

The Warming Place



**ACK Homlessness Team: Rev. Linda Simmons, Debbie Dubois, Sue Mynttinen, Elise Norton, Taylor Hilst, Holly McGowan**

## **The Warming Place**

### **The Problem**

There are people on Nantucket experiencing homelessness. We are uncertain of the exact number but know that there are individuals who are living in the woods off of Polpis Road or sleep on benches. We also know of at least one woman living in her car and a man sleeping on a bench in town. We estimate that there are about a dozen such people living in these ways on island. The major causes of homelessness are poverty, often associated with the lack of affordable housing; domestic abuse, mental illness and drug and alcohol addiction.

There is not an overnight shelter on the island. If someone is desperate, their only option is to go to the Police Station and then be escorted to the ferry to travel to Hyannis where they may or may not find a bed in a shelter. The homeless on Nantucket consider this to be their home and do not want to leave and/or if they consider going off island, they are worried about losing their possessions, being hurt in the shelter, and in general are fearful of the unknown on the Cape.

### **The Opportunity**

Open a cold weather Warming Place, 2 days a week from 9am-1pm, to provide a hospitable space during the day. The Warming Place would enable guests to escape the cold and often wet weather for some physical and mental relief. We would provide breakfast and lunch, hopefully donated by local restaurants. Guests could access a phone and computer that we would provide. We would have several camping cots (that we would carry in and out) so that people could rest out of the cold without fear of their possessions being stolen. We would connect the guests to services through the Family Resource Warming Place, Fairwinds and other island agencies as appropriate. We are hopeful that a local doctor/dentist/eye doctor would volunteer their time. We may develop programs in subjects ranging from anger management, tobacco cessation. We would offer board games to encourage socialization. Our guests would learn that they are cared for and respected.

## **How to Start**

Volunteers would staff the Warming Place and be responsible for all amenities and programs. We would apply for grants and contact restaurants. The volunteers would be guided by a small executive team. We would start small, perhaps two days a week, and see how it is received before adding more days.

The American Legion has agreed to partner with us in this for no rental fee. We believe the Hall will be an ideal place to house the Warming Place and we know that the American Legion shares the same values of supporting those without on our island.

## **Responsibilities**

The onsite volunteers for the day would be responsible for cleaning all spaces: bathrooms, main room, etc. There would be written guidelines that all volunteers would be asked to abide by.

## **Warming Place Guest Rules and Guidelines**

Warming Place staff are authorized to deny admission to or require exit of persons whose behavior indicates a direct threat to the staff or other shelter guests (violent aggressive behavior, erratic, irrational behavior, or instigating others to engage in such behavior) following the procedure described below.

When a staff member believes a guest to be in violation of rules, the behavior will be reported to the Warming Place manager on duty. The Warming Place manager will then give a warning to the guest to cease the behavior. The exception to the warning requirement is actual violent behavior and/or other behavior that poses an immediate threat to the safety of others, in which case the guest will be required to leave without warning. If after a warning, a guest fails to cease the rule breaking behavior, or engages in other rule breaking behavior, the shelter manager will inform the guest that he/she has to leave.

### **Rules**

1. No alcohol, marijuana, and/or illegal substances in the building or in the immediate vicinity of the building.
2. No misuse of doctor prescribed medication and no use of another person's medication.
3. No weapons in the building or in the immediate vicinity of the building.
4. No smoking in the building.
5. No discriminatory, sexual or racial remarks will be tolerated. No threats to or abuse of another person or property allowed.
6. No pets are allowed in without permission from the Warming Place Manager.
7. No loud noises that disturb other guests or staff.
8. No improper dress, indecent mannerisms or sexual contact of any kind
9. Doors will open at 9AM, everyone must be out by 1:30PM.

10. Mutual respect and courtesy for guests, volunteers, staff and property are expected.
11. Clean up after yourself.

I have read (or have been read) the Warming Place rules and understand my responsibilities while a guest at the Warming Place.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby agree to "hold harmless the Warming Place and it's volunteers for injury sustained by me or my property while voluntarily participating in activities held at the Warming Place. This release is intended to include activities conducted both with and without the presence of staff.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Warming Place Chain of Command Policy**

The following rules have been established to allow for safe and effective operations of our shelter program for the benefit of guests and staff.

The rules are not intended to infringe on the rights of individuals, however they are designed to prevent direct threats to the health and safety of other guests and staff and to prevent behaviors that substantially interfere with the use and enjoyment of the premises by other guests and staff.

Warming Place staff are authorized to deny admission to or require exit of persons whose behavior indicates a direct threat to the staff or other shelter guests (violent aggressive behavior, erratic irrational behavior, instigating others to engage in such behavior) in accordance with the procedure outlined below.

Each guest must sign a Rules Form the first time he/she visits the Warming Place. Each guest must also sign a daily log with their name, date and time of entry and exit.

The Rules will be posted in a prominent place in the Warming Place.

1. When a staff member believes a guest is in violation of rules, the behavior will be reported to the Warming Place Manager (CM) on duty. The CM on duty will then give a warning to the guest to cease the behavior. The exception to the warning requirement is actual behavior that poses an immediate threat to the safety of others, in which case the guest will be required to leave without warning.
2. If after a warning, a guest fails to cease the rule breaking behavior, or engages in other rule breaking behavior, the CM on duty will inform the guest that he/she has to leave. (The CM on duty reserves the right to make exceptions due to individual circumstances, however, the guiding principle is that rules be enforced uniformly.)

3. If a guest fails to leave after being told to do so by the CM on duty, the police will be called to escort the guest out of the Warming Place.
4. Any guest expelled from the Warming Place must obtain permission from the Warming Place Team (or designate) in order to return. After review the Team may:
  - a. Permit the guest to return with a promise to follow the rules,
  - b. Permit the guest to return on a probationary basis requiring strict adherence to the rules or be escorted out without warning.
  - c. Prohibit the guest from returning to the Warming Place for a specified amount of time and after expiration of the period of time, return on a probationary basis, or
  - d. Prohibit the guest from returning for the remainder of the Warming Place season.

5. All staff must report rule breaking behavior to the CM on duty for determination of whether the behavior of a guest requires a warning. If a warning is given, the circumstances must be reported in the daily log. All events requiring a warning and/or expulsion must not only be reported in the daily log but must also be reported verbally or through dedicated e-mail to the Warming Place Team (or designate) on the day that they occur.

6. If a guest engages in a pattern of rule breaking (receiving more than 3 warnings in a two week period), even if the behavior did not result in the guest being ordered to leave, the Warming Place Team may impose any of the remedies set out in a-d above.

7. A guest may appeal to the Warming Place Team. Decisions regarding re-entry after expulsion will be guided by compassion and individual necessity, however, safety of others remains the paramount criteria.

### The Warming Place Volunteer Duties

Set up: pick up food at restaurant, arrange tables and chairs, put out food and paper goods, pick up cots at the UU meeting house and set up.

Breakdown: pack up paper goods and extra food, break down tables, stack chairs, and fold up cots and return to the UU meeting house.

One volunteer will be designated the manager for the day and be responsible, per the Chain of Command, for enforcing the rules and be responsible that all duties are performed per the Warming Places' guidelines

Maintain Covid-19 Protocols: 6' social distancing, everyone must wear a mask (masks will be provided for volunteers and guests who do not have one), stock bathroom with disinfectant wipes so guests can clean bathroom after each use.

Cleaning: maintain a clean serving area, wiping down as needed. Wipe tables and chairs after between guests. Follow cleaning protocols and guidelines at the end of day before closing.

Help serve meals, coffee, and tea

Upholding Warming Place Rules: see rules and guidelines for guests

Ensure Volunteer and Guest Safety

Assist guests in need

Interact with clients in a friendly, positive, happy and professional manner

Keep guests' names and personal information confidential

Sign out and Sign in Laptops:

Sign out and Sign in Phone:

Distribute Basic Supplies