

Issue 14, February 23, 2017

OUR HOUSE

IN FOCUS



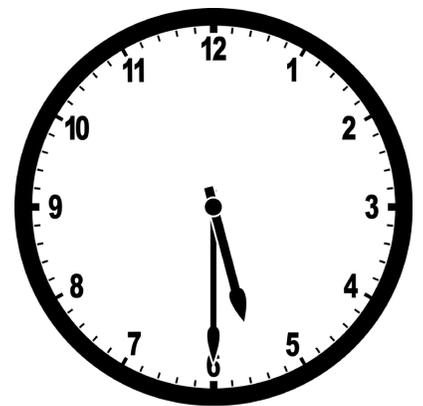
THE SHELTER

A Day in the Life of Those We Serve



5:30 A.M.

What are you doing at 5:30 in the morning? Are you still sleeping, or getting ready for your day? It's 5:30 in the morning and Our House is already a bustling scene. Mothers are waking up their kids and getting them ready for school or Little Learners. People are rushing to get dressed. Stanford gets a few gallons of coffee percolating. Breakfast is getting laid out. Toast, cereal, granola make up a typical day. 80 residents living under the same roof all lead different lives. Some of our residents are just making their way back in from their night shift, while others are just starting off. Either way, the daylight is coming and Our House residents are ready for it.





8:00 A.M.

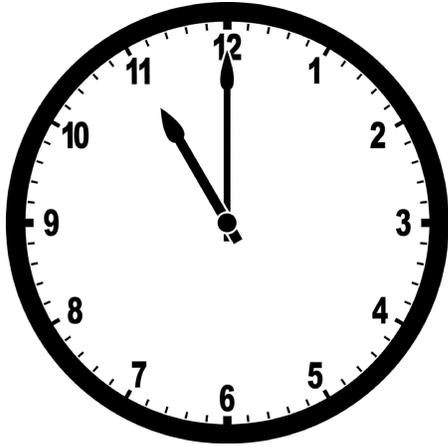


Most people are getting to work or starting their commute. Classes have begun and everyone is getting busy with their day. At Our House, 8:00 a.m. is a busy time, especially on a day when a bed becomes available. At 8:00 a.m. intake process begins. Every new client or resident is met at the guard shack and then walked through the intake process by our clerk. The entire process includes an orientation in the shelter and a review of all 63 rules and procedures for living at Our House. They are given a bed with fresh linens, and many get to meet with their case manager to discuss resources that Our House has to offer in helping them meet their goals.

Drew Smith, the Housing Case Manager said, *"Intakes are a very important process for many of our residents. Being homeless and having to check into a shelter is a very traumatic experience. We try to lessen this trauma by treating people with the dignity they deserve and meeting their basic needs to they can focus wholeheartedly on their job search and stability plan."*

By 9:00 am the shelter is full again with new residents filling the void that was left by former residents moving on.

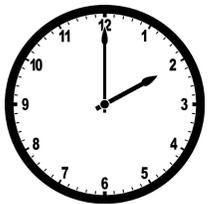
11:00 A.M.



By 11:00 a.m. volunteer groups have made their way to our on-campus commercial kitchen and begin concocting a delicious, healthy meal for the residents, clients, National Service Members, and staff. Every year, Our House hosts over 2,000 volunteers that serve over 16,000 hours- many of those towards our meal service program. By noon the food is done and clients who are doing work in our Career Center are lined up in anticipation for today's offering. Everyone gets their tray and finds their seat at any of the tables set up in the shelter main-area.

At these tables staff members and residents alike share a meal together, get to know each other, and talk about life, politics, and funny things people see on the internet. The Our House Community is comprised not only of clients, residents, and staff, but also includes anyone and everyone who steps foot through the gates and shares a bit of life with us. From our residents to full-time staff to volunteers and so forth, the people of Our House are sharing life, breaking bread, and moving forward together.





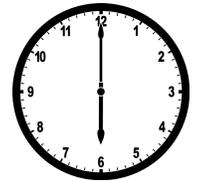
2:00 P.M.

It's 2:00 in the afternoon. People are feeling the midafternoon slump. Maybe you are checking Facebook during your break at work? Some people are counting down to quitting time. Not at Our House.

Any given afternoon, you will find our case management team hard at work with clients who are still looking for jobs or whose work schedules allow them to be on campus for the day. Drew Smith, Housing Case Manager, meets with clients every day. These meetings can serve as simple check-ins, budgeting help, or even crisis interventions. Like Drew, case managers at Our House see or hear about every milestone or misstep in a client's journey. They are the people the clients want to see when they are in need of help and the ones with whom they want to call to celebrate success. Case managers use motivational tools to help people assess their strengths and build their success plans off of those strengths. Through daily meetings, our case managers provide the support clients need to thrive and succeed- that many may lack outside of the gates.



6:00 P.M.



It's 6:00 at night. The sun is getting low, the temperature is dropping. People are getting home from work, starting to eat dinner and fall into their nightly routines. It is the same for Our House residents. 6:00 rolls around and all 80 of our Shelter residents are lined up to eat dinner. It is a bustling scene as volunteers help children with their trays and to their seats. Residents without children pitch in to help make sure the kids eat and that parents don't parent alone. Conversation fills the air with noise like meal time at a family reunion. The conversations range from complaining about work, to encouraging each other to keep at it, to simply talking about each other's day. When the meal is done and the volunteers head on out, the community of residents start their nightly chores. Everyone chips in and helps out putting up the tables and chairs, sweeping the floor, doing the dishes. You'll see some residents finish their chore and start helping out with another one. You ask them why and they'll tell you this is their home.

"Chores are not only a practical way of keeping our shelter clean, it is a way our residents find ownership and pride in where they live. They can look in the building and know they are the reason it looks as good as it does," reflected Michelle Barnes, the director of Housing. With the building sparkling and clean, the residents are free to do whatever else they need to.

7:00 P.M.



It's 7:00 at night. You may be finishing dinner, or settling down to watch television. At Our House, our clients are busy doing things that better themselves. Every night of the week something is being offered down in the Career Center. From job skills classes to employment coaching, our residents get the opportunity to better their careers during those night time hours. Most nights there are also ways for our clients to better themselves through support groups, recovery meetings, and counseling. The Career Center is host to a weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, two substance abuse support groups, two domestic violence support groups, and anger management courses and counseling. Most nights there are also ways for our clients to benefit themselves financially. The Career Center offers a financial empowerment curriculum, which educates people on savings, credit, loans, investing, banking, and avoiding financial crises. Our House also boasts a counseling clinic. Social workers and social work interns provide counseling, therapy, and referrals to other mental health services for our clients. On average, Our House clients spend over 16 hours bettering themselves by working on their career, education, mental health, or recovery. Each of those hours is a positive investment they make in their life so that they may never be homeless again.





10:30 P.M.



It's 10:30 at night. The kids have been in bed for a couple hours. Chores have been done. People have gone to their meetings or classes in the Career Center. Residents are going to bed full and nourished. They can sleep easier knowing they aren't on the streets, or couch surfing. They also go to bed knowing 5:30 am is coming soon and they'll need their rest for the upcoming day.

OUR HOUSE

Click here to learn more about the Shelter and our other Housing Programs!



Interested in volunteering at the Shelter? Click here!