



AmeriCorps St. Louis “My Mother’s House” Shelter Volunteer Orientation

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See The Need, Meet the Need

About AmeriCorps St. Louis & My Mother's House

AmeriCorps St. Louis is a nonprofit and National Service Program that trains 42 AmeriCorps Members each year in environmental stewardship and disaster response. Since **2009**, we have also been part of the **Winter Outreach** network that provides emergency overnight shelter to the unhoused population of St. Louis. Learn more [here](#).

Video: Former ACSTL Program Director & My Mother's House Founder Kathleen Becherer, Winter Outreach Founder Teka Childress, and Former AmeriCorps Member Jimmy Truschel talk about the history of the emergency Winter Warming Shelter at AmeriCorps St. Louis.



My Mother's House

Our shelter is named “My Mother’s House” so a guest can say honestly that they stayed at their mother’s house last night and not need reveal their unhoused status.

Capacity: 35 beds

Population: All ages and genders, couples, and families; facility is disability accessible; pets allowed; inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Activation Protocol:

For the 2022 - 2023 season, My Mother’s House will activate **Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays**, when temperatures are **20 degrees or below, or 25 degrees with precipitation**. Volunteers will be notified 24 hours in advance of volunteer needs.

[Click here for the weather forecast used to determine shelter activation.](#)

Shelter and AmeriCorps Personnel

My Mother's House Staff:

- Zippy Lee - Shelter Facilitator (*they/them*)
- John Pawloski - Shelter Facilitator (*he/him*)
- Mary Hoelterhoff - Outreach Services Manager (*she/her*)
- Nate Neal - Outreach Services Coordinator
- Christina Sterman - Emergency Shelter Administrator
- Joseph Koch - Emergency Shelter Administrator

AmeriCorps St. Louis Program Staff:

- Kenan Ender - Executive Director (*he/him*)
 - Liaison with City of St. Louis, general oversight
- Kelley Hower - Member Services Director (*she/her*)
 - Oversight to outreach services
- Amanda Henderson - Director of Operations (*she/her*)
 - Foodbank liaison, payroll, HR, supply orders
- Jane Kersch - Outreach Manager (*she/her*)
 - volunteer coordination, social media/outreach
- Tim Elwell - Development Manager (*he/him*)
 - Fundraising and donations (monetary and in-kind)

About our Facility/Amenities

There are two buildings associated with our shelter: **The MKB Center** (located on the right side) and the **Main Building** (located on the left).

The MKB Center:

- Cots for men
- 2 bathrooms (single stall)
- Shower

Main Building:

- Community Room (Cots for women, families, couples, and children)
- Full kitchen (oven, freezers, fridges, prep station, pantry)
- 2 bathrooms (gendered, multi-stall)
- 2 TVs, games
- Linen/clothing/donations closet

Rules/Policies for Shelter Guests

Prohibited Items: Illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons

Possession of any of these items will result in disciplinary action:

Alcohol	→	case by case decision
Illegal drugs	→	immediate 1-month ban
Weapons	→	immediate 1-month ban
Fighting	→	immediate 1-month ban

Nightly Schedule for Volunteers

The shelter schedule for volunteer shifts:

5:00 - 8:00 PM

Setup, Check-In, and Dinner Service

7:00 - 10:00 PM

Dinner Service & Clean Up, Shower Monitoring,
Donations Distribution

10:00 PM - 1:00 AM

Overnight Monitoring

1:00 - 4:00 AM

Overnight Monitoring and Prep

5:00 - 8:00 AM

Breakfast Service, Clean Up, Guest Check Out

Pre-Opening (done by Shelter Staff)

Set-Up Duties | 3:30 - 5:00 PM

- ❑ Set oven to 350°F. Take out labeled food for nightly meal and begin to thaw in the oven, rotating every hour.
- ❑ Make sure the heat is working in the MKB building and set to 70°F.
- ❑ Make sure the heat is working in the Community Room and set to 70°F.

Prep: Dinner Service

Volunteer Set-Up Duties | 5:00 - 6:00 PM

Dining service

- Make sure all plates and utensils have been washed and placed on the metal cart next to the metal door that leads to the Back Kitchen.
- Make sure napkins and other supplies (serving spoons, etc.) are in place and ready to use

Kitchen

- Rotate food in and out, making sure to thaw all the way through – some of those casseroles are thick!
- Confirm with Staff if additional food needs to be made for dinner service

Prep: Dinner Service - Beverage Stations

Volunteer Set-Up Duties | 5:00 - 6:00 PM

Coffee Station (table near bathrooms in Dining Room)

- Brew hot water (about 8 pots) and place in green carafe.
- Brew coffee (about 10-12 pots) and place in brown carafe.
- Make sure all coffee cup racks are stocked with clean coffee cups.
- Put out both a bowl of sugar and dry coffee creamer.
- Put out packets or a coffee can of cocoa and assorted teas.
- Put out a small plate with a few clean teaspoons.

Juice Station (moving cart in dining area near refrigerator)

- Mix juice in one Dasani carafe. Use 4 containers of drink mix with water and sugar to taste. Label as "Juice."
- Fill one Dasani carafe with ice water. Label as "Ice water."

Intake (done by Shelter Staff and Volunteers)

Guest Registration | 5:00 - 10:00 PM

If the guest is a returner to the shelter:

- ❑ Confirm that their registration form is on file.
 - ❑ If their registration **is confirmed**, Shelter Staff will sign in on guest log.
 - ❑ If their registration **cannot be confirmed**, have the guest fill out a new registration form.
- ❑ Inquire if guest has weapons, alcohol, or any additional items violating the rules, and offer to store these if necessary. If these items are not stored, refer guests to the Guest House Rules disciplinary policy.
- ❑ Assign the guest to a cot and log the guest's full name on the cot diagram of the cot they will be staying in.

Intake (done by Shelter Staff and Volunteers)

If a guest is new to the shelter:

- ❑ Explain house and guest rules before giving the guest a registration form.
- ❑ Have new guests completely fill out registration form, assisting guests as needed.
- ❑ Inquire if guest has weapons, alcohol, or any additional items violating the rules, and offer to store these if necessary. If these items are not stored, refer guests to the Guest House Rules disciplinary policy.
- ❑ Assign the guest to a cot and log the guest's full name on the cot diagram of the cot they will be staying in.
- ❑ Point out the restrooms and shower facilities in MKB and the restrooms, Community Space, and dinner/beverage station in Education Center.
- ❑ **Reinforce** the two main shelter rules: 1) no prohibited items (weapons, alcohol, or drugs) and 2) no physical and/or verbal altercations with guests, volunteers, or Staff.

Dinner Service

Food Service: Dinner | 6:30 - 7:30 PM

- ❑ Volunteers will consult with Staff about dinner service time as it gets closer to 6:30 PM.
- ❑ At the approval of Staff, food will be delivered to individuals at their assigned cots
- ❑ Volunteers will use appropriate serving utensils and food-safe gloves to serve guests.
- ❑ During dinner service hours, guests will be served by a volunteer to ensure safe food handling and proper assessment of ongoing food needs. **Guests should NOT serve themselves.**
- ❑ Clear dishes immediately after eating. Guests will pile used dishes and utensils in the marked brown tubs near the coffee station. These tubs can be washed in the Kitchen to utilize the larger sink and drying area. Guests may help with this task if they desire.
- ❑ Wipe tables with a cleaning solution (located beneath the Kitchenette sink or in the Back Kitchen) and dispose of any additional food waste in the dining area trash receptacles.

Clothing Closet/Shower Monitoring

Clothing Closet>Showers | 7:00 - 10:00 PM

- ❑ For new volunteers, Staff will walk through the clothing closet, give a tour, and explain clothing closet procedures, including fully filling out a Guest Need List, and packaging procedures for requested items.
- ❑ If additional items need to be sorted, Staff will instruct the volunteer in the proper sorting method and locations.
- ❑ If any items run out, volunteer will inform Staff at end of their shift.
- ❑ Volunteers will also monitor the shower sign up list, instructing guests when their time is up, and making sure the next person in line is ready

Overnight Shifts

Overnight Shifts | 10:00 PM - 1:00 AM
1:00 AM - 4:00 AM

Every hour of both shifts, volunteer will do a shelter walkthrough.

- 10:00 PM: **lights out**. Guests can still go outside to smoke a cigarette or get fresh air.
- During overnight shifts, Shelter Staff generally take shifts sleeping. One Shelter Staff is usually awake while the other rests.
- Check the bathrooms in Community Room and MKB Center.
- Check the shower in the MKB Center.
- Check the gangway and sweep cigarette butts, shovel snow, or lay ice melt, if necessary.
- Address ongoing needs of shelter guests as needed.
 - If there is a medical emergency, alert/wake Staff.
 - If there is a potential behavioral situation, alert/wake Staff.

Overnight Shifts, continued

Overnight Shifts | 10:00 PM - 1:00 AM 1:00 - 4:00 AM

- If new guests arrive, wake/alert Staff for check-in process.
- If a guest needs additional linen, get linen from linen closet.
- Clean any dishes, utensils, or additional items as needed.
- Begin brewing coffee and hot water at 4:00 AM.
- If Staff are resting, wake them at 4:00 AM.

Breakfast Service

Food Service: Breakfast | 6:00 - 7:30 AM

- ❑ Volunteers will consult with Staff about breakfast service time as it gets closer to 6:00 AM.
- ❑ With the approval of Staff, all food will be brought to individuals at their cots, or given to them as they check out.
- ❑ Volunteers will use appropriate serving utensils and food-safe gloves to serve guests.
- ❑ During breakfast service hours, guests will be served by a volunteer to ensure safe food handling and proper assessment of ongoing food needs.
- ❑ Clear dishes immediately after eating. Guests will pile their used dishes and utensils in the marked brown tubs near the coffee station. These tubs can be washed in the Kitchen to utilize the larger sink and drying area. Guests may help with this task if they desire.
- ❑ Wipe down tables after eating with a cleaning solution (located beneath the kitchenette sink or in the Back Kitchen) and dispose of any additional food waste in the available dining area trash receptacles.

Check Out

Guest Sign Out | 7:00 - 8:00 AM

- ❑ Guests must sign out when leaving the shelter and **ALL** guests must begin the check out process at **7:00 AM**, unless they are participating in shelter clean-up.
- ❑ Before signing out, guests must take **ALL** of their dirty linen to the large laundry bins in the rear of the gangway. If the laundry bin seems full, pile it on anyway.
- ❑ Guests must take all of their belongings with them upon signing out. This includes **ALL** the bags stored overnight. Any personal property left behind goes in the “Lost and Found” shelf to be claimed by whoever needs the item (not necessarily the previous owner of said item).
- ❑ Upon signing out, guests receive a bus pass. If they must return inside for any reason, they must give their bus ticket back to Staff until they are truly ready to leave.
- ❑ If a guest needs help identifying the bus lines, refer them to the bus routes and times in the Staff binder.
- ❑ If guests have difficulty signing out, Staff will help in this task.

Clean Up: MKB Center

Shelter Clean-Up Duties | 8:00 - 9:00 AM

MKB Center

- Turn heat to 52°F.
- Sweep the floor.
- Spot mop with bleach mixture if necessary.
- Wipe down all cots with Lysol, removing and disposing of items. If any linens remain, deposit them in the laundry bins in the gangway.
- Clean the shower.
 - Remove all soap products.
 - Take down the shower curtain and lay over door to clean with bleach mixture.
 - Clean stall with bleach mixture.
 - Dispose of any items left in shower area, *except linens*.
 - Take all found linens to laundry bins in the gangway.
 - Mop up any water on floor.
- Clean both bathrooms.
 - Restock paper towels and toilet paper.
 - Clean toilets with bleach mixture.
 - Clean sinks with bleach mixture.
 - Restock soap and toothpaste.
 - Sweep the floors.
 - Empty the trash receptacles.
 - Mop the floors.

Clean Up: Main Building

Shelter Clean-Up Duties | 8:00 - 9:00 AM

Main Building - Community Room/Kitchen

- Clean any additional dishes/pans in Kitchenette and Back Kitchen areas.
- Wipe down Back Kitchen with disinfectant.
- Dump any remaining juice, ice water, coffee, and hot water in the sink and rinse the Dasani containers and carafes.
- Vacuum dining area and Community Room.
- Clean both bathrooms.
 - Restock paper towels and toilet paper.
 - Clean toilets with bleach mixture.
 - Clean sinks with bleach mixture.
 - Restock soap and toothpaste.
 - Sweep the floors.
 - Empty the trash receptacles.
 - Mop the floors.
- Wipe down all cots with Lysol, removing and disposing of items that remain. If any dirty linens remain, deposit them in the laundry bins in the gangway.
- Wipe down the chairs with Lysol.
- Make sure food is stored properly according to the aforementioned procedures.

Other Resources & Policies



- [Behavioral Issues and Emergencies, Medical Emergencies, Police, De-Escalation Techniques](#)
- [Find the weather forecast here](#)
- [How to Use Narcan](#)
- [Link to Sign Up for Volunteer Shifts](#)
- [Link to join Winter Outreach Facebook Group](#)
- St. Louis Housing Helpline: (314) 802-5444