

Cold Weather Shelter  
The Salvation Army / Anacortes Corps

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## General Instructions

Mission Statement: Provide a safe overnight shelter during extreme weather for families and single persons who have no place else to come in from the cold.

### Hospitality & Volunteer Comportment:

- Volunteers will wear name tags (preferably with first name only)
- One volunteer will be stationed at the front desk during check-in.
- Conflict resolution: call 911 +and Lt Stephen Milner
  - If a guest is a threat to others or to him/herself call 911
- Volunteers may not give money to any shelter guests.
- Welcome people to the shelter as guests. Treat our neighbors who do not have permanent housing as you would any other neighbors.
- Use language that promotes acceptance, respect and uniqueness; be empathetic to guests' situations—do not minimize their experience; most guests have experienced some sort of trauma.

### Shelter Hours: 5:30 PM until 7:30 AM

Our shelter will provide shelter for men, women, and families with children 16 years and older (and service animals). Families with children under 16 years old will be housed at the Holiday Motel, as part of the Cold Weather Shelter program.

### Weapons:

- Guests must check their weapons with volunteers. Weapons will be labeled and locked in the safe.
- Weapons will be returned to the guest upon leaving the shelter

### Designated Areas:

- Guests will eat and sleep in the designated area upstairs.
- Guests are not permitted in the kitchen or unaccompanied downstairs
- Smoking area:
  - Smoking is permitted outside the building near the butt can in back of the building. All cigarette butts are to be placed in the receptacle. Guests may go outside to smoke until 9:45 PM

### Pets:

Smaller animals can remain with their owners in the shelter area. Animals may be caged at the discretion of the volunteer staff, with the cage remaining near the owner. If an animal is disruptive, the animal and the owner may be asked to leave.

- Pets can be outdoors during smoke breaks, but they must be on a leash at all times. All pet owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets utilizing the bags provided.

### Telephone:

- Volunteers (first shift) should answer the phone at the front desk.
- Guests may use the phone for three minutes
  - To get an outside line dial: 9 + 1 + area code + number

### Doors

- The front door will be locked at 10 PM after the last smoke break. All guests must remain inside the building after this time.
- The Anacortes PD may bring guests to the shelter after hours
- Any guest leaving the building after 10 PM will not be allowed to return to the shelter that night.

### Storing stuff in the Refrigerator:

- If there are items to be stored in the refrigerator, label them with one of the Cold Weather Shelter tags

### Beverages

- Coffee, tea, hot water, etc., will be available at all times.

### Cleaning up Spills

- If you need to clean up any areas, use latex/rubber gloves and bleach water. (Use 1 tsp bleach to 1 gal of water.)
  - The rubber gloves are in one of the bins
  - The bleach and bucket are in the broom closet next to the chapel

### Personal Belongings

- Guests' belongings will not be left in the building during the day.

### Fire Extinguishers

- Located at:
  - Kitchen wall near the refrigerator.
  - At the front entrance
  - At the top of the stairway

### Reader Boards:

- A designated Salvation Army board member will contact the Library and Hospital staff about posting information re the opening of the shelter on their reader boards:
  - Diana Farnsworth: [dianaf@cityofanacortes.org](mailto:dianaf@cityofanacortes.org) / (360) 293-1910
  - Barb LeDuc: [bleduc@islandhospital.org](mailto:bleduc@islandhospital.org) / (360) 588-2086

## Duties for Each Shift

1st Shift – 5:00 – 8:00 PM

3 volunteers

5:00 PM

- Salvation Army staff / board members will open the building and turn on the outdoor marquee.
- Upon volunteers arrival
  - Personal belongings should be kept in the office
  - Put on a name badge
  - Sign-in on the Shift Report at the check-in desk
  - Set up check-in desk with:
    - Shelter guest agreements
      - [if a current agreement is on file; no need to refill]
    - Shelter guest log [for that evening]
    - Shelter shift report
  - Scheduler will ensure that the binder is available and contains an adequate number of blank forms]
  - Set up upstairs great room (before the guests arrive) with:
    - Floor mats
    - Blanket and sleeping bag bins
    - Table for socks and other community donations
    - Stored guest belongings
  - Guests requested to assist in past years and were allowed to assist in setting up the tents; guests are not allowed in the storage area.
  - Start coffee and hot water, set out food supplies [located in bins in the storage area].
    - [Need instructions from the SA staff on coffee-making]
  - Volunteers will arrange for the evening meals.

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

- Doors open officially at 5:30 PM
- If no guests arrive by 7:00 PM, the shelter will not open that night. The first shift will notify 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift workers of the closure and lock the building.
- Greet guests and hand out blankets and mats. Large garbage bags can be used for wet clothes, coats, etc., Label bags with guest's name. (There may be an area to hang wet coats.)
- Have all guests read (or read it aloud to them) and sign the Shelter Guest Agreement.

- One volunteer will take weapons and any other valuables that people may wish to store overnight to the storage facility
- Annotate each person on the Shelter Guest Log (the sign-in sheet)
- Guests do not need to provide ID
- Ask about any weapons and lock them in the safe.
- Show guests the restrooms, sleeping and eating areas.
- Answer the phone if it rings.
- Begin serving dinner at 7:00 PM
- Make notes in the Shelter Shift Report for needed supplies, disturbances, etc. Log any activities that appear odd.
- Families with children under 16 years of age:
  - They need to sign the appropriate agreements and have their data collected for the HMIS database.
  - Once that is accomplished they will be directed to the Holiday Motel, 2903 Commercial Ave. (just south of the bowling lanes)[ (360) 293-6511]
  - The Holiday Motel has a two-bedroom apartment reserved for the winter that will be available for one or two families, depending. Families may return to the CWS for breakfast.
  - Families need to check with the Anacortes Family Center [(360) 293-2993] (1011 27<sup>th</sup> St) to check what services might be available
- People who have not utilized the shelter before are asked to fill out a packet of forms. These forms include:
  - A half-page questionnaire
  - A guest agreement
  - An HMIS Client Release of Information and Informed Consent Form \*
  - An information gathering form for the HMIS data base. \*
  - \*NOTE: All clients have the right to refuse consent to any identifying information being entered into the HMIS data base. Guests who opt out need to write their name and the words "Refuse Consent" on the Release of Information Form. If consent is refused, the information gathering form is to be left blank

#### 7:00 PM Supper

- Make a short presentation on fire safety, exit procedures and other information needed by the guests (see "Fire Safety Briefing" in the binder)
- Offer a prayer to ask a blessing on the food and guests (or ask the guests to lead the prayer).

#### 7:30 PM

- Fill out the Shelter Shift Report for the new incoming staff

2nd Shift: 8:00 – 11:00 PM

2 volunteers

Second Shift responsibilities:

- Read and sign-in on the Shelter Shift Report, put on name badge and check-in with the 1<sup>st</sup> Shift Volunteers
- Answer the phone
- Clean-up dishes, wipe tables, etc., after supper. Guests may want to help, but cannot, due to health regulations
- Tag all refrigerator items belonging to the Cold Weather Shelter
- 10:00 PM: Lights out and lock the building
  - After the building is locked, guests are not to leave the building and will not be allowed back in
  - Make notes in the Shelter Shift Report for needed supplies, disturbances, etc. Factually log any activities that seem odd.

At 10:00 PM start Fire Watch Log sheet and make entries every half hour



Graveyard Shift: 11:00 PM – 5:30 AM

2 hired staff members

3rd Shift responsibilities:

- Read and sign-in on the Shelter Shift Report, put on name badge and check-in with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Shift Volunteers
- Answer the phone
- Volunteers may not give money to any shelter guests
- Ensure that the doors are locked.
- If a guest leaves in the night, inform the Anacortes Police Department and provide them with the intended destination of the guest. We don't want someone wandering around lost.
- Annotate the Fire Watch Log Sheet every half-hour
- 10:00 – 6:00 PM
  - Sign out any guests who need to leave the shelter.
  - Lights out at 10:00 PM. No smoking after lights out.
  - One person should be upstairs and one downstairs
- 5:00 AM – 5:30 AM
  - Set up tables and chairs for breakfast.
  - Unlock the front door.
  - Make notes in the Shelter Shift Report for needed supplies, disturbances, etc. Factually log any activities that seem odd.

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4th Shift: 5:30 AM - 8:00 AM  
2 volunteers

6:00 AM:

- Read and sign-in on the Shelter Shift Report, put on name badge and check-in with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Shift Volunteers
- Start fresh coffee
- Answer the phone

6:00 AM – 7:30 AM

- Start breakfast for 7 AM serving time
- Awaken guests at 6:45 AM
- Serve breakfast and clean kitchen
- Tag all refrigerator items belonging to the Cold Weather Shelter

7:30 AM

- Check Out
  - Help guests pack their possessions, blankets in large plastic bags if the shelter will be open the next night (personal possessions will be kept for one night only) Mats and tents are stored in the storage area. Tags for marking bags are in the Cold Weather Shelter supply bin.
  - Distribute sanitizing wipes for guests to clean both sides of their mat.
  - Guests work together to stack mats in storage room.
  - Possessions left in the shelter will be disposed of when the cold weather event ends.
  - Any weapons left at the shelter will be taken to the Anacortes Police station.
- Clean Up
  - Clean up areas, using latex/rubber gloves and bleach water.
  - Bathroom cleaning supplies are located in the broom closet next to the chapel
  - Store all supplies and non-perishable food in the plastic bins.
  - Straighten tables and chairs
  - Place Shelter Guest Log and Shift Reports (note supplies needed) in the three-ring binder at the front desk.
  - Ensure that all water faucets are turned off in the bathrooms and kitchen
  - Secure building: lock doors, etc.

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- Check bathrooms to ensure that no one is left inside
- Leave Log Books, Procedural Manual, name badges, etc in the plastic bin in the office
- Leave the Cold Weather Shelter Key on the key rack in the office

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### Shelter Guest Agreement

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult     Child

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

- I will not use alcohol or drugs while a guest on this property or I will be asked to leave. If I am asked to leave, I will do so promptly.
- I will smoke only in the designated area outside the building and put butts in the designated receptacle.
- I will clean up after my pets if I have brought any. Bags will be provided. Pets must remain on leashes in the shelter area or in provided kennels at all times.
- After 10:00 PM, I will not be allowed to leave the building until 6:30 AM.
- If I have a weapon, I will check it with a Shelter Volunteer, who will return it upon my departure in the morning.
- I will respect the rights of all others while using this facility.
- I will remain in the area designated by Shelter Volunteers.
- If I am asked to leave this shelter I will do so promptly. A cab will be provided.
- I understand that if I leave this shelter after 10 PM, I will not be allowed to return until the following day.
- Enter the date/time you signed into the Shelter in the form on the back of this page

If someone asks if you are at the Shelter, is it OK to tell him/her that you are here?

Yes     No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Family members also at the Shelter: \_\_\_\_\_

For Volunteers:

- It is very important that each guest be signed in and out
- Guests do not need to provide ID



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Shelter Guest Log

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

21. \_\_\_\_\_

22. \_\_\_\_\_

23. \_\_\_\_\_

24. \_\_\_\_\_

25. \_\_\_\_\_

26. \_\_\_\_\_

27. \_\_\_\_\_

28. \_\_\_\_\_

HMIS Winter Shelter Report

The information listed below will be used for reporting purposes only. You have the right to refuse to answer any or all questions. Refusing to answer any question will not affect your nightly shelter services.

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (first, middle, last): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic: Yes   
No

Have you ever served in the United States military? Yes  No

Where did you stay last night?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How many nights, weeks, or months did you stay in that situation or place?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been continuously homeless?  
\_\_\_\_\_

In the past 3 years, how many times have you been homeless?  
\_\_\_\_\_

In the past 3 years, how many total months have you been homeless?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Disabling Conditions & Barriers (please check all that apply):**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disability      | <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse-Alcohol            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse-Drugs              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic Health Condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence-Survivor         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Condition  | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence-actively fleeing |

Current Monthly Income: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Income Source(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you receive any other benefits?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you covered by health insurance? Yes  No  Type/Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Staff Use/Notes:</b>	<b>Client</b>
Refused <input type="checkbox"/>	

**HMIS**

Informed Consent

Client

## HMIS Client Release of Information and Informed Consent

**IMPORTANT: Do not enter personally identifying information into HMIS for clients who are: 1) in DV agencies or; 2) currently fleeing or in danger from a domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking situation; 3) are being served in a program that requires disclosure of HIV/AIDS status (i.e.; HOPWA); or 4) under 13 with no parent or guardian available to consent to enter the minor's information in HMIS.**

*If this applies to you, **STOP- Do not sign this form.***

This agency participates in the Washington State Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) by collecting information, over time, about the characteristics and service needs of people facing homelessness. **RCW 43.185C.180 and RCW 43.185C.030**

- To provide the most effective services in moving people from homelessness to permanent housing, we need an accurate count of all people experiencing homelessness in Washington State. In order to insure that clients are not counted twice, we need to collect four pieces of personally identifying information. Specifically, we collect: **name, birth date, and race/ethnicity.** You may also choose to provide your social security number. However, signing this form does not require you to do so. Your information will be stored in our database for 7 years after the last date of service. If you have questions about collection of data or your rights regarding your personally identifying information, contact the HMIS System Administrator at: (360) 725-3028
- We use strict security policies designed to protect your privacy. Our computer system is highly secure and uses up-to-date protection features such as data encryption, passwords, and two-factor authentication required for each system user. There is a small risk of a security breach, and someone might obtain and use your information inappropriately. If you ever suspect the data in HMIS has been misused, immediately contact the HMIS System Administrator at: (360) 725-3028
- The data you provide may be combined with data from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Education Research and Data Center for the purpose of further analysis. Your name and other identifying information will not be included in any reports or publications. Only a limited number of staff members, who have signed confidentiality agreements, will be able to see this information. Your information will not be used to determine eligibility for DSHS programs. Washington State HMIS system administrators have full access to all information in HMIS. This includes the Department of Commerce staff, designated HMIS system administrators, and the software vendor.
- By signing this form, you acknowledge and allow Department of Commerce staff to obtain additional records of information from other state agencies with which there is a data sharing agreement (DSA) on file between Commerce and the other agency. Our DSA guides data transfer and storage security protocols. If DSAs are in place, Commerce is authorized by you to obtain, add to HMIS, and use for evaluation purposes any other data you have provided to other Washington state agencies.
- Your decision to participate in the HMIS will not affect the quality or quantity of services you are eligible to receive from this agency, and will not be used to deny outreach, assistance, shelter or housing. However, if you do choose to participate, services in the region may improve if we have accurate information about homeless individuals and the services they need. Furthermore, some funders MAY require that you consent to provide your personally identifying information in HMIS in order for you to receive services from that funding source.

**I understand the above statements and consent to the inclusion of personally identifying information in HMIS about me and any dependents listed below, and authorize information collected to be shared with partner agencies. I understand that my personally identifying information will not be made public and will only be used with strict confidentiality. I also understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time by filing a 'Client Revocation of Consent' form with this agency. I understand that I may obtain a copy of my signed consent form from this Agency (including forms signed electronically).**

Dependent children under 18 in household, if any (Please print first and last names):



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Client Signature (Parent/Guardian)

Date

Client Name (Print clearly)

Agency Staff Name (Print clearly)  
Initials

**Client refused consent** \_\_\_\_\_ (Agency Staff Initials)

**HMIS Unique Identifier (optional)**

Client Release of Information and Informed Consent

Revised 6/2018

This form may not be amended except by approval of the Washington State Department of Commerce  
Approved as to form by Sandra Adix, Assistant Attorney General, 6/5/2018

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Salvation Army – Anacortes Corps  
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Shelter Shift Report

Date \_\_\_\_\_

	1 <sup>st</sup> Shift	2 <sup>nd</sup> Shift	3 <sup>rd</sup> Shift	4 <sup>th</sup> Shift	5 <sup>th</sup> Shift
Volunteer 1					
Volunteer 2					
Volunteer 3					

Did any volunteers not arrive? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a message for the scheduler? \_\_\_\_\_

How many guests attended the Shelter? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any weapons locked in the office or not claimed at checkout?

Yes     No

Note needed supplies:

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Log any activities that seemed odd:

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Questions and Suggestions:

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Place shift report in the Binder when the Shelter closes.

## COLD WEATHER SHELTER MEALS AND FOOD DONATIONS

Volunteers may want to supplement what is offered for dinner and breakfast at the Cold Weather Shelter or provide the guests with additional food bags for the rest of the day.

All non-perishable food items can be donated. Non-perishable food items can be stored in a pantry without requiring refrigeration or freezing. Check the dates on all packages and discard expired or damaged items.

The non-perishable food should be items that do not require preparation or only require the addition of hot water.

Dinner at the Shelter may be donated by local restaurants. Food prepared in licensed kitchens by permitted handlers can be donated to the Shelter.

Home baked good that do not need refrigeration to remain safe (such as cookies, cakes, fruit pies, and breads) can be donated.

NO home-cooked food prepared in a home kitchen can be donated. This includes casseroles, soups and stews.

Fresh produce is welcome since Shelter guests receive mainly non-perishable food products. Fruit such as apples, bananas and oranges and vegetables that do not require cooking such as carrots and avocados are possibilities.

Hard boiled eggs are acceptable.

Instant coffee and other instant hot drinks are welcome.

Do not donate anything you don't want to eat.

Skagit County Department of Public Health

Basic Requirements for Food Preparation at Charity Meals

Charity feeding programs are an important community service. The Skagit County Department of Public Health supports these programs by providing food safety education and inspections with no permit fees. The following guidelines will help protect your clients from food borne illness and comply with Washington State Food Code, WAC 246-215.

- Food preparation must be supervised by a person with a current food handler card.
- All food ingredients must be obtained from facilities licensed to supply food to the public.
- Only non-hazardous baked goods such as cookies, fruit pies, and cakes (no creams or custards) can be prepared in home kitchens.
- All other foods must be stored and prepared at a Donor Kitchen or at the Donated Food Distributing Organization (contact the Health Department if you need information on a particular facility).
- Cooking of potentially hazardous foods should be done immediately prior to service unless your facility can meet the strict requirements for cooling and reheating of foods (contact the Health Department if you intend to cool foods for later service).
- Foods prepared on site must be served within 8 hours of preparation.
- Gloves or barriers must be used when handling foods that will not be cooked prior to service, including home baked goods and produce.
- No persons ill or recently ill (within 3 days) with vomiting or diarrhea should be involved in food preparation or service.

Please contact Polly Dubbel at 360-416-1551 if you have any questions regarding this information. Thank you for your efforts in providing healthy foods to those in need!

# Fire Watch Log Sheet

Address:

Hour	Date	Time	Initials	Note
0.5				
1.0				
1.5				
2.0				
2.5				
3.0				
3.5				
4.0				
4.5				
5.0				
5.5				
6.0				
6.5				
7.0				
7.5				
8.0				
8.5				
9.5				
10.0				
10.5				
11.0				
11.5				
12.0				
12.5				

## Fire Safety Plan

### General Fire Safety Related Duties

- Keep the doors in fire separations closed at all times.
- Keep access to exits—inside and outside—clear of any obstructions at all times.
- Do not permit combustible materials to accumulate in quantities or locations that would constitute a fire hazard.
- Promptly remove all combustible waste from areas where waste is placed for disposal, if applicable.
- Keep access roadways, fire routes and fire department connections clear and accessible for fire department use.
- Maintain the fire protection equipment in good operating condition at all times.
- Have a working knowledge of the building fire and life safety systems.
- Conduct fire safety briefing each night, as needed, for new guests, upon arrival to make guests know where the exits are, how they are to exit and where to meet. Staff will have the list of guests with them, so they can check to make sure everyone is accounted for.
- Volunteers will conduct regular fire watch checks after guests are bedded down for night and maintain a log of those checks.

### Procedures for Staff in Case of Fire

- Leave fire area immediately and close doors if appropriate. Alert occupants.
- Sound Fire Alarm and follow the fire alarm evacuation procedures.
- If it is safe to do so, supervise the evacuation of all occupants, including those requiring assistance.
- Ensure that other staff and guests have been notified of the emergency conditions.
- Call 9-1-1 from a safe location.
- Exit the building via the nearest exit.
- Gather occupants at an outside safe location
- Await the arrival of the Fire Department at the gather point.
- Upon the arrival of the firefighters, inform the fire officer of the conditions in the building and coordinate the efforts of the Supervisory staff with those of the Fire Department.
- Provide access and information to the firefighters as to location of persons and fire, etc.

## YMCA Oasis Fact Sheet

“YMCA Oasis is a program of the Skagit Valley Family YMCA consisting of three parts: The Oasis Daylight Center, the Oasis Outreach Program, and the Oasis Teen Shelter. *We are a safe, supportive, and confidential resource for youth and their families, especially those experiencing homelessness.*”

- The Oasis Daylight Center is a privately funded drop-in program for ANY youth 13 to 17 years old. Youth may attend as they choose and access regular social, educational and recreational workshops. It provides a safe, supervised space for teens to connect with their peers.
- The Oasis Teen Shelter is a licensed facility with the ability to serve up to 9 youth between 13 and 17 years old. The program prioritizes homeless youth, but can also serve at-risk and housed youth seeking temporary respite from home. The program stabilizes youth, aims for reunification with family and puts a strong emphasis on schooling. Youth start with a 21 day stay. After a review, the stay can be extended for up to 90 days.
- The Oasis Outreach Program is a holistic and state funded program that provides intensive case management and financial assistance to homeless youth age 13-17 and their families throughout Skagit County. Outreach staff are highly mobile and can meet youth/families where it is easiest for them. Youth do not need to be staying in the shelter or accessing the drop in center to receive these services.
- The shelter and drop in center both provide meals, showers, clothing, school and hygiene supplies, access to computers, a recording lab, and case management. Both programs encourage youth to set goals and support their work towards achieving them.

### **Frequently asked questions:**

*Who do you serve? What ages?*

All programs serve youth age 13-17. The Daylight Center is available to ANY youth in the community. The shelter prioritizes serving homeless and at-risk youth. The Outreach Program only serves youth/families fitting the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness. We unfortunately do not have a contract to place state-dependent (foster care) youth in our shelter, such as through HOPE beds, as we are not a 24/7 facility. However, these youth are more than welcome to access the Daylight Center and tap into resources there. Furthermore, a youth in crisis is always welcomed to call us or visit, and we will do our best to reconnect them with their social worker, parents or the appropriate parties.

*Do you only work with homeless youth?*

Our shelter prioritizes serving homeless and at-risk youth, but the shelter and Daylight Center can serve ANY youth in some capacity. The shelter often provides temporary respite to housed youth as a safer alternative to running away or to staying in an unsafe housing situation. Most of the youth at the Daylight Center are housed and attending school regularly and would not

be considered homeless or “at-risk.” The Daylight Center is simply a free, safe space for youth to congregate and participate in a number of programs. The Outreach Program, however, requires that youth fit the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness to be eligible for enrollment. This is a broad definition and encompasses situations like couch surfing.

*How does a youth enter your programs?*

Youth may show up to the Oasis Daylight Center at any time during operating hours. If it’s a youth’s first time, we ask them to complete a simple intake with staff. Youth do not need permission to attend the Oasis Daylight Center. Youth wishing to stay in the shelter may show up or call during operating hours and enter immediately. Staff will do an intake and then make contact with parents or guardians to confirm that the youth may stay the night. If there are safety concerns or the parent is unwilling to give permission, staff will contact law enforcement to mediate. The shelter is very rarely full. Homeless youth in need of support or wishing to enroll in the Outreach Program can connect with Outreach Program staff in the community, through the Daylight Center, Shelter, or by giving us a call. Once identified as homeless and in need of services, the youth completes an intake and then begins meeting with their case manager.

*Why are youth homeless and where do youth go when they exit your programs?*

The underlying cause of homelessness is poverty and a lack of affordable housing. Many families lose housing due to economic hardship and parent is then no longer able to provide the youth with stability. We also work with youth who are on their own. Many of them have run from home due to abuse or neglect. Many of them have been kicked out of their homes, often times due to their gender or sexual orientation. Many of them simply do not have a parent or guardian that can adequately provide or care for them. Family reconciliation is always our top priority. Trained staff work with parents/guardians to find stable housing if necessary, then help to mend relationships, mediate conflict, and get that youth back in the home. Sometimes home is simply too dangerous. In those cases, staff work to find other solutions such as youth transitional living programs, Job Corp, or through identifying another possible guardian.

*Where do youth go in the mornings if they are staying at the shelter?*

It’s unfortunate that Oasis is not able to provide 24-hour care. We hope to be 24 hours as soon as it is financially possible. In the meantime, we do the best we can to ensure youth are staying safe. Ideally, youth should be attending school during the day. If that is not possible, youth typically spend their time at the YMCA or around town at places like the Library or Co Op. Youth can also connect with our Outreach Program staff out in the community or by appointment at the building.

*Can you help youth with transportation?*

Unfortunately, Oasis staff cannot transport youth. However, staff can call a taxi, assist a youth in using the bus, or find other creative solutions to ensure transportation is not made



a barrier. If the youth is eligible, the Outreach Program can assist the youth or family in purchasing gas for their car.

*How does Oasis fit into the YMCA?*

YMCA Oasis is a program of the Skagit Valley Family YMCA. While it is unique in that it operates a shelter, drop-in teen center, and homeless outreach program, it is still under the Y's 501(c)3 nonprofit license. The Y administrative staff greatly supports Oasis, especially in the development, communications, and finance departments. YMCA Oasis teens are also able to access the YMCA's recreational facilities and partner for some programs.

*How many youth do you serve?*

As of November, the Oasis Teen Shelter has served a total of 43 unique youth in 2018; the Oasis Daylight Center has served a total of 90 unique youth; and the Outreach Program has served 33 unique youth. From January to November 2018, there have been a total of 704 instances in which the Teen Shelter has provided a safe, comfortable bed to a youth in need. The Shelter and Daylight Center combined have also given out 4,137 meals from January to November this year.

*Where can I learn more?*

You can keep up to date on YMCA Oasis happenings by liking our Facebook pages, visiting our page on the YMCA website, or signing up to receive our email updates each month. To receive emails, contact the Director at: 360 419 9058.