

MISSION MOMENT

DANA LEAHY AND THE CISS SHELTER MEAL

Dana Leahy has graciously spear-headed WHLC's participation in providing food and monetary donations for the shelter meal supporting Central Iowa Shelter and Services. The congregation appreciates her continuing dedication to this ministry. Please enjoy learning more about Dana's involvement with the shelter meal, her personal experiences and how you can become involved.

1. How did WHLC and you become involved with the CISS shelter meal? Although I don't know the exact date/year WHLC began serving monthly at the homeless shelter, I remember going to the old Churches United Shelter with my sons to serve a meal when they were in the confirmation program approximately 15 years ago. We began serving periodically with the WHLC group and then began serving nearly every month about a decade ago. John and I have been coordinating the monthly meal for about five years.

2. How has providing meals at the shelter changed during the pandemic? The last meal that WHLC volunteers served at Central Iowa Shelter and Services was on March 11, 2020. Since that date, John and I have purchased all of the meal items, except for sloppy joe meat and buns, at Sam's Club (with the help of the CISS fund), and delivered it to the shelter on the 11th of every month. Price Chopper, who we've paid to make the meat and buns for over a decade, has continued to make both and delivers these items to the shelter also on the 11th of every month to complete the meal WHLC provides.

3. What is your favorite part of being involved with the shelter meal? My favorite part of serving at the shelter is witnessing love in action and knowing that those who are in dire need of food and hospitality are receiving it. I also immensely enjoy serving with my WHLC friends and often going out for dinner afterwards.

4. Would you be willing to share a memorable conversation or special interaction that you've had with a shelter meal recipient? Nearly every month we serve, there are special and meaningful interactions with CISS residents/recipients. They always express their thanks and some even ask us to pray for them, which is humbling and heartwarming. For awhile there was a resident who brought her dog, Lucky, along to the meal and told me that Lucky was the only family she had. She must've known I was an easy mark when it comes to dogs because she'd pull me aside and request a scoop of meat for Lucky. After everyone else had been served and I was able to deliver a scoop of meat to Lucky, she was always effusively grateful.



5. How do church members become involved with the shelter meal? Obviously, with the pandemic, no one except CISS staff and residents are serving meals at the shelter; and John and I will be the only ones delivering the meal items until the pandemic subsides and it's safe to serve again. Any member of our church is welcomed to serve, contribute funds and/or food items that are listed on a monthly sign-up sheet on the bulletin board (near the upstairs drinking fountains), when serving resumes. In the meantime, monetary contributions to WHLC's CISS fund are welcomed and appreciated.