



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

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NORTH COUNTY WINTER SHELTER DEBUTS NOV. 15

With homelessness spiking throughout the West Coast, the Santa Cruz County Emergency Winter Shelter Program is debuting an expanded program to help assure the safety and security of homeless individuals.

The North County Winter Shelter will open Nov. 15 at the Salvation Army Santa Cruz Corps Community Center in downtown Santa Cruz, followed by a Nov. 24 shelter opening at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7263 in Live Oak. The two shelters will stay open longer and increase the number of beds, resulting in a nearly 30 percent increase in bed days over last winter.

While the Salvation Army has increased its support for the Emergency Winter Shelter Program by providing shelter services under contract with the County, the Association of Faith Communities has graciously agreed to provide staffing services for a second year.

"Every local jurisdiction has stepped up to increase services for local homeless individuals and increase the number of available beds," Santa Cruz County Homeless Services Coordinator Rayne Marr said. "The need is great. I'd especially like to thank the Salvation Army, the VFW and the Association of Faith Communities for partnering in the North County Winter Shelter. Without them, none of this would be possible."

"We are gratified that local governments have funded a longer season with more space and staff devoted to getting folks off the street and into housing. It's a real opportunity to make this more than just a safe place to sleep. This has been the



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best collaboration of community and community resources," said Jon Showalter, chair of the Association of Faith Communities.

In addition to increased bed days, the emergency winter shelter will also provide increased services to shelter clients. The Homeless Persons Health Project will offer twice-weekly onsite health services, including health screenings and vaccinations. The Santa Cruz County Human Services Department will also provide benefits enrollment services to shelter clients.

The emergency winter shelter programs are funded through the Homeless Action Partnership, a consortium of local jurisdictions and service agencies that acts as the federally designated local Continuum of Care (CoC) provider. The HAP is also providing funding for a South County emergency winter shelter in Watsonville, with details forthcoming. Funding for all shelters is shared between the County and each of the four cities.

The Emergency Winter Shelter Program will remain open until April 15. Intake will occur daily from 4 p.m.-6 p.m. at the following locations:

Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat/Sun: Salvation Army, 721 Laurel St., Santa Cruz

Tues/Thurs: Louden Nelson Community Center, 301 Center St., Santa Cruz

After intake, clients will be provided transportation to their shelter location.