

# Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)

## Frequently Asked Questions

The Interfaith Hospitality Network or IHN is a network of volunteer churches that provide temporary shelter and meals for homeless individuals and families throughout the year. IHN has been operating in Cuyahoga County for some time but the Lorain County program is just starting out. ALUCC has made a commitment to serve as a host congregation as part of our mission outreach. We have been talking about this program for some time now but many people have questions about the program. Listed below are some of the more frequently asked questions we have encountered. Please contact the IHN Coordinators Linda Yonkers 937-5633 or Maureen Johnson 933-8329 if you have any additional questions or concerns.

### **What is the commitment we are making?**

We have indicated that we are willing to host guests for one week at a time four times per year. We do have some flexibility regarding the weeks we are able to host so other events should not be dramatically interfered with (Bike and Build, various concerts etc.).

### **When will we a start hosting families?**

IHN of Lorain County is still assembling a list of host congregations. They would like to have commitments from 13 congregations before they proceed with the program. As soon as they have a complete list of host congregations and they have established an adequate day center for the participants to use, we will be put on a schedule for hosting.

A preliminary schedule has us hosting the week of March 2, 2008. This may be postponed but we will move forward using this date.

### **How many people will be here at one time?**

We can host up to 4 families at one time but never more than 14 people. Most of the participants of the program will be families but occasionally individuals will be staying as well.

### **Is this safe?**

All participants in the program are screened for substance abuse and mental health issues. There are strict rules that must be followed to get into and stay in this program.

### **What happens if someone gets hurt on our property, will we be protected from liability?**

Liability from injury to participants while on our property will be covered under our insurance policy. This protection is the same as for any public gathering in our space.

### **Where will the visitors stay?**

The current plan is to house our guests in Fellowship Hall for sleeping and dining. We will also have the library and possibly the bride's room or family lounge open for students to work on homework in the evening.

### **What time will visitors be at ALUCC?**

Our guests will be at our church from 5 pm to 7 am every day, Sunday to Sunday. The sleeping space will be taken down prior to church services on Sunday at the end of our host week, keeping our Fellowship Hall available for Sunday morning activities.

### **What kind of supplies do we need to provide?**

The IHN provides mattresses, cots, and screens needed to make up temporary bedroom spaces. These items will arrive Sunday afternoon (after our services and fellowship time). We need to provide bed linens, dinner ware, food, misc. first aid and hygiene items, diapers, baby wipes etc. A complete list is available from Maureen or Linda. Basically, we provide the small items, IHN provides the furniture.

## **How much will this cost?**

To be honest there is no total cost calculated at this time. Most of our costs will be starting up the program purchasing bed linens and misc. supplies. Long-term costs will be the replacement of these items as they are used up or wear out. The Thrift Shop has generously donated \$2000.00 to this program and a private donation has been received. This should more than cover the costs for start-up and the first year. A complete record of expenses will be kept and a better answer will be given for this question after we have hosted a few times.

There are additional expenses in providing the meals. For now, breakfast and lunch supplies will come from the ALUCC IHN money mentioned above and dinners will be donated by our volunteers.

## **How many volunteers do we need to run this program and what will they need to do?**

Well, of course, the more volunteers we have the easier it is for every one of them. The tasks for the week are set-up and take-down of temporary sleeping areas, preparing breakfast and dinner each day, providing some sort of evening fellowship or activity, and we need two people to sleep overnight each night to provide assistance as needed. We also need volunteers to launder bed linens between visits. We currently have coordinators for volunteers in each of these areas (listed at end of this document). They are gathering names of people who would like to help out. So far the response has been very positive.

## **What about group meetings during the week when we are hosting IHN?**

We do have some say in when we will NOT host IHN, so weeks that are very busy on the calendar do not have to be disrupted.

During our host week the Fellowship Hall, the bride's room and the library will not be open for meetings. The rest of the church will still be open for use. Programs that usually hold meetings in the Hall will be able to meet elsewhere in the building.

## **How can I help out?**

If you are interested in being a part of this mission work at ALUCC, please contact one of the people listed below to be added to their list of volunteers. This does not commit you to working a specific night or week. We will call people off these lists when we have hosting dates. If it works with your schedule great, if not we'll try again later.

Family Promise is the organization that coordinates this network and there are additional volunteer opportunities with them during the daytime hours. Contact Maureen or Linda if you would like to learn more.

All volunteers (13 years and older) will need to attend a 3-hour training before interacting with our guests. Training will be provided at ALUCC on Saturday, February 16, 9 am – noon and on Thursday, February 21, 6pm – 9 pm.

### **Meal Coordinators**

Donna Cracas 933-4431  
Judy Reich 930-5370

### **Hospitality Coordinators**

Lynn Accorti 440.899-7566  
Jim & Jean Grady 933-4865

### **Supply Coordinators**

Deirdre Schraff 934-1777  
Linda Yonkers 937-5633

### **Setup & Takedown Coordinators**

Jerry Kerwin 937-9493  
Shelley MacDonald 933-9397

### **Overnight Coordinator**

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