

Winter Freeze Shelter Closes For Season

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WHEELING — About 250 people this season used Youth Services System's Winter Freeze Shelter, a place where people can have a warm place to sleep during cold weather months.

The shelter's final day of operation for this winter was Tuesday night. It began operating Dec. 6.

"Of those 250 individuals, our staff and our many partners were able to help about 25%, or 62 people, into a more permanent shelter, whether that was by getting them into local housing or a residential treatment center or by providing them



Photo provided

The National Women in Roofing Wheeling Council donated items to the Winter Freeze Shelter collected via Giving Boxes placed at various locations in the community. Shown giving the items are co-chairwomen Stephanie Barry, left, and Shawnda Burgess.

transportation to family members or friends that would house them," YSS Communications Director Betsy Bethel-McFarland said Tuesday. (Please see **SHELTER**, Page 3)

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The shelter is overseen by shelter managers who work for YSS, but the organization received many donations from community members and groups to help clothe and feed people there. In its most recent newsletter, the shelter listed about 480 different groups and people as supporters of the facility.

One example of a donation includes items

collected via the Caleb Smail Human Kindness Project. According to YSS, "the purpose of the project is to keep Caleb's memory, as well as his spirit of kindness and generosity, alive in the community."

Another example is the annual Neighbors Helping Neighbors food drive, and members of the fourth grade class at Wheeling Country Day School packing and do-

nating "blessing bags" for the homeless at the shelter.

And just last week, members of the National Women in Roofing Wheeling Council donated items they collected via their Giving Boxes placed at various locations.

"We could not do this life-saving work without the help of our generous community. Thirty different groups held

supply drives this winter, and those are just the ones we know about. Hundreds of people donated. We are grateful to them along with the city of Wheeling; the police, fire and EMS departments; Wheeling Linen; Project HOPE; the Street MOMs and our dedicated staff," Bethel-McFarland said.

"People experiencing homelessness cannot be helped with cookie-cut-

ter solutions," she added. "We commend the city of Wheeling for taking steps to tackle this complex issue by hiring homeless liaison Melissa Adams, and we will continue to support Melissa and others to find real solutions that preserve the safety and dignity of our friends who don't have adequate shelter."

Open seven days a week each season, the shelter provides a warm

place for the Wheeling area's homeless to sleep overnight. It is located at the former Ohio Valley Medical Center Building now owned by the city of Wheeling.

"There will be a breakfast first thing tomorrow morning for guests followed by a distribution of items such as tents and sleeping bags by local nonprofits that serve this population," she noted.