



Shelter Week

St. Irenaeus Week of Hospitality November 7-13 *SOS Volunteer sign-ups begin this week!*

Lighthouse of Michigan was established in 2019 as *Lighthouse of Oakland County* and *South Oakland Shelter* combined forces and merged agencies. Lighthouse of Michigan is leveraging the best of both agencies, providing direct services (food, shelter, rental/utility and other financial assistance, clothing, crisis referrals) and stability and housing programs that develop and support self-sufficiency.

What is SOS? South Oakland Shelter (SOS) is a temporary emergency shelter for families and individuals who find themselves homeless due to an array of reasons. Lighthouse staff works with these homeless clients to obtain education, skills, training, and assistance that will empower them to sustain their own housing once they procure it.

How has COVID-19 affected the SOS Shelter? Before COVID hit, Lighthouse's SOS emergency shelter rotated weekly among various congregations. The SOS rotating shelter accommodated just over 30 guests each week, which is what we saw during our own past weeks of hospitality. Since COVID began, homeless shelter guests have been housed in a local motel. Thanks to special (although temporary) funding, SOS has been able to accommodate more guests—they are currently caring for about 100 people (half of whom are children). Some of these guests are HOPE Shelter guests who have jobs and cannot go 'in-and-out' of the HOPE Shelter. Each family (or individual guest) stays in their own motel room.

How will St. Irenaeus help this year? We will 'adopt' these families for a week in November as always. To start the week off, we will put together and drop off **Care Baskets** (using laundry baskets) that will include lunch fixings such as soup, tuna kits, fruit, snacks, etc., so the families can make their own lunches during the week... with a few other items like washable dishes and small useable gifts. We will cook, individually-package, and deliver **dinners** to the guests' motel rooms each night for all the guests. We *hope* to offer an **outdoor socially-distanced activity** like cider and donuts (or hot cocoa and cookies!), sidewalk chalk, and therapy dog visits. We will survey the guests to see if they have any **tangible needs**—anything from their typical requests of underwear and winter boots, to notebook paper and face masks. And of course, we will cover the week and our guests in **prayer!**

Additional support we will provide... The Lighthouse PATH program is a 2-year transitional housing program for domestic violence victims and formerly homeless women with children which provides housing, case management, and wrap-around services. We will provide quality bath towels and XL twin comforters for these women.

How can you help? You can donate food, gifts, and other supplies... You can help prepare meals... You can help prepare Care Baskets... You can help deliver gifts, dinners, and supplies to the guests' motel rooms... You can help shop for food, supplies, and need items requested by guests. You can donate new towels and new XL twin comforters. You can donate money or gift cards to help with our week's food and supply expenses. You can join a group baking sweet breads for our lunch baskets. You can cover us in prayer!

What to do next: Click on the **SOS Shelter Week** link at www.stirenaeus.org/serve to sign up to volunteer, view our list of needed donations, and see more details. Check back often as we will continue to add items. If you are not fond of computers, you may also call and leave a message at **248-651-9595, ext 801** and an SOS Team Captain will get back to you! And—most importantly—please keep our SOS Week of Hospitality, as well as all our homeless guests we will be serving, in your prayers!

St. Irenaeus' relationship with Lighthouse of Michigan allows our parish to directly impact the lives of individuals suffering from homelessness. Our joint mission is to provide services that 'break the cycle of homelessness.' Thank you for helping!