

Safe Harbor Annual Report 2018

UUCGT has provided volunteers for Safe Harbor for many years. Safe Harbor is a seasonal, temporary overnight shelter for those experiencing homelessness. Volunteers prepare and serve meals, help monitor and interact with guests in the evening, overnight and in the morning. Volunteers also perform clean up duties at the shelter. At least 20 churches help with Safe Harbor with each church providing volunteers for a week at a time. Any one of our congregants, member or friend, is welcome to volunteer in our Safe Harbor effort.

For the first time we hosted Safe Harbor in the new permanent shelter near downtown. We provided volunteers from Saturday, December 9 through Friday, December 15. Over 90 volunteers gave over 1700 hours of their time to help our UU Congregation provide shelter, food and fellowship to an average of 49 guests who were experiencing homelessness over the seven nights. During the week we had over 60 different guests, some of whom were at the shelter all seven nights and some for only one night. Several of our guests mentioned how much they appreciated how welcoming our volunteers were and how good the food was.

Volunteers prepared and served over 400 dinners during the week, provided fellowship during the evening, stayed overnight with our guests, served breakfast and cleaned up every morning. Special thanks go out to five groups: the Jewish Congregation, the Grand Traverse Humanists, the Grand Traverse Area Pagans, the UU Men's Group and the Vocal Ensemble. Each of these groups provided the majority of the volunteers for an evening and night. Also a special thanks to Chris Innes and Debbie Beason who served with us on the planning Task Force for our Safe Harbor effort.

In addition UUCGT provided all (18) of the volunteers for Safe Harbor on Saturday, April 14, dinner on Saturday, April 21 and helped out during a continuing extension during the fourth week of April. Our congregation's willingness to pitch in with more help enabled Safe Harbor to stay open two more weeks after some unprecedented weather events in April.

Mike and Sandra McDonald, Co-chairs