

A wonderful example of AHC providing Loving Arms – story submitted by Pastor Seth

Code Blue Housing in Highland Park

For the past three winters RCHP has been asked by Highland Park to run the Code Blue program for the town. We provide housing on cold nights, and on snowy nights, and on extremely wet nights, to those in our community who are homeless.

While on paper, Code Blue is supposed to be initiated when temperatures fall below 32 degrees, the county is actually very good at communicating when Code Blue is in effect. An email is sent to countywide participants with as much advanced notice and possible and we immediately make plans to ready the house.

The Code Blue house is located over the Main Street Highland Park offices. It is a two-bedroom apartment, with a spacious living room. 1 of the bedrooms is lived in by a 'host' or 'host couple.' After 2.5 years of excellent hosting Paul Rubintwari moved out and Johnny and Kate Wood moved in. That couple lives there in exchange for being available, as needed, all year, for families who have no place to go.



In addition to winter Code Blue the house is used if there is a local fire, if it is dangerously hot (Code Red) or if there is a family identified as using short-term support between long-term solutions.

Over the winter there were 11 different persons who utilized the Code Blue House, some for many, many nights, due to living outside, in their cars or in abandoned spaces with no heat. A few years ago, when New Brunswick had a less robust Code Blue arrangement, HP Code Blue was often overflowing with New Brunswick homeless residents. We are thankful that New Brunswick has increased its capacity and that has meant that our smaller Code Blue house has been an appropriate size. On a couple of occasions Code Blue HP was too small to meet the needs on a particular night. In those cases RCHP classrooms were opened and set up with cots.

In addition to 11 homeless people the Code Blue house has served as a transition space for 1-2 nights for individuals released from detention centers or who are arriving as asylum seekers. It served 30 people in that capacity in the last 12 months.

Code Blue referrals come most often from the police department, from University Behavior Health Care or from calls to the Reformed Church.

All Code Blue guests are housed from 7pm-8am. At that time all guests are invited to 'hang out' at the Reformed Church, all day if they wish. There is free coffee and breakfast in the morning followed by a hot lunch at Global Grace Cafe around noon. RCHP is a great place for those who are homeless to meet with case managers, to access services and to take steps forward toward independence, recovery or self-sufficiency.