

Letter: Grant a boon for homeless group

To the community,

Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless is grateful to the Sierra Health Foundation for awarding a grant of \$15,000 for the operation of the South Lake Tahoe Warm Room in 2017-18. The Sierra Health Foundation is an independent foundation committed to supporting health-related activities in Northern California. The South Lake Tahoe Warm Room is an overnight emergency shelter that operates only during the winter months in our community.

This grant will go a long way in helping us get up and running this winter. We appreciate the Sierra Health Foundation for their acknowledgement that the health of community individuals is improved by having a safe and warm place to sleep at night.

The South Lake Tahoe Warm Room is in its third season. The warm room provides a refuge from Tahoe's harsh winter elements. In 2016-17, over 200 individuals and businesses supported warm room operations. The warm room was open 137 nights, served 136 individuals, and provided over 5500 shelter bed nights. In addition, TCH provides emergency motel rooms for families with children under 18, and did so for seven families with children last winter.

The majority of guests were Tahoe locals when they became homeless, and 26 percent were employed. The average guest stayed 25 nights last winter. In addition to shelter, the warm room provides light food and drink and referrals to resources. Last season guests received referrals to the mental health department, substance abuse programs, medical appointments, job boards/job training information, and more.

Marissa Muscat, Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless