



January 8, 2020

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Help the Homeless by Volunteering for Jan. 22 Event

Making a meaningful impact on someone's life can be as simple as volunteering one evening of your time this year.

Volunteers are needed for the Jan. 22 Point in Time Count, which is organized each year in response to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to assess the amount of people experiencing homelessness. The count includes men, women, and children who are living in shelters, on the street, or in places not meant for human habitation, as well as individuals and families living with others. The PIT is conducted so Anoka County can identify what's needed to help the homeless and to apply for housing and service programs.

Go to www.anokacounty.us/homelessness for more information, to sign up for a training, and to volunteer. There are two in-person trainings — Jan. 8 and 14 — before the PIT Count. Training can also be completed online after Jan. 14. Volunteers will work in pairs, and new volunteers will be placed with people who have experience doing the count.

The count, facilitated by Anoka County, the Heading Home Anoka Housing Collaborative, and the Suburban Metro Area Continuum of Care, will start at sunset and end at sunrise the following day. Locations throughout the county, including homeless shelters, city streets, and other known homeless encampments will be canvassed to interview people who are experiencing homelessness.

New this year is the involvement of several area police departments. On Dec. 19, 2019, the Blaine Police Department conducted its own homelessness outreach event, with aid from neighboring police departments and social service organizations, at the former Buffalo Wild Wings

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building at Northtown Mall and connected with 35 people wanting help. They were also provided with meals and vaccinations for the flu and Hepatitis A. This location, again facilitated by the Blaine PD, will be utilized 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. as a warming shelter/gathering place during the PIT count.

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