

30 Main St.
PO Box 2188
Rapid City, SD 57709
605-341-2844
Fax: 605-718-2332
csrcm@cornerstonemission.org

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No Place to Call Home

As you wake up in your nice warm bed tomorrow morning, listen to the cold wind blow outside, and close your eyes for a few more minutes. Now, picture yourself waking up in sub-zero temperatures curled up on the seat of a car or under a bridge with only the cover of a cardboard box. Next envision yourself lying on a mat in the dining room of the Cornerstone Rescue Mission because the 85 bunk beds in the dorm area are occupied by other men. Or, imagine that you are a mother with three small children who has been living at a homeless shelter for the past six months with 25 women and children just like you. Imagine yourself with no place to call home. Unfortunately, these scenarios are reality for far too many people in Rapid City and communities across this country. In the recent months, the Cornerstone organization has provided shelter, food and clothing for 120 to 150 people every night. This number does not include the hundreds of people who reside “doubled up,” (living with several other people) in local motel rooms.

After picturing yourself in any of these scenarios, you would likely ask, “So why are so many homeless and what can be done to change this?” Cornerstone is a member of the Black Hills Homeless Coalition, which envisions a society free of involuntary homelessness. While this is a noble mission to pursue, both the numbers of people experiencing homelessness and the obstacles that they must overcome to secure suitable housing are increasing.

Did you know...



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No Place...

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- Homeless families make up over 40% of the homeless population in the United States.
- There are currently more than 150,000 homeless veterans in this country.
- Contrary to popular belief, most homeless people are actively seeking employment. In fact, nationwide, 47 percent of people experiencing homelessness are employed.
- According to the Department of Labor, in the current labor market, the average person submits 30 or more applications before they are contacted for one interview and they will likely complete interviews with at least three different employers before they are hired.
- Recently a local employer posted an open position in his business and on the first day of posting the "Help Wanted" sign, he received 287 applications in just four hours.
- A family needs the income from 2.3 minimum wage jobs in order to afford the average two bedroom apartment in Rapid City.
- There is currently an 18-month waiting period for people who qualify for Section 8 Public Housing Assistance in Pennington County. There are over 1100 applicants on the waiting list.
- In January 2010, over 600 homeless children were attending classes in the Rapid City Public School District.
- In 2008, the Cornerstone Rescue Mission served an average of 275 meals per day to people in need of nourishment. In 2009, the number of meals served increased to over 375 every day.
- In the first two years of operation, over 230 families have applied to live in one of only 24 transitional housing apartments operated by the Cornerstone organization.

Cornerstone and the other members of the Black Hills Homeless Coalition endeavor every day to diminish the impact of poverty in this area of the country. Homelessness is a community issue. You can help! If you would like to know more, please call Vicki Linn, program director, at 718-8713.

Ready to see the world on a big, big screen? Here's your chance! Enter the Bird and Bison Raffle to win a 37" Flatscreen HDTV



A 37" flatscreen HDTV could be yours if you're the lucky ticket holder in this year's Bird and Bison raffle!

Raffle tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20 and are available at the Cornerstone Thrift Store through March 12. Tickets will also be sold during the Bird and Bison Banquet on March 13 at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

Be sure to completely fill out the back of tickets purchased, including name, address, and phone number.

The winner will be announced at the Bird & Bison Banquet and you need not be present to win. If you aren't there, we'll call you on March 15 to let you know that you've won.

Proceeds of the raffle support Mission programs. We thank you for your support!

Mission staff, relatives of staff, Mission clients and Mission board members are not eligible to participate in the raffle.

Thank You Downtown Kiwanians!

The Kiwanis international mission is “To improve the lot of children and to change the world one child and one community at a time.” In response to the mission, the Downtown Kiwanis made the decision to extend their support to children served by Cornerstone.

At the January board meeting, the group decided to support Cornerstone’s Dear Ones Child Care program by purchasing a four-passenger stroller. This wonderful gift will make it possible for Dear Ones staff and children to enjoy exploring nature and the neighborhood surrounding the child care facility, especially appreciated with Spring just around the corner!.

Cornerstone staff members Vicki Linn and Sarah Lewis attended the February 10 meeting of Rapid City Downtown Kiwanis and were presented with the stroller along with two bags of homemade child-size afghans. The afghans were donated by a lady in North Dakota who is nearly 90 years old.



Tom Allen, president of Rapid City Downtown Kiwanis, Sarah Lewis, Dear Ones supervisor, and Vicki Linn, program director.

Needs Lists

We are grateful for the support of this community throughout the year! Our current needs include:

Cornerstone Apartments

Shampoo and conditioner
Diapers
Cleaning supplies
Nonperishable food
Towels
Dish soap
Laundry soap

Dear Ones

Light bulbs—A19 100 watt
Light bulbs—G25 40 watt
Dishwasher detergent
Vacuum
Paper towels
Economy-size hand sanitizer

Men’s Mission

Salt
Onions
Salad dressing
Milk (fresh)
Eggs
Sugar
Pens (any color ink)
Men’s medium-size underwear

Women & Children’s Home

Laundry soap and bleach
Dish soap
All-purpose cleaner
Feminine hygiene products
Hair conditioner
Kleenex
60-watt bulbs
Band-aids
Diapers (sizes 3, 4 &5)
Baby wipes
Milk
Sugar
Coffee
Coffee creamer

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Attorney, Bangs McCullen, et al.

Doug Thrash
Rapid City Police Department

Ann Van Loan
Western Resources For The Dis-ABLED

Dexter Wittman
State's Attorney's Office

*Executive Board member

The Value of Volunteers

When times are tough, and the existence of your organization depends on the generous donations of others, how do you keep going? Cornerstone Rescue Mission can answer that question in one word: volunteers. Even though monetary donations have been low since early 2009, and demand for services has been at an all-time high, volunteer support has remained strong.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of countless volunteers, Cornerstone has managed to meet the recent increased demand for services. Cooking and serving meals, sorting donations at the Thrift Store, arranging the Thrift Store displays, helping folks find what they need...no job seems beyond the abilities of these kind-hearted people. They generously step up and do whatever needs done.

One recent example was the annual Coats for Christmas drive in December. During this major event, over 1,000 coats were given away to the homeless and needy in our community, along with boots, blankets, hats, and gloves. Those items were donated by people throughout Rapid City. Distributing them all required the efforts of scores of volunteers.

Among them was Master Sergeant Yvonne Lopez of Ellsworth Air Force Base. Originally from California, Yvonne has been stationed here since 2006. She was part of a group of some 40 Ellsworth personnel who volunteered their time and energy to this year's Coats for Christmas drive. When we caught up with Yvonne, she told us there are several groups at Ellsworth that give their time to help the Mission and other organizations in Rapid City. In addition to those efforts, base volunteers brought eight truckloads of clothing donations to Cornerstone.

As volunteers helped folks find coats and accessories that would fit them, stories emerged that stayed in their minds long after the drive was over. Like the two little boys who were fitted with gloves, boots, and new coats and hats. Despite the warmth in the building, those two boys put on all their new gear and wore it, showing it off to everyone they saw. Or the young woman in a hoodie who obviously needed a warm coat. A volunteer noticed her standing on the sidelines with her arms folded, not looking at the coats. Hoping to help the young woman feel more comfortable, the volunteer began talking about a coat for herself. "If there are any left, I may keep one," she shared with the young woman. Soon, they were busy locating a warm coat that suited the young woman's needs and tastes, talking about finding just the right one.

Stories like these abound when people reach down into their hearts and give what they can to help others. Cornerstone Rescue Mission survives during these difficult financial times not only because of the generous gifts of money, but the time and energy shared by our most valuable people: our wonderful volunteers. God bless you all!

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO CORNERSTONE RESCUE MISSION

(The enclosed envelope is for your convenience. We are serving more people every day. Your help is appreciated!)