

Helena Salvation Army plans housing program for young men



Rebekah, Jordan and Joshua Lawler stand at attention during the Helena Corps' anniversary dinner. Photo by Catherine McKillips

For 125th anniversary, corps aims to raise \$125,000 to meet a community need.

To celebrate its 125th anniversary, The Salvation Army Helena (Mont.) Corps will open a transitional housing complex for young men.

The new program will transition men from homelessness and joblessness into stabilized living conditions through education and training in life skills, money management, budgeting, and seeking and securing employment. To show accountability, participants will meet weekly with a counselor.

"We want to give them that sense of dignity," said Captain Tiffany Lawler, corps officer with her husband, Lt. Rob Lawler.

"The transitional housing need for single men in our community is great," Lawler said. "We're also looking to work along with the jail and prison system to assist in transitioning certain levels of newly released individuals back into society and our community's workforce."

The center is the first of its kind in Helena. Shelters exist for men, women, unwed and single mothers, but not specifically for young men. The established men's shelter provides temporary emergency housing, not a transition into stable living.

<https://caringmagazine.org>

Working with the University of Montana, the Lawlers drew plans for a 12-bed men's transitional home, providing two beds per room, separate closets and dressers, three full bathrooms, four full-sized washers and dryers, communal kitchen and living areas and small individual storage units. It was strategically built beside the corps' gym for easy access.

The Helena Corps needs to raise \$125,000 to furnish the facility. In conjunction with the corps' 125th anniversary, a week of fundraising events ensued, including percentages of sales from various restaurants and local baseball game tickets. The corps held a catered dinner and welcomed guests including Lt. Colonels Doug and Diane O'Brien, Western territorial secretaries for personnel and community care ministries, respectively.

Majors Doug and Sheryl Tollerud, Northwest divisional leaders; Majors Joe and Nila Huttenlocker, Great Falls, Mont., corps officers; and Lts. Josh and Loreen Hamilton, Missoula, Mont., corps officers, also attended the dinner.

Doug O'Brien spoke at the local Historical Society Museum on Saturday about the history of The Salvation Army, and the corps served doughnuts prepared from the traditional recipe of the WWI doughnut girls.