

Letter: Appreciation, stats from homeless coalition

To the community,

On behalf of Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless, I would like to thank our community for its support during the third winter season of the South Lake Tahoe warm room project. Our organization received donations from over 150 individuals and businesses and benefited from 64 volunteers who provided over 675 volunteer hours in the warm room.

In its third winter, the warm room was open 98 nights, serving 109 individuals (81 men and 28 women stayed in the warm room, and two families with children were provided temporary shelter in motels) and providing 1,809 shelter-bed nights. On average, 19 guests (15 men and four women) stayed at the warm room per night. Service animals were provided with 15 shelter-bed nights. Thirteen veterans stayed in the warm room, with two finding housing, one finding employment, and two reconnecting with out-of-state family to whom they chose to return. Twenty-seven percent of our guests were employed during their stay in the warm room. This season we were able to provide 250 showers and 25 haircuts to our guests.

Since inception, the warm room has been open 337 nights, providing 7,370 shelter bed-nights. Nineteen guests found long-term housing with TCH's support this winter, and only six individuals have used the warm room all three seasons. In 2017-18, the average stay was 14 nights.

This season, the warm room operated out of two locations. The warm room began the season at Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church, before moving to a space on Rufus Allen Boulevard owned by the city of South Lake Tahoe. I would like to thank Pastor Bob Kelley and the congregation of Lake Tahoe

Community Presbyterian Church for welcoming us into their facility over the holidays, as well as the city for leasing us the space on Rufus Allen and being a great partner at that location. In addition, I would thank our fantastic staff and volunteers – without their incredible dedication, we would not have a warm room.

Although the warm room is closed, I am pleased to announce that we have scheduled a staff member to engage with the homeless community year-round to assist with housing options and provide access to resources.

The success of this program is reliant on the collaboration of donations from our generous community. Special thanks to the El Dorado Community Foundation, Sierra Health Foundation, Reliapro Painters, Caesars Foundation, South Lake Tahoe Endowment, Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, American Century Golf, Knights of Columbus, South Shore Christian Assembly, Our Lady of Tahoe, St Theresa Catholic Church, and many more for their support. We are grateful for partnerships with the city of South Lake Tahoe City Council, Parks and Recreation, and the South Lake Tahoe Police Department; Barton Health; Darke Marketing; El Dorado County Services; High Sierra Patrol, Live Violence Free; Only Kindness; Tahoe Youth & Family Services; Heavenly Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church; Hope Lutheran; Temple Bat Yam; and Unity at the Lake. Our supporters are too numerous to name but we do appreciate all of your support in opening and operating our area's first overnight emergency winter shelter.

Marissa Muscat, executive director Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless