

C-U at Home Phoenix Homeless Center Summary

Happy Kalavadia

C-U at Home's Phoenix Drop In Center is easy to get to, it is located on 70 East Washington street near downtown Champaign, their hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 12pm to 5pm, their phone number is 217-819-4569 and point of contact person is coordinator Cheryl Lehman.

In 2011, C-U at Home was founded by Melany Jackson who had a history of helping those in need (Cu At Home, n.d.). She earned her Master of Divinity in Kansas City where she ministered a couple of hours each week to the people of downtown (Cu At Home, n.d.). Locally, she served at Salt & Light, a ministry dedicated to helping those in need with basic food and clothing (Cu At Home, n.d.). She served with the Canteen Run, which is a ministry of Partnering Against Homelessness and The Salvation Army (Cu At Home, n.d.). From those opportunities, she decided to start C-U at Home which is the parent unit of The Phoenix Drop-in Center.

C-U at Home's Phoenix Drop in Center is a non-profit faith-based homelessness ministry (Cu At Home, n.d.) with 6 full time employees, 10 part-time employees and is 100% funded by the community. They made it a priority not to accept any state or federal funds, through community dollars, they can stay true to their mission which is "C-U at Home engages and mobilizes our community to house and support the most vulnerable homeless on their journey of healing and restoration" (Cu At Home, n.d.).

As stated by the Development and Community Outreach director, Rob Dalhaus III, C-U at Home's goal and purpose in the community goes far beyond the mission statement. Every day, they work to develop close, lasting relationships with our "friends without an address" (Cu At Home, n.d.). They make a conscious and intentional effort not to refer to those they serve as "homeless" due to the severely negative stereotype associated with that term and strive to break down the barriers put up by society by relating to our friends (Cu At Home, n.d.).

The Phoenix Daytime Center provides services for friends without an address in Champaign County and the amount of people served differs each year. CU at Home is also a men's shelter that provides a place to stay as long as you are drug and alcohol free, the men's shelter is on a first come first serve basis. In order to qualify to stay at the shelter you must be a resident of Champaign county for at least 30 days. CU at home offers interviews Monday through Friday from 2-4 p.m. for shelter placement. Additionally, there are emergency shelters that you can drop in between 7:30 pm and 7:00 am on a first come first serve basis. The Women's emergency shelter is located at First Presbyterian (302 W. Church Champaign) and the Men's emergency shelter is located at New Covenant Fellowship (142 W. White, Champaign).

There is no criteria or fees to use the Phoenix Daytime Drop-in Center. The services offered are shower, washer, dryer, computers, internet, phone, case management, local resources, and a job board (Cu At Home, n.d.).

C-U at home helps serve the vulnerable population of Champaign County. Our service impacted the organization by showing our friends without an address that people do care about them and that people are willing to donate their time to help others out. Our group stepped out of their comfort zone and developed relationships with our friends by spending time, playing games, talking to them and learning about their stories, struggles, and their future goals.

C-U at Home's Phoenix Daytime Center could use community monetary donations to help the facility run properly and to meet their goal of becoming a 24-hour shelter that provides stability for friends that utilize the center (Cu At Home, n.d.). They are also needing hand warmers, disposable ponchos,

packages of underwear, Tylenol, fingernail clippers, snacks, and drinks such as bottled water or Gatorade.

Community members can also volunteer by being a friend of the Phoenix and simply hanging out, volunteering as drivers and riders as part of the Transportation Ministry, being a Professional Case Manager, helping residents through transitional housing or providing spiritual advice by providing encouragement and wisdom (Cu At Home, n.d.).

References

CU at Home. (n.d.). Retrieved March 21, 2022, from <https://www.cuathome.us/>