



Home at St. E's

Vol. 32 No. 01

How Suite It Is

Summer 2021

New Program Doubles Beds Available for Homeless

Placing homeless clients in housing is a major challenge for our hard-working case managers, particularly in Santa Fe where the median monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,400. But the task lightened significantly in late December when St. Elizabeth Shelters began operating Santa Fe Suites, a 120-unit facility in Plaza Entrada at Zia and St. Francis Drive.

The former extended-stay motel, then called Camel Rock Suites, was purchased by Community Solutions, a New York-based housing non-profit, with the City of Santa Fe providing \$2 million in COVID relief funds to complete the deal. St. Elizabeth was chosen to manage the complex as a mixed-income program to house recently homeless, as well as low- and moderate-income individuals. The apartments are fully furnished and the \$850 monthly rent covers all utilities, cable tv and internet costs. Vouchers and other payment arrangements are available for those not able to afford the full rent.



The Santa Fe Suites feature 120 fully furnished apartments with paid utilities, internet, tv and on-site case managers.

"It was an incredible opportunity that allowed us to double the number of beds available daily to homeless individuals in Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico," says Edward Archuleta, St. E's executive director. "We are so grateful to partner with Community Solutions and the City to help alleviate the ongoing homeless crisis that COVID only augmented."

The original operating plan had the Suites taking an entire year to reach full capacity. But demand has been so great that 93 of the units are already occupied. Some residents had already been living there on a permanent basis, more than 50 were recently homeless, while others are what might be termed the hidden homeless – people who have jobs or other monthly income but were sleeping in their cars or crashing with friends because they couldn't afford the high rents and security deposits other apartment complexes require.

"We hit the ground running and

haven't looked back," says Scott Sanders, LMSW, program manager at the Suites. "It's been a real challenge creating a new program from scratch, and it's taken some time to figure out all we need here to best serve our clients. At the same time, we're converting a former short-term motel into a long-term residence and that necessitates some structural changes."

To these ends, the program has

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The Carl C. Anderson Sr. & Marie Jo Anderson Charitable Foundation has issued a \$20,000 challenge grant to subsidize rent at the Suites for recently homeless individuals with extremely limited funds and will match all donations up to this amount. If you would like to help meet this challenge, please donate online at www.steshelter.org or mail your check to St. Elizabeth at 804 Alarid St. and indicate it is for this match.

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MISSION

St. Elizabeth is dedicated to assisting homeless individuals and families by providing emergency shelter, food, case management, counseling, supportive housing and referrals to partnering human-services agencies.

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St. Elizabeth Shelters & Supportive Housing
 804 Alarid St. Santa Fe, NM 87505
www.steshelter.org

Director's Corner



Edward Archuleta

A little more than a year ago St. Elizabeth was facing the worst crisis of its life. COVID had forced the closing of our two emergency shelters, and I was desperately calling all over town to find motels that would accommodate our relocated guests. Then when we finally did, several staff members moved in also to monitor the situation and continue providing services to our clients.

Even when we shortly reopened the shelters, our occupancy rate was strictly limited and most clients ended up staying in motels forcing staff to do double duty hopping between locations. Still, people continued working on their goals, addressing their various issues, finding employment and locating housing. And best of all, we never suffered a major infection.

Six months ago we were privy to plans to convert the former Camel Rock Suites into permanent housing for recently homeless and lower-income individuals. But we were only going to be among the various partners in the project, referring our clients there for housing. Then with just a few weeks notice, we were asked to run the entire project or else the deal would collapse. Talk about pressure.

Today Santa Fe Suites is up and running and has doubled the number of beds we can provide on a daily basis, our two emergency shelters are back to full capacity, and the city, state and life are returning to normal. For that, I'm more than grateful. Even more so, I'm so proud of our staff for having carried on in the face of all that adversity, persevered through everything and continued their work for others, despite all the unknown risks to their own well-being that COVID presented. We may not be out of the woods yet, but things are definitely looking up.

Executive Director

That Was the Year That Was

Things seem slowly to be returning to normal at St. Elizabeth – as if anything is ever normal around here. Homeless men and women are showing up at the Men's Emergency Shelter and Casa Familia doors and, if vaccinated, are being allowed to stay. Only those awaiting vaccination or the two-week waiting period after are being housed in motels, along with families with children too young to be vaccinated. People are out looking for, and finding, work as well as locating housing.

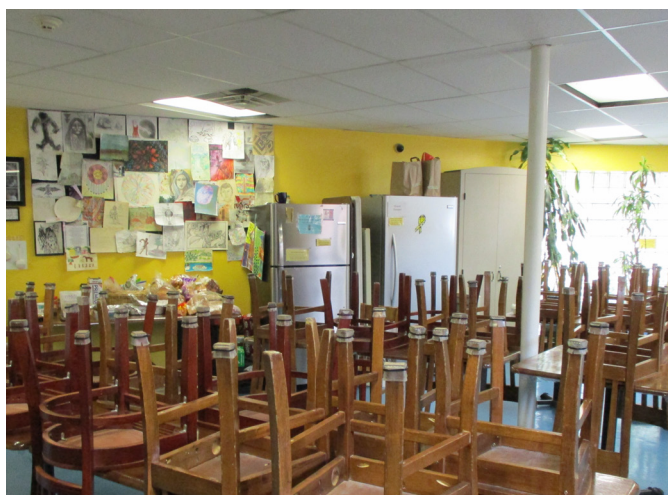
But the travails and trials of 2020 are not yet totally in the rearview mirror.

"It was the most challenging time in all my years at St. Elizabeth," says Edward Archuleta, executive director. "When COVID arrived we were in a state of semi-panic. No one knew how it was transmitted, how to treat it or how to keep from getting infected. All we knew was that in our group settings, if someone became sick everyone else would catch it too."

To avoid that, shelter staff kept reviewing and revising protocols, sometimes on a daily basis, to prevent infection. At the onset, both emergency shelters were closed and guests moved to local motels. With staff moving in as well to provide services. Everyone was tested, all came back negative, and most moved back to the shelters where their movements were strictly limited only to essential appointments and accompanied by staff. Those who were working and couldn't be closely monitored stayed at the motels.

While the shelters remained closed to the public, those seeking

assistance could come to the door and ask staff to bring them needed items. Inside, constant cleaning and



The empty dining room at the Men's Emergency Shelter during COVID restrictions.

sanitizing became a way of life. As more was learned about the virus, shelter occupancy was limited to seven people at each, and as a result most guests moved to motels. Since families would quickly put Casa Familia over the limit, they stayed at motels. And since we didn't want families with children on the streets during the pandemic, any family in need was immediately housed in a motel too.

"At first we didn't know how we could cover this huge and unanticipated expense," Edward says. "But we are so fortunate to

be in Santa Fe where we received emergency funding from the city, county, New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, Santa Fe Community Foundation, Frost Foundation, PNM Foundation, Thornburg Foundation, Carl and Marie Jo Anderson Foundation and numerous individuals to offset costs."

Throughout it all, staff did double duty attending to clients at the shelters as well as the motels, where they brought food, supplies, prescription medicines and provided transportation for those without cars since we didn't want people riding on buses. The Department

of Health required regular testing of staff to ensure safety for all.

For those residents at our three supportive housing programs all living in their own apartments, it was less traumatic and disruptive. Still, staff were kept busy providing ongoing information about the virus, stressing and enforcing social distancing, calming those with behavioral health issues and helping set up many on Zoom so they could attend their counseling sessions virtually.

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Throughout the pandemic, the shelter continued distributing needed supplies to those in need.

That Was the Year That Was

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Once vaccines became available in January, St. Elizabeth staff were eligible in the first wave alongside medical professionals, first responders, and other essential workers. Then in March, vaccines became available for clients as well.

“Our priority was always clear,” Edward says, “to keep our clients and staff safe from contagion and by extension keeping the community safe from infection by them. I’m truly amazed and thankful at how well we did. Only two clients – one living in their own apartment and the other staying at a motel – became infected along with one staff member, and all are doing fine now.”

Some lessons learned during the pandemic are being applied as the shelters reopen. Formerly all

guests, except those staying inside on medical respite, had to leave the building from 8 am to 3 pm to work on their goals – finding employment,



The dining room today at the Men's Emergency Shelter.

locating housing, going to healthcare appointments, substance abuse counseling, etc. Now given our experience helping people meet their

goals while their outside movements were restricted, we've relaxed this rule. But we found that restricting the street homeless from coming inside our shelters to look for specific items, like clothing or hygiene supplies, and having staff instead find and deliver them, was less disruptive and more efficient.

“Not surprisingly our numbers served declined last year,” Edward says. “But we still were able to move 57 percent of all those leaving our five residential programs during the year – 195 people – into housing. It’s a true tribute to our staff keeping the shelters up and running through it all and continuing to help people with their various issues and place them in housing. And now we’re ready to resume full service to everyone in need.”

ST. ELIZABETH SHELTERS & SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
PRESENTS...

A COMPASSIONATE COOKOFF

To End Homelessness in the City Different

Saturday
November
13TH

HUNGRY MOUTH
2021
festival
ST ELIZABETH SHELTER



SAVE THE DATE

New Program Doubles Beds Available for Homeless

...from page 1



Case Manager Ericka Kidd and resident Boris Dimitrov enjoy an outside chat at the Suites.

success stories – finding employment, obtaining Social Security benefits, accessing healthcare and even moving to other housing more suitable to their needs.”

Tammy Madrid, 51, moved into the Suites in January. Originally from California, her family moved to Santa Fe when she was 14. Two years later her mother put her in reform school, and she has been living on and off the streets ever since. She had been living in Mexico but moved back to Santa Fe in 2019 to live with her daughter. Then last September, her daughter

put her out.

“I was in an awful situation and no one wanted to help me,” Tammy says. “I had an aortic aneurysm in 2010 and now have a pig valve in my heart, I suffer from schizoaffective disorder and suicide ideation, so I was losing my mind. Fortunately I connected with Life Link, and they got me a permanent housing voucher and called the Santa Fe Suites on my behalf. When they told me an apartment was available, I was so relieved I began crying.”

Tammy’s apartment has a front yard, and she is planning on planting flowers to brighten it up. Scott and Ericka work closely with her to address her healthcare challenges, helping to set up her medical appointments and even driving her to them when necessary.

“They’ve been good to me here, and I’m comfortable” Tammy says. “It’s a nice place to live with security, and the staff takes care of you. You’re not on your own.”

Boris Dimitrov, 80, is another recently homeless resident. Born in Bulgaria, the former engineer left his homeland in the 1960s and moved to Morocco where he taught high school mathematics. In 1987 he moved to Portland, Oregon, where he worked for a pulp and paper company and then moved to Rio Rancho to work at Intel. But he wanted to be an artist and Santa Fe beckoned.

“Santa Fe has a real artsy vibe, and I like the mountains,” he says. “I just wanted to be free of everything, free to do my artwork, and realized I could exist here without money. So I’ve lived here for 20 years but never really had a home. I liked sleeping outside in the mountains in the summer and in the winter I had a shed in town for shelter.”



Program Manager Scott Sanders and resident Tammy Madrid strike a pose at the Suites.

ROUNDUP APP

Make an impact with little effort. Donate your change to St. E’s using the Roundup App. Visit your app store or go to www.steshelter.org

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Thank You to Our Dedicated Chefs!

Amma Center
Anthony's Grill
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Joni Brenneisen
Janet Burnside
Café Castro
Lynn Cheek
Christ Church of Santa Fe
Susan Dixon
Dr. Field Goods
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Immaculate Heart of Mary
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Elizabeth Johnson
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Naomi Kroencke
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Tom L
Deena Lentz
Susan Little
Jason Lolis
Leslie Lujan
Lutheran Church of the Servant
Mirabai
Sharon Mitchell
Arthur Montoya

Mormon Families of White Rock
Matthew Ortiz
Over the Arroyo Hiking Group
The Pantry
Papa Murphy's/St. Francis Drive
Susan Peterson
Plant Base Café – Frankie Valdez
Ron & Frances Porterfield
Real Burger
Elizabeth Rice
Bud Ryan & Friends
Miriam Sagan
St. Bede's Episcopal Church
Santa Fe School of Cooking
Secular Franciscan Order
Shelley
Margie Stockton
Mary Stramel
Elizabeth Taylor
Temple Beth Shalom
Irene Thomas
Tomasita's
Kim Ulibarri
Unitarian Church of Los Alamos
United Church of Santa Fe
Upaya Zen Center
Sheila Vaughn
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Lisa Weremeling
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Yeshua's Righteous Word and Love Ministry
Zia United Methodist Church

New Program Doubles Beds Available for Homeless

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But on a trip to Texas, his car was stolen along with all his IDs and passport. Returning to Santa Fe, he ended up first staying at the Interfaith Community Shelter and then was moved to the Green Tree Inn for the past year due to COVID restrictions. Upon retirement of Joe Jordan-Berenis, Interfaith's former executive director, the organization established a fund in his honor to pay the rent of Boris and another former client at the Suites.

"The accommodation here is very different from Pete's Place (Interfaith Community Shelter)," Boris says. "I have my own kitchen, TV and bathroom. My life is totally changed, and I feel comfortable and happier."

"The staff here works with you person-to-person and once you

explain your situation, they help anyway they can. They've already



Case Manager Kyra Thomson counsels a resident.

gotten me food stamps and a Santa Fe ID and are working on retrieving my citizenship papers so I can get on Medicaid."

As these two experiences suggest, the Suites is a collaborative effort

among many of Santa Fe's homeless-serving organizations, as well as Community Solutions and the City, to improve outcomes for this at-risk population.

"We are all working together to become a stronger community for those we serve," Scott says. "Our residents have mental illness, substance abuse, legal issues, health issues and other problems. They're housed here but they still need outside services to thrive. And for many without transportation, that can be difficult to access. So my goal is to bring some of our partnering agencies specializing in these issues onsite to the Suites in shared office space and thereby bridge the gap between connecting folks to housing and services."

"We're still a work in progress but we're moving forward quickly."

**DAVID COPHER'S
HALLOWEEN**
*Sunday Oct. 31st
7pm to 11pm*

*Featuring music by
"Billy D & the Hoodoo's"*

At: the Hilton Santa Fe
100 Sandoval St, Downtown

Costume Prizes By: David Copher

\$40 donation at the door
Proceeds to support the St. Elizabeth Shelter



Custom jewelry by David Copher awaits a winner of the party's costume contest.



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Summer Wish List

MEN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER

Please call (982-6611) or bring the smaller items to St. Elizabeth at 804 Alarid Street.

Clothing – Caps, rain ponchos, men's jackets, socks, underwear, backpacks.

Personal Hygiene – Shaving cream, disposable razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hotel-size shampoo, deodorant, sun screen.

Food – Shelf-stable single serving beverages, milk, juice, eggs, fresh fruits, bottled water, coffee.

Other – Blankets, bus passes.

Volunteers – Cooks for dinner.

CASA FAMILIA

Please call (983-2042) or bring the smaller items to Casa Familia at 1604 Berry Ave.

Clothing – Women's new underwear, socks, long-sleeve shirts, shoes, rain gear, umbrellas, sun hats.

Personal Hygiene – Shampoo, conditioner, disposable razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hair brushes, foot powder, body soap, nail clippers, nail files, deodorant, sun screen, cough drops, cotton balls and Q-tips, Emergen Vitamin C®, face wash and moisturizer, body wash, allergy meds Zyrtec and Claritan.

Food – Fresh fruits & vegetables, bottled water, coffee and creamer.

Other – Bus passes, movie passes, diapers (all sizes, particularly 4-6), baby wipes, twin size sheets, towels, latex-free gloves, kitchen utensils, pots & pans, dish soap, toilet paper, paper towels, shower shoes, AA/AAA/9-volt batteries, laundry detergent, painting supplies (roller covers, brushes tape), birdseed for feeders, sleeping bags and tents.

Tools – Hose wheel for outdoor hose, propane for barbeque.

Volunteers – Cooks for dinner

CASA CERRILLO

Please call 471-3456 for a complete list:

Household Items – Pots & pans, bedding, furniture, cleaning supplies, light bulbs.

8 St. Elizabeth Shelters