

SONOMA OVERNIGHT SUPPORT

Helping the homeless and hungry in Sonoma Valley



What we do:

SOS provides the only homeless shelter in Sonoma. We are in a unique position to assist homeless individuals and families coping with hunger and crisis.

Those who are in the shelter benefit from nutritional meals, shower and laundry facilities, a secure and warm place to sleep, and other services including job placement, bus passes, computer and phone access, an address to receive mail, and a network of social services.

A single story:

Rather than a single story, SOS is best portrayed as responding to three areas of needs.

- **Food:** In 2005, Brown Baggers became a program of SOS. Originally founded to care for the vineyard workers, Brown Baggers expanded to include all the hungry in the Valley. Today 350 volunteers create hundreds of burrito lunches each week and drop them off at established sites in the Valley. Food services have been extended to include two soup kitchens – Wednesday lunches at the Sonoma Valley Grange Hall and Friday night dinners at La Luz – each serving 70 and 120 individuals, who are either homeless or living on limited incomes: senior citizens, veterans and low income families. In 2014, more than 21,000 meals were provided.
- **Shelter:** SOS ensures that the homeless and hungry in the Sonoma Valley have a welcoming, safe, and healing environment at the Haven. In 2014, SOS worked with FISH (Friends in Sonoma Helping) to create a Severe Weather Shelter program that provides transportation to temporary emergency shelters and food at local churches and congregations.
- **Services:** In the first six months of 2014, the Outreach Drop-In Center provided services to 507 individuals including 295 showers, 113 loads of laundry, 386 on-site meals, and 359 meals to go. In addition, the SOS professional staff assisted with individual counseling, referrals to other agencies, regaining permanent or transitional housing, and job search advice.

SOS collaborates with numerous other organizations to bring dignity and support to the homeless and hungry in the Sonoma Valley.

Our start:

In the late '90s, church volunteers joined other community members to address homelessness and hunger in the Sonoma Valley. Their immediate goal was to find temporary housing to provide homeless individuals with a good night's sleep and respite from cold winter nights.

The group continued to raise awareness of the plight of the homeless throughout the Valley, and in 2003, succeeded in raising funds to create a non-profit organization called Sonoma Overnight Support (SOS).

With state and city funding, SOS became the program operator for a home provided by the city and called their new shelter "The Haven."

Our future:

We are seeing increasing demands for food for the hungry and emergency shelter for the growing number of homeless. Our goal is to increase capacity to serve the staggering number of those in need and to open a new shelter for women and children.



Impact100 Sonoma has awarded two Community Grants to Sonoma Overnight Support: \$11,000 for capital needs (2012) and \$15,000 to start the "drop-in center" (2014).

www.sonomaovernightsupport.org

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