

SPOTLIGHT ON HOPE HOUSE

Hope House is the only day center for homeless people in Shreveport. It provides a "reintroduction" to society by

- providing its clients individual voice mail boxes, to allow the clients to leave a call back number for jobs,
- providing a P.O. box to allow clients to receive mail, which is necessary for the clients to begin receiving veterans' and other benefits, and
- assisting in reestablishing their identities through replacement ID cards.

When they visit Hope House, the homeless clients are also given a hygiene kit (ziplock bag with travel-sized soap, shampoo, lotion, and deodorant) and are allowed to take a shower and wash clothes. Clients also can get coffee, snacks, and, when money allows, bus passes.

Hope House also puts together teams of people in different disciplines to visit the homeless camps throughout the city to develop trust among the camp "members" and to help provide the services the homeless need, such as substance abuse treatment and mental health evaluations and treatment.

Though it operates under the umbrella of the Centerpoint agency, Hope House is essentially a one-woman shop next door to Mercy House. Recently, Hope House lost funding it has received from the City of Shreveport and needs some assistance to bridge the gap. Outreach voted to provide some funding to help bridge this emergency need of Hope House, but after meeting with Peggy O'Neil, who runs Hope House, Outreach discovered Hope House has many special and ongoing needs that this congregation is uniquely suited to help meet:

- **1 lawn mower,**
- **1 set of lockable lockers (to allow clients to leave items at Hope House),**
- **travel-sized toiletries (deodorant, soap, shampoo, lotion),**
- **clothes soap,**
- **new or gently used towels, and**
- **men's socks and underwear.**

Be on the lookout for bins close to the sanctuary that Outreach will place to collect these and other needs, but if you don't see bins, please take your donations to the church office.

Hope House also needs the ongoing relationship that can be provided through members at First Pres who are interested in working with the homeless. If you feel tugged to this type of opportunity in responding to the grace that you have received, Peggy would see it as an answer to prayer to have another helping hand dedicated to helping those homeless who make their way to Hope House.