

October 2013

the HOT SPOT

News for Blythwood Out of the Cold Volunteers

Ready! Set! OPEN!

Get ready friends!

The first night of the 2013-2014 Out of the Cold season at Blythwood is November 2!

And our guests need you!

Watch your email and call display.

We'll be in touch to schedule your shifts.



Homelessness in TO

Rosanna runs the numbers

Rosanna Tanti from the coordinating committee for Blythwood Out of the Cold has been tracking data released this summer about people who are homeless in Toronto. These items are based on 2013 City of Toronto survey of guests of Out of the Cold, and the 2013 Street Needs Assessment.



- 1.** The total estimated homeless population in Toronto on April 17, 2013 was 5,219. 8.6% of the homeless population sleep outdoors - 447 people, a 24% increase from 2009.
- 2.** Average length of homelessness: males 6 years, females 3 years.
- 3.** The share of seniors in the homeless population has more than doubled since 2009. 10% of the homeless population is 61 or older; those 51 and above represent 29.1% of the homeless population.
- 4.** 6.5% of the homeless population is under 21.
- 5.** 15.6% of the outdoor homeless population claim Canadian military service.
- 6.** Almost half (47.8%) of the homeless population visited a hospital from November 2012 - April 2013.

7. The vast majority of those who are homeless want permanent housing. 93% of those experiencing homelessness indicate a desire to get into permanent housing.

8. Almost half of the homeless population is on a waiting list for subsidized housing – but have yet to be housed. 48.7% of respondents indicated that they were on a waiting list for housing.

9. OOTC operates average 23 weeks. Beginning of November - end of March. During those months, there are 55-126 OOTC beds available per night in the city.

10. Blythwood OOTC provides all 55 of those beds on a Saturday night.

11. 18% of our guests are female. 82% of our guests are male. 20% are of Aboriginal descent.

12. The average age of our guests is 44 - male 45, female 43.

OUR OUT OF THE COLD GUESTS SPEAK

Why do they come? They come because of you (and, well, the food).

(Reasons given for coming to Out of the Cold, listed in descending order of frequency)

- For the food. They lack financial resources, and Out of the Cold is an alternative or additional to food banks.

Blythwood serves 100 - 150 guests dinner on a Saturday night. 30-50% of those guests stay overnight and will be served breakfast and given a bag lunch and token Sunday morning.

- Companionship/camaraderie with other guests.
- For our volunteers!
- Other supplied services (this varies from shelter to shelter): clothing, laundry facilities, showers, art classes, entertainment etc.



Most often cited as disliked by guests:

- Lining up
- Other guests
- Interaction with security/social service staff

Biggest Concerns

- Violence at the shelters
- Risk to their health from other guests
- Their safety (regarding other guests)

Surprise!

- No complaints regarding sleeping on mats; some actually preferred them to alternatives at other facilities.
- No issue with distance of OOTC shelters from downtown; those interviewed like the variety of where the shelters are located.

OOTC CONTACTS

Host: Blythwood Road Baptist Church

Minister Rev. Dr. Bill Norman 416-487-4571

Associate Pastor: David Thomas 416-487-4571

www.blythwood.org

Lawrence Park Community Church

Contact: Cecilia Akeyempon 905-737-4849

Eglinton-St. George's United Church

Contact: Marjorie Hiley 416-483-2167

Saturday Evening Meals

Marjorie Hiley 416-483-2167

Volunteer Scheduling & Coordination

Georgina Balascas 416-546-4132

Clothing room coordination

Jennifer Frank 416-487-4571

Other committee/ coordinator contacts

Dennis Bruce 416-590-0741

Larry Matthews 416-461-0667

Bill McKechnie 416-489-5570

Don McKinnon 416-285-1970

Leonard Swartz 416-845-5994

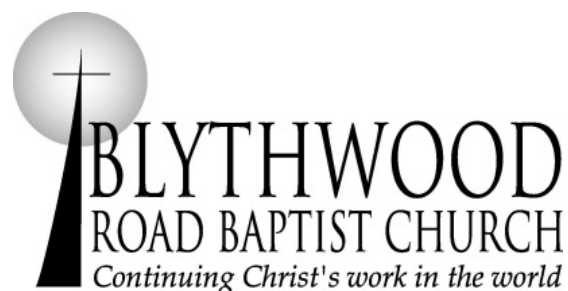
Rosanna Tanti 416-817-7995

Dixon Hall (Safety and Support)

ootc@dixonhall.org

Phone: 416-699-OOTC

www.ootc.ca



80 Blythwood Rd., Toronto, ON M4N 1A4
Phone: 416-487-4571 Fax: 416-487-5099