

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**CONTACT:**

Anna Estrada
616.451.0236 x35
anna@lifeonthestreet.org

Sharice Purman
616.389.7583
sharice@lifeonthestreet.org

COST FOR EMERGENCY SHELTER CAN BE HIGHER THAN RENT PAYMENTS

A report by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) finds that housing the homeless in emergency shelters can be more costly to communities than the average monthly rent.

The report compares the cost of emergency shelters in cities around the United States and finds that the cost for emergency shelters, depending on the specific services provided, is costing the government, individuals and service providers more per person per month than an average rent payment.

Market trends (graph attached) show that the average cost for renting a one bedroom apartment in Grand Rapids in 2010 is \$576; for a 2-bedroom apartment the cost was \$688.

Guiding Light Mission, arguably the lowest cost provider among homeless shelters in Kent County, has an average cost of \$24.80 per person per day, which equates to roughly \$744 per month.

“We are able to provide safe, overnight and day shelter, access to showers and personal hygiene products, Christian fellowship, and three balanced meals a day for members of our community at a cost of \$24.80 per person,” said Stuart Ray, executive director of Guiding Light Mission. “We are among the most cost effective service providers, and still we are spending more on emergency shelter than the cost of affordable housing. This is truly a systemic problem that we see rooted in the lack of affordable housing and shortage of resources that allow us to provide more services to our neighbors in need.”

The Brookings Institution recently ranked Grand Rapids #1 nationwide for having the steepest increase in poverty since the year 2000 (attached).

\$30 million is spent on shelter in Kent County each year, with roughly \$18 million of that being allocated to emergency shelters, according to the Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness.

Guiding Light Mission does not receive any state or federal funding and is supported entirely by private donation.

The Guiding Light Mission

Guiding Light Mission helps men to transition out of homelessness by providing a Christian-based, residential substance abuse recovery program. They provide an average of 8,000 meals per month to men, women and children in the community and donate almost 12,500 pounds of food monthly to local charities. Additionally, Guiding Light Mission offers shelter to over 100 homeless men on a nightly basis. The Mission is funded entirely by private donations and relies extensively on volunteers.

For more information about Guiding Light Mission, please visit www.lifeonthestreet.org.

Enclosed: Grand Rapids market trends – apartment ratings.pdf
Homelessness_the_big_picture.pdf
Brookings_suburbanization of poverty.pdf

###