



April 30, 2013

North Boone Community Unit School District 200
Attn: Steve Baule, District Superintendent
6428 North Boone School Road
Poplar Grove, IL 61065

Dear North Boone School District Board of Directors,

This letter is respectfully submitted to you as a means of communicating a need that has been noticed in the district and a potential service to meet that need. Let me explain further.

Every January, at the mandate of HUD, a point in time (PIT) count of the homeless is conducted in every county in the nation. The Boone County PIT is conducted by a group of volunteers who are part of the Boone County Homeless Project (BCHP), an arm of the Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness. This year we found 177 homeless persons in Boone County with 97 of them being children and an astounding 60 people being literally homeless. The majority of the literally homeless were found in Capron. This is a disproportionately high number for such a small town. We knew we had to address this problem immediately as these individuals lacked the basic necessities in life including nutritious meals.

One of the ways we would like to address this issue is to open a Soup Kitchen that would serve a hot, nutritious evening meal at least twice per week to start. Our target population would be families with children. However, we know that one in six people in America struggle with food insecurity and our Soup Kitchen would be open to anyone needing a nutritious meal.

Our vision for this Soup Kitchen would be to use a building that already exists, has a fully functioning kitchen and is Boone County Health Department certified. This building would need to be easy to get to, have handicapped accessibility, contain safety features such as night time lighting in the parking areas and have easy access to eating areas and restrooms. It would appear that the Capron Elementary School would meet these requirements.

The BCHP has partnered with the Belvidere Boone County Food Pantry (BBCFP) and the Poplar Grove United Methodist Church (PGUM C) for assistance with this project. All food items needed for the Soup Kitchen will be supplied by BBCFP and all supervision/coordination will be provided by PGUMC. There will be a need for certified cooking staff (volunteer initially), serving staff, and cleanup crews for every meal. All of whom we will be responsible for obtaining.

The proposed days meals would be served are Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4:30-5:30 with cleanup immediately thereafter. The intention is to vacate the school by 6:00pm. The intended start date of this project would be the first Tuesday after the current school year ends. This gives us all time to get the pieces in place needed for such an endeavor and meet with Village of Capron officials to inform them of our plan.

The BCHP is of course flexible, according to the school's schedule. If we see the need in Capron as going above and beyond the two evenings, we would petition to the board to increase either the evenings served or add a Saturday afternoon. Of course, we remain open to the thoughts and concerns that the board may wish to express as the Soup Kitchen gets underway. We would consider this endeavor to be a partnership between three anchor institutions and a task force, further increasing the likelihood of its success.

One other component worth mentioning about this project is that we know the Soup Kitchen is not the solution to the problem of poverty and homelessness. These conditions will always exist among people; however, we are called to make an impact on the lives of those suffering in this way. The Soup Kitchen will serve as a place for people to not only receive a nutritious meal, but also receive information on how to connect to various social services and resources they may need. Additionally, while patrons are enjoying their meals, they begin to connect with others there and relationships are formed. It is through caring relationships that individuals are transformed and changed.

We thank you for the opportunity to present this proposal to you and look forward to seeing lives changed in Capron one meal at a time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Danice Loveridge".

Danice Loveridge, BGTS
President, Boone County Homeless Project Board of Directors
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Enclosures: Mission Possible