

HOPE RESCUE MISSION LAUNCHES NEW TEMPORARY OUTDOOR SHELTERS

MISSOULA, MONTANA—Hope Rescue Mission (HRM) is preparing to open new hard-sided shelters to accommodate up to 60 homeless individuals on Thursday, January 5. The new Temporary Safe Outdoor Space (TSOS), centrally located in Missoula, will increase current capacity by 50 percent and connect to power, water, and sewer.

The expansion will reduce the environmental impacts of illegal camping, such as human waste, trash accumulation, and polluted waterways, according to HRM officials. “The shelters are solving a very real, immediate need,” according to Hope Rescue Mission Executive Director Jim Hicks. “We are providing more beds to those who need shelter and reducing the environmental impact of homeless encampments,” he adds.

Hope Rescue Mission has been operating the TSOS since 2020, in cooperation with the United Way, Missoula County, the City of Missoula, and other public and nonprofit agencies. The safe, secure, staffed, 24/7, service-rich outdoor shelter serves those experiencing homelessness.

HRM’s goal is to transition individuals away from homelessness and toward self-sufficiency, Hicks says. “Our ultimate goal is transformational development—providing a path forward in people’s lives, by equipping them to be sustaining, productive members of society.”

The new outdoor space includes 30 shelters and a double-wide office building purchased by Missoula County to accommodate TSOS staff and service providers. Outreach personnel and peer support specialists work closely with residents to coordinate care, connect residents with community resources, provide housing navigation and employment assistance, and supply shelter, hygiene, and life essentials.

Access to utilities, including running water, will enable the addition of bathrooms and showers this spring. “Having daily access to showers increases self-confidence, especially for those who are employed or seeking employment,” says Ashley Corbally, development director for HRM. “We really want to encourage recovery and transition,” she adds. Program participants must check in daily with peer support specialists, agree to a drug-free environment, and complete life-skills classes.

HRM has served 165 homeless individuals since December 2020 through the outdoor shelter, 51 of whom have transitioned into housing; 89 were assisted in 2022, with 22 transitioning into housing. The mission is supported through private donations, Thrift Boutique revenue, and grants from the Otto Bremer Trust, Cross Charitable Foundation, and Gianforte Family Foundation, among others.

Catherine Koenen, executive director of the Gianforte Family Foundation, says, “We’re proud to support Hope Rescue Mission as they not only provide innovative shelter but also essential life-skills training, partnering with several nonprofits and civic institutions to help those escaping poverty and homelessness.”

A faith-based organization, Hope Rescue Mission serves all people. “We walk along people where they are,” Corbally says. For more information or to support HRM, contact Corbally at 406-542-5240 or development@hopemontana.org.

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