

Changes underway for Berberian Shelter

Classes and partnership planned under new leadership

The Salvation Army Berberian Homeless Shelter and Transitional Living Center in Modesto, Calif., is going through changes under the new leadership of Calvin Bizek.

His involvement with The Salvation Army covers 12 years, as he served in corps and facilities in California, Arizona and Washington before taking on his new position at the shelter.



“Many clients come to us thinking they are at the end of their rope when actually it is a new beginning,” Bizek said. “My goal is to have each person realize they are worth something and they may have a setback but we are here to help them from start to finish.”

Bizek said that the basic fundamentals and program goals of the Berberian Shelter—such as the number of people served, housing and emergency shelter beds—will remain the same because of the needs of the community.

“We will continue to have regular classes for the clients of the Berberian Shelter such as Sunday church, Bible study and basic life skills classes in nutrition guidelines, food shopping information and community living skills,” Bizek said. “It is a continually changing program that will be judged by its successes.”

Physical changes for the Berberian Shelter include a new kitchen where the shelter cook and community volunteers will be able to serve more than 600 meals and snacks each day.

Existing [medical](#), dental and optometry clinic services offered at the Berberian Shelter will expand to include beneficiaries of the Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC) in Stockton, Calif., as well as those awaiting admittance to the ARC and ARC graduates in the shelter’s transitional housing program.

“We are excited about the partnership that we are developing with the [ARC],” Bizek said.

The [dental clinic](#) will offer these individuals free care for fillings, major dental work, and even full sets of dentures. Medical clinic services include physical exams and wellness checks for both men and women, while the optometry clinic will help with glasses and eye care.

The shelter also welcomed new Non-Veterans Case Manager Sonja Radinovich who assists clients with their résumés and employment preparation with mock interviews, while setting them up with actual job interviews.

Radinovich will add advanced life skills classes at the shelter, teaching the clients how to balance a checkbook, prepare healthy meals, and read and understand basic legal contracts such as rental agreements. Volunteer instructors for bead and jewelry making, drawing classes, and self empowerment groups will be available as well.

“These life skills classes will be part of an evolving program to meet the needs of small groups that share in life experiences,” Bizek said. “They are needed to assist the clients with socialization and money handling skills and any other knowledge needed for adults in today’s society.”

Shelter personnel are working to bring these new programs online and develop timelines for solving the more complicated issues faced.

“We are here to serve those in need with a hand up and guidance along the way...with the support of the local community and those charitable organizations that donate time, talent and financial assistance we will achieve those goals,” Bizek said. “It is our desire to ‘Do the Most Good’ for each soul that walks through our door to help them be successful members of society and to strive to be a better person.”