vs. ignoring the person. If your personal policy is not to give, let your child know how you direct your charitable giving.
3. Find a local charity. While giving in response to national or global disasters is commendable, when your child sees firsthand how their dollars change lives it gives him or her a window on issues affecting your community that they may not be aware of.
4. Talk about why you give and why your kids should too. Studies have proven that children grow up with a giving spirit when their parents and grandparents have conversations about compassion and our responsibility to share our blessings with those less fortunate.
5. Don’t over praise your kid’s charitable efforts. While it is great to praise your child for good behavior—don’t overdo it. One child recently mentioned her mom was so over the top in her praise that is essentially killed the whole experience.

My personal favorite idea came from a Spirit Circle couple. She and her husband stated that their grandchildren have more than they need - especially at Christmas. So, before Christmas, they ask their grandchildren to select a charity that they hold dear, research it a bit, and write a note explaining how that charity’s work touches their heart. They then make a donation to the charity in the name of that grandchild. She said it helps the selected charity and, more importantly, nurtures a spirit of compassion in their grandchildren.

Got a question? Contact Mary at malessio@ccsomn.org.