

Interfaith Hospitality Network

IHN is a community effort in which Emmanuel participates. There is a website detailing the purpose of IHN and how a coalition of Athens Area Churches and Congregations of Faith, referred to as Host Congregations, provide shelter, meals, and support for homeless families in crisis. The URL is <http://www.ihnathens.org/>.

Each host congregation provides accommodations and meals for up to three families for one week every three months on a rotating schedule. The host provides sleeping quarters, a place where the guests can relax, socialize, do homework, and watch television. Guests arrive at 5PM on the beginning Sunday of the week, leave in the morning and return late in the afternoon each day through the next Sunday. Emmanuel provides the evening meal, a simple breakfast, and a bag lunch or leftovers. In the morning the guests return to the day center. From there children go to school, while adults care for young children, go to work, and/or look for jobs or housing.

Hands-on Opportunities:

Set up and Take down: Preparation of the bedrooms and living space for the guests at. First Sunday: A truck with 14 beds and containerized personal belongings arrives at 2:00pm at Emmanuel on Sunday of the first day prior to the guests (who arrive at 5pm).

Transportation: Transport guests M-F to and from Day Center, work, or school.

Meals: Two or three volunteers are needed each night, Sunday evening through Saturday night. Dinner is a hot meal prepared at volunteers' homes or in the church kitchen.

Weekend activities: Volunteers are needed for 2 hour increments to support other volunteers with family supervision, activities, or transportation. Duties may involve staying at the IHN Day Center on Sunday afternoon with another volunteer while the family catches up on laundry, or attends their own church.

Evening Hosts: Greet guests upon arrival to the church and possibly assist the dinner preparation team. Evening hosts support guests and may assist with children's needs as invited by the parents. Dinner is informal. After dinner, hosts may conduct children's activities, help with homework, or assist a guest with a particular need.

Overnight Host: Two hosts spend the night; roll-away beds are provided. Overnight hosts spend time with the parents and children, may help older children with homework, and are available in case of emergency. They usually wake the guests

around 6 a.m. and may help prepare a simple breakfast, usually cereal or food that is microwavable.