

Event will help meet needs of homeless

By KAREN HERZOG
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As an outreach effort, Trinity Lutheran Church in Bismarck stepped forward 18 months ago to initiate The Banquet, a weekly food and fellowship ministry open to anyone in the community. Trinity also emerged as an early supporter of the work of Carrie Grosz, the liaison for the Bismarck school system's families in transition program, which is dedicated to meeting the needs of children and teens who are dealing with homelessness, and the organization called Carrie's Kids.

On Wednesday, Trinity is hosting another event in which people who are homeless are invited to come to the church's Community Room from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. to take part in Project Community.

A hundred-plus volunteers are participating in Project Community, setting up booths, sorting clothing and food, and providing information and services, such as housing, eye exams, haircuts, medical screenings and more. Both

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Dwight Hegel, volunteer

individuals and agencies, such as Community Action, the Salvation Army and UND Family Practice, are taking part, said Dwight Hegel, a member of Trinity and a volunteer who has put in countless hours with Carrie's Kids.

Hegel has come to think of Grosz as a sister, he said.

They think alike, he said, fight fairly and provide a support system for each other as the profile of Carrie's Kids has grown in the Bismarck-Mandan community.

Grosz's passion is for being out and about, getting to know the people, traveling the streets to connect with people, Hegel said.

"She wants to develop a relationship with families and kids," he said.

Grosz spends a lot of her time getting the

word out about homelessness, a problem which is invisible to most in the community, since few people see people sleeping on the streets, Hegel said.

"Kids (who are homeless) look like all the others," he said. It's just that their "home" may be a car or an apartment with 20 other people, he said.

But Bismarck-Mandan is generous, Hegel has discovered: "When they know there's a need, they help."

All kinds of help will be available to people at the Wednesday event, Hegel said. Food and clothing will be organized for people to pick up, he said.

Project Community also is participating that day, with the help of classes from the University of Mary, in the National Point in Time survey, which attempts to count the homeless.

The previous event in August drew about 500 people, he said. He expects that amount or more to turn up on Wednesday as well, he said.

More information is available at <http://www.carrieskids.com>.