

## Our Lady of Peace Open Shelter Group

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your interest in learning more about the Second Thursday of the month Open Shelter group of Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church. We could use your help! This group has been serving meals to the homeless community for over 20 years.

We are a group of 35+ families. We are a cross-section of the members from the OLP parish. Some of us have young children in the OLP School, some have high school students at Bishop Watterson High School, some families have young people in college and some of us are grandparents and retirees. What we have in common is our concern for the homeless and marginally housed of our community.

Every second Thursday of the month, a group of 8-10 families, prepare, go downtown and serve the evening meal to approximately 150 homeless men, women and children, at the Broad Street United Methodist Church @Broad and Washington. The church is across the street from the Art Museum and is a non-smoking facility.

We serve homemade chili as the main course, nine months of the year-- January through May and September through December. With the chili, we also serve a green salad, crackers, bread and butter, and a dessert. In the summer, we serve grilled hamburgers and hot dogs or sloppy joes as the main course, with baked beans, side salads like potato, pasta etc., roll, butter and dessert. All of the food is made in each member's home with each family making enough food to serve 12-15. We have one family bring what we call the "extras"; 40-50 pieces of fruit, 8-10 gallons of milk (half white and half chocolate) and 3 lbs. of coffee. We meet in the OLP parking lot at 4:50 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Some of our members go downtown to the church and serve the meal. Others just drop off the dinner. We begin to serve at 5:45 pm and we are finished by 6:45pm. I return the labeled pans to the homes of those who did not go downtown with us.

Each family fills out an online sign-up form, noting the months they are available to prepare this meal and when they are available to prepare the meal and also go downtown to the church and serve it cafeteria style. I collect all the data and coordinate the effort. I make reminder calls or emails. The schedule is very flexible and it can easily accommodate any needed changes.

There have been a few changes since we moved to the Broad Street Church. As far as the menu, we now have requests for vegetarian dishes. We bring supplies to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Some families make vegetarian chili and baked macaroni-n-cheese. We also need "to-go" containers with secure lids (left over plastic containers which once held margarine, sour cream or cottage cheese for example), sandwich bags, all sizes of zip lock bags, plastic food service gloves and brown lunch or plastic sacks. Any left-over food is packaged up and distributed to our guests.

If you are unable to prepare a meal on this weeknight, you can help us in another way. We are always in need of supplies like plastic zip lock sandwich bags, small paper plates and paper towels. Some families supply what we call the bonus items; bottles of hot sauce, big bags of grated cheese, sour cream, extra vegetables like cherry tomatoes, carrots and celery sticks, jars of pickles and olives, Fritos, Goldfish crackers or tortilla chips, extra fruit or containers of individually wrapped candies. If you wish, you can send the money to help pay for some of these extras. We receive no money from OLP. St. Vincent de Paul gives us a small contribution to help pay for the paper goods once a year. All items served are donated by our group of OLP Open Shelter families.

Please call or email if you have any questions. Again, thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

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