WEDNESDAY NIGHT SHELTER

Seattle First Presbyterian Church

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DESCRIBE THE MISSION: HOW IT IS OPERATED AND FUNDED

History:
In early 1999, several volunteers from our Community Dinner ministry began meeting to explore the possibility of providing shelter for the homeless men we were getting to know through the Dinner. We knew that we wanted to provide more than a "mat and a meal" and, after a lot of research and prayer, we committed ourselves to the vision of becoming an intentional Christian community – "the new family of Jesus" – into which we would welcome men from the street. At first we hoped to engage six other churches in a partnership where each church would provide shelter one night a week, but after fifteen visits to the mission committees of other churches – which were very fruitful in terms of networking and learning what other churches were doing, but which turned up no partners in a shelter ministry – we launched, in November, 1999, a one-night-a-week Shelter Ministry in the basement of our church, partnering only with Operation Nightwatch, which has screened and referred a number of men to our shelter every Wednesday night until the present time.

How it Works:
Our doors open at 8:00 p.m. each Wednesday night for the thirty men who will sleep that night in our fellowship hall. They are greeted with a hot supper served by six to eight Shelter Team volunteers who are there to welcome them and provide for their needs.

After supper and a brief orientation, the men are free to use the shelter space however they wish – to read, write, sleep or talk with team members or other shelter guests. The team's job is simply to provide a warm, clean, safe, respectful and welcoming community within which these men can relax for the night.

For those who wish to come early for a more intentional experience of spiritual community, we offer a "Men's Circle" meeting at 6:30 p.m. There men learn to share their hearts before God and in response to Scripture and to pray for one another, giving and getting the support they need to continue on their journeys.

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$7,000 from individual donors.