

Harvard Square Homeless Shelter – Case Statement

For more information, telephone (617) 876-3256.

Ms. Diane Stevens and Rev. Joanne Elise Engquist, Campaign Co-Chairs

Harvard Square Homeless Shelter is seeking donations and grant funding to support major kitchen renovations. Housed in University Lutheran Church's basement, the Shelter is a place of hospitality for twenty-four guests every night from mid-November through mid-April. This kitchen renovation project is necessitated by Harvard University's multiyear process of redesigning its dining services, resulting in an unfortunate consequence that surplus prepared food is decreasingly available for shelter guests. The Harvard Square Homeless Shelter must respond immediately by implementing major kitchen renovations so that meals can be prepared on site.

For more than twenty years, Harvard Square Homeless Shelter has been an asset to the community, striving to provide a dignified and safe space for the homeless to eat, sleep, and seek relief from the harsh street life during the coldest months of the year. Each winter since its founding in 1983, the Shelter has provided dinner, breakfast, and a place to sleep for two dozen homeless men and women each night, while offering meals to as many others as come to the doors each night. Additionally, it has provided thousands of Harvard students with opportunities to serve their community and to learn about poverty, economic justice, and homelessness.

The Shelter's operational costs are about one quarter of similarly sized shelters because of students. Fifteen students serve as directors; each year they set operational policy, raise funds, and train as many as two hundred student volunteers to staff the shelter every night, do laundry, and serve hot meals every morning and evening. In 1997, the Church, Harvard University, and the Cambridge community joined together in a capital campaign to finance substantial renovations. The shelter space is now bright and spacious; there are separate sleeping facilities for men and women, comfortable wooden bunk beds with handmade quilts, a lounge area, and computers with Internet access. Compared to other shelters around town, one guest said, "UniLu feels like a home."

In our efforts to provide such a "home," we again convened a three-part coalition of the Church, the University, and the Cambridge community to appeal for financial support for this second phase of Shelter renovations. Under the auspices of the independent, non-sectarian, non-profit Harvard Square Homeless Shelter Corporation, we seek additional support from a wide variety of charitable foundations.

For this project, we will raise \$200,000, which includes allowance for a twenty-percent construction contingency. These funds will be secured in time to build in the summer of 2005.

Specifically, the kitchen renovations include (with approximate associated costs):

• Demolition	\$ 10,500
• Finishes	\$ 12,000
• Equipment	\$ 65,000
• Mechanical	\$ 40,000
• Electrical	\$ 12,500
Construction Subtotal	\$140,000
• General requirements (office expense & permits)	\$ 20,000
• Construction Management Fee	Donated
• Fund raising	\$ 12,000
• Contingency for Construction Expenses	\$ 28,000
Grand Total	\$200,000

Since 1983, an all-volunteer staff has provided meals and a safe place to sleep for some of the most vulnerable residents of Cambridge. Although we regret the continued and increased need for these services, we remain committed to meeting these needs and are encouraged by the unique collaborations that make such possible. With your help, the student-run Harvard Square Homeless Shelter will continue to serve the homeless in our area.