

St. Augustine's
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
1100 W. 41ST AVENUE

SUNDAY MASSES
SATURDAY 500 **
SUNDAY 900 1100 ** 500 **
CONFESSIONS SAT 400 430 **
WEEKDAY MASS
TUES TO SAT 800 MON TO FRI 1000

GRACE VANCOUVER CHURCH

KITSILANO RECREATION CENTRE

MUSIC WITH MARNIE CONCERT

Kitsilano Community Centre Showers for the Homeless Program

**“Live justly, be a good neighbour,
see the need and fill it.”**

What is the *Showers for the Homeless* Program?

- Showers, hot breakfast, Starbuck's coffee, clean clothing & friendly conversation in a safe, comfortable environment. Valet parking for shopping carts and dog sitting is provided by volunteers.



- Offered to homeless people on the West side of Vancouver each Saturday 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
- Also attended by people travelling by foot and bicycle from the Downtown east side.
- Currently 35 – 70 people attend the program each week.

Who coordinates the Shower Program?

- A Partnership between the Kitsilano Community Centre, St. Augustine's Catholic Church, and Grace Vancouver Presbyterian Church
- Kitsilano Community Centre provides the showers, kitchen, meeting room, clothing equipment storage and funding.
- Staffed by Kitsilano Community Centre staff and a roster of volunteers from both churches committed to at least one Saturday morning per month for a minimum of six months.



How did the Shower Program get Started?

- February 2001, Judy Graves, Coordinator of the Tenant Assistance Program, City of Vancouver informed the Social Justice Committee of St. Augustine's Church that approximately 30 homeless people in Kitsilano did not have access to showers. She suggested contacting Grace Vancouver Church, another church in the same neighbourhood with a burden for the homeless. The two churches then approached the Kits Community Centre and a partnership was formed.
- Judy Graves trained the volunteers and served as a mentor for the first 2 months of the program.
- Training included: Interacting with the homeless, problem solving, troubleshooting, health and safety guidelines.

Who provides ongoing support for the Shower Program?

- Corporate donations are provided weekly by Starbucks, Terra Breads Bakery, Stongs, IGA.
 - Individual donations of clothing, toiletries, towels, and other needs.
 - In December 2003 the program received a one year \$3,000 grant from the HRDC and is used to purchase clothing and undergarments as needed.
 - An average of \$1500 / year is received from outside donations.
 - Local High School Student produced cards with shower participants poetry/thoughts. Proceeds from sales went back into the program.
- *Food Donations that are not used are taken to the Door is Open downtown so that nothing goes to waste.

What are the Ongoing Costs of the Program?

The cost of a staff member - \$100 per week

Kitsilano Community Centre Association provides close to \$5,000 for staffing and makes a similar amount available to cover any shortcomings in donations for supplies.

Donated food approximately \$200 and approximately \$100 per week for food, cooking supplies, toiletries and clothing.

Operating procedures were established and addressed the following:

- Sign in sheets for volunteers and participants
- Conduct guidelines for volunteers and participants
- Kitchen procedures
- Guest Serving guidelines
- Kitchen Supplies inventory
- Clothing and grooming supplies inventory
- Set up and Clean up Procedures

Other Partnerships

- The Shower Program coordinators also arranged the services of a volunteer dentist, barber, and an optometrist. They are working on establishing a partnership with the public health nurse to provide assistance on an as required basis.

What has been Achieved since Shower Program Start Up?

- Between 35 and 70 people are offered a shower, clean clothes and a hot breakfast every week.
- Special breakfasts and packed lunches are offered at Christmas and Easter.
- At Christmas, each guest was offered a gift package which included fleece blankets, food items etc.
- Once a month participants whose birthday is in that month receive cupcake with a candle, birthday bag and birthday song.
- Strong, committed group of volunteers from both churches.

Good relationships with
Corporate donors and
sponsors

One regular participant
has become a
committed volunteer
each week coordinating
the clothing inventory
and storage.

Participants and
volunteers are
developing friendships.

Participants look
forward to the mornings
for fellowship and
conversation and the
comfort that a clean
body and trusted friends
provide.





Challenges

- Outside influences impacting participants.
- Neighbours have been very positive about the program however drug pushing occasionally has come into the area causing concern.
- Good relationships with Mental Health and Police have helped to correct these issues.

- Participants are beginning to see volunteers as a resource for referrals to housing and other social programs. A few participants have moved from living on the streets to housing since becoming associated with the program.
- Volunteers have learned from the participants about the issues of homelessness, addiction, need for human dignity, interesting life stories, benefits of living more simply and frugally and the incredibly positive response of every human being, regardless of circumstances, to a small amount of caring by other human beings.

New Benefits

- With link to Grace Church the program has helped support participants in acquiring housing at More Than a Roof Housing.
- From the shower programs participants have developed the confidence in the volunteers to attend the Extreme Weather Shelters.



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