

Sleep Out for the Homeless: Participant Expectations and Reminders

THANK YOU for participating in this year's Sleep out for the Homeless. This annual event (for over 25+ years) has proven to be a meaningful and an eye opening experience for our youth and provides amazing financial support to those agencies in our community helping to serve those experiencing homelessness. We are so grateful to have you join the cardboard community that will spring up in the parking lot of First UMC and line the streets of Mechanicsburg this November. What a privilege it is to stretch ourselves and others to become more aware of the realities of homelessness and to bless the agencies supporting those who find themselves in the midst of homeless situations. We strive to draw attention to the realities of homelessness particularly near Thanksgiving as a reminder to ourselves and others that while we may have much, others may have little. As a body of believers, we recognize our need for interdependence and to not just be grateful for what we have but be grateful for the ways we can help each other. Join the youth from churches in the Mechanicsburg area as we experience a night of homelessness and draw others to be praying and supporting those who may be without a home.

Arrive at First United Methodist Church: November 22nd at 3:30PM*

*Student can arrive starting at 3:00 to begin constructing their cardboard homes.

- Check in at the registration table (get wrist band)
- Using your cardboard and building materials to construct your soon-to-be box home and place it in the parking lot (designated sides for males and females).
- We strive to be out collecting money from passing cars along Simpson Street as soon as we are able. Once your home is constructed come to the entryway in the fenced off area of the parking lot (near the clothing collection bin) to receive instructions for street collecting.

Need to bring:

- A collection jug. Bring a rinsed out and dry gallon jug to collect money in. Decorate your jug ahead of time for a "Best" in show contest.
- A box (or substantial large pieces of cardboard to construct a durable box.)
- Sleeping Bag/Pillow/Blankets
- Dress warm and in something you are comfortable sleeping in
- Tape - to help construct the structure of your shelter.
- Tarps/Plastic - to help aid against soggy cardboard and morning dew, rain, or snow.
- An item to donate to the Free Little Pantry's in downtown Mechanicsburg (see list of suggested and appropriate items).

Don't bring:

- Electronics
- Cell Phones
- Snacks

(Don't forget we are supposed to be simulating a homeless experience)

(Continues on back) 

Guidelines:

- Wear your wristband at all times.
- Be diligently collecting money unless you are in the prayer room, constructing a shelter, on a bathroom break, at the soup kitchen, or participating in any additional education and service offerings made available.
- Stay out of the roads (collect money from on the sidewalk, have the cars come to you).
- Cross the street at the crosswalk (Police presence is there to aid in crossing and slowing down traffic).
- Deposit any money collected on the streets with the adult stationed at the fence entrance.
- Enter and exit our cardboard community only at the designated entry and exit points.
- No mixing genders (male/females) inside your cardboard homes.
- Do not enter the church unless for the bathroom, prayer room, soup kitchen, or other specified events.
- Be present for the entirety of the event; no hiding out in boxes when collecting is happening.
- Do not leave the grounds unless you are signed out.
- Have a good time and take care of yourself and the others in our cardboard community!
- Stay healthy for thanksgiving! If the cold is too much for you, talk to an adult (we always make available sleeping areas inside for those who require such arrangements). We ask that all participants attempt to their best effort to sleep out but make accommodations as needed.

Event ends: Saturday November 23rd at 8:00am

-You must clean up your area and sign out before leaving.

-Please pick up any medicine you may have given to an adult leader.

Adult Support:

Mechanicsburg Borough approves this event and offers police presence in crossing the street along Simpson Street. There is also additional lighting placed along the street to help in making traffic aware of our presence along Simpson Street. However, our best ability in keeping our students safe during this event is through the help and support of parents and adults. Please sign up to help with this event at www.timetosignup.com/kidscount. If you do not currently have clearance on file with your church please complete them prior to this event and turn them into your church. Clearances are free for those serving with youth in volunteering roles and are required by state law.

Additional Help:

We provide a "soup kitchen" styled meal for our participants and ask for your help in providing needed food items. If you are not able to physically be present at the Sleep Out, please consider providing food. Food Sign Ups are located at www.timetosignup.com/kidscount.

THANK YOU again for your participation and support of this event!