



HAAT Force South Metro, INC
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Subject: HAAT Force South Metro 2020-2021 Season Report

Thank you for your support of HAAT Force! We are so very grateful to you, our donors and partners!

This was our 10th season in operation providing severe weather motel shelter for families and people with disabilities or pets. During the pandemic we have faced many challenges and, as you will see, we went way above and beyond our normal operations to meet the needs of the community.

Severe Weather Shelter Program

From October 2020 through April 2021, we issued **65 motel vouchers for 404 person-nights of severe weather shelter**. We sheltered 51 men, 43 women and 11 children at the Holiday Motel in Englewood and the Motel 6 in Greenwood Village.



Our biggest challenge during the pandemic was how to issue motel vouchers safely. Many of our treasured volunteers went on hiatus in order to stay healthy. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, a wonderful non-profit, **Movement 5280**, provided volunteers to issue our vouchers at their location. Movement 5280, 3485 S. Broadway, Englewood, provides services to young people aging out of foster care. On Tuesdays, a HAAT Force volunteer distributed vouchers at **Giving Heart**, 4358 S Broadway, Englewood, with safety precautions in place. Giving Heart is a day-shelter for people experiencing homelessness and is the location of the HAAT Force Office. On other days, we issued vouchers either outside at Giving Heart or over the phone.

The **Englewood Police Department** continued to partner with us by issuing vouchers to people in need. In addition, in partnership with the non-profit **Severe Weather Shelter Network, Stride Community Health Center** provided free Covid screenings for people coming for vouchers.



We are extremely grateful to **Movement 5280** for providing services “above and beyond” to our severe weather voucher guests – food, hygiene items, connection with mental health services, use of their space, and access to and assistance with their computers.

We received the following message from one of our severe weather voucher guests: *“please accept my gratitude for the warm dry nights you and your organization have so graciously bestowed upon me...it was wonderful being able to shower when I wanted and use the bathroom when I needed and to charge my phone or leave things and not worry about them disappearing. You guys are giving so much more than shelter from the elements with these rooms... you're giving peace of mind and safety. It becomes exhausting being homeless... from the bottom of my heart thank you and God bless us all.”*

Severe Weather Shelter – Financial Support

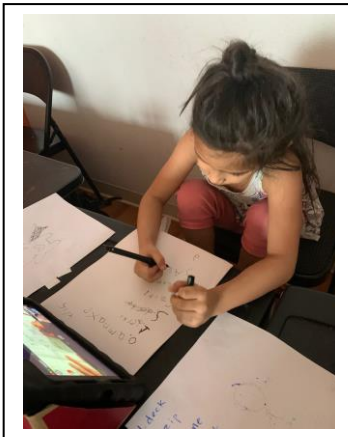
During the 2020-2021 season, we received \$28,322.77 in donations from individuals and our beloved partner churches, including a tremendous response to our virtual Fall fundraiser in October! Our volunteers and Board members came through with nice silent auction items for the fundraiser. We also received grants from the High Plains Region of the Episcopal Church, Arapahoe County, City of Englewood, Colorado Access and the Littleton Rotary. We cannot express enough appreciation for all the support!

Continuous Shelter Program

Because of the pandemic, there has been a need to provide longer term motel shelter for people experiencing homelessness to prevent them from getting Covid and to help them have stability while experiencing financial crises, mental stress and health issues. The pandemic has made it much harder for people to find safe shelter indoors, day or night.

From September 2020 through May 31, 2021, **Arapahoe County** and **Colorado Access** have contracted with HAAT Force to administer a continuous motel shelter program for families and people with disabilities or pets at our two motels.

In total, **98 people have participated, including 45 children**. HAAT Force has managed the contracts, motel invoice payments, financial tracking, and relationships with the motel managers and continuous shelter guests. In addition, HAAT Force has a connection through **Change the Trend**, Englewood, with numerous community organizations that have provided many services to the motel guests.



One of the participants in the continuous shelter program since September 1, 2020 is a mother with 3 children. At left is a photo of her youngest child, who is in kindergarten. The mother writes, *“Human services would have taken my kids away from me if it weren't for you. Thank you.”*

Continuous Shelter Program – Community Organizations

Community organizations that have been involved with HAAT Force include: **Arapahoe County Department of Housing and Community Development Services** – professional Case Management to help people find housing and determine next steps; **Arapahoe County Department of Human Services** – professional navigation services, child and adult protective services/resources; **Hornbuckle Foundation** - counseling; **Break Bread**, Littleton – regular delivery of food; resource navigation for families; **Movement 5280** – delivery of meals, connection to **All Health Network**, and help with computers for tele-health visits; clothing; addiction recovery group; **A Stronger Chord** – success coaches to walk with people for the long haul; **LoveINC** – furniture for people who have obtained housing; **City of Englewood** – helping people to get on housing wait lists; co-responders to help in emergency situations; Covid vaccines; **Safer Program** – peer counseling for people released from prison and mitigation of general guest issues; **South Metro Fire** – help in emergency situations; Christmas gifts; flu shot clinics; free dental services for children; **House of Hope** – resource navigation; **Change the Trend** Resource Navigator Subgroup; McKinney-Vento **Homeless Liaisons at schools** – advocating for the children.

Our motel guests are thrilled with their Case Managers and have benefited greatly from all the community support. A total of 9 families have moved into their own apartments. Individuals with severe non-Covid-related health issues have been connected with the medical resources they need and have been provided with safe shelter as they heal.

This has been truly a community-wide collaborative effort! As they say, "it takes a village!"

Continuous Shelter Program - What Have We Learned?

We have learned a great deal from our experience with the continuous shelter program. There is a need for more truly affordable housing and a continuum of housing resources to include permanent supportive housing programs for very low-income households and people experiencing homelessness. The need for accessible mental health services and health services is also critical. People experiencing homelessness do not always have easy access to computers, phones or the technical skills to use such devices and cannot easily wade through two or more intake appointments before receiving services. We need to find ways to meet them where they are and at the time they need the services. Access to services already available in the community is a major identified and ongoing need. Intensive Case Management is essential.

Finally, motels are not set up for continuous sheltering and this project has been a challenge for the people sheltered, the motels and the supporting organizations. Some families/individuals confined to one or two rooms over months during this pandemic have struggled tremendously. Unexpected health and mental health issues arose. Maintaining children's access to and participation in school is an ongoing challenge for people sheltered in motels.

Future Plans

HAAT Force is run by an all-volunteer Board of Directors and associates, with one paid exception - a professional Quickbooks administrator.

In the 2021-2022 season, we will continue to offer severe weather shelter to families and people with disabilities or pets; actively support our connections and partnerships with community organizations, donors and grantors; provide financial oversight; and organize fundraising. In addition, we have two goals:

- Hire an Executive Director with visionary leadership skills, non-profit experience and a passion for addressing homelessness;
- For each motel voucher guest, offer the services of a paid professional Case Manager/Resource Navigator.

As this severe weather season closes, we look forward to the future. With passion and compassion, and your ongoing support, we will continue to be in solidarity with our neighbors experiencing homelessness!

Sincerely,
HAAT Force Board of Directors
Bonnie DeHart
Betsy Keyack
John Mezger
Jennifer Grady

We welcome your tax-deductible donations all year round! To donate, you can go to www.haatforce.org or mail a check to: HAAT Force South Metro, INC, PO Box 22997, Denver, CO 80222