



Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati

The Faith Community's Response to Family Homelessness

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Isn't it difficult for families to move week to week?

Not really. While families enjoy their week stay at each congregation, they usually look forward to experiencing a new congregation. They know that wherever they go, compassionate people will be there to provide them with hospitality.

Who does Interfaith Hospitality Network GC serve?

We serve families without homes in the Greater Cincinnati area. By families, we mean a parent or parents with children. We are one of only two family shelters that serve male parents and male children over 12 years old.

How are potential guests screened?

Our case manager does an in-depth intake interview, and then checks information like criminal records by accessing information services available to her.

What are the qualifications for staying at Interfaith Hospitality Network GC?

Besides being homeless and a family with children, guests must not be using alcohol or abusing drugs, must not be committing domestic violence or be the recent victim of domestic violence in the perpetrator is likely to find them, and must not have been committed for a violent crime.

How long may guests stay at Interfaith Hospitality Network GC?

That depends on how long it takes for them to find housing, whether or not they abide by our rules and regulations, and whether or not they actively implement their case plans. Some families have stayed as long as three months, but the average length of stay is only 23 days.

Where do guests go when they move out of Interfaith Hospitality Network GC?



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Most guests move directly into homes of their own, either subsidized or market rate depending on their income and other qualifications. Others move in with family members while awaiting housing. A few are reunited with their families in permanent housing. Some move into “transitional housing,” housing that other non-profit agencies provide for families with too many barriers to obtain housing within a couple of months, and people may reside there for up to two years. Transitional Housing is housing with supportive service, such as counseling or employment assistance, and residents pay up to a third of their income while there. Only about seven percent of our guests have returned to area family shelters over the last three years.

What happens during a normal day for an Interfaith Hospitality Network Guest?

An Interfaith Hospitality Network guest wakes up bright and early at the congregation, with enough time to dress, eat, and get ready to board the bus at 6:30 a.m. to head back to the Day Center for the day. Once at the Day Center, guests occasionally have a house meeting, parenting, life skills, or budgeting class. The guests also have time during the day to meet with the Case Manager to establish and work on a case plan.

The rest of the day is spent working on that case plan, both independently and with the case manager. Working on the case plan may include attending a food stamps appointment, interviewing for a job, creating a resume, taking children to daycare, and so on. All guests are expected to return back to the Day Center at 3 p.m. so that they can prepare their belongings and children for the night at the congregation. Guests are also assigned chores to do in the Day Center, and that happens every day at 3:30 p.m.

At 5pm, the guests board the Interfaith Hospitality Network bus, and head out to the congregation for the evening. Once at the congregation, the guests are greeted by volunteers at the congregation and settle in for dinner and evening activities. Each congregation differs in the activities they provide in the evening. Some congregations offer time for guests to relax and hang out, while others plan entertainment for the guests, such as magic shows, trick dogs, or movie night. At bedtime, the guests retire to their family's private sleeping space for a good night's sleep