

February 24, 2021

Hello Everyone,

*First of all, I sincerely want to thank everyone for all the good work and efforts put in to protect those living on the edge over the past month. From January 28th, our first open night, until this past Saturday night/Sunday morning, (Feb 20th / 21st), we hosted 75 unique individuals for 362 overnight stays during, (hopefully), the coldest weather of the winter. Our Team genuinely protected vulnerable men and women that were in harm's way, not because we had to, but because it was the right thing to do. And, if you are like me, yes, it was hard work but I am sure that I got more out of the experience than I put into it.*

*The reason for this correspondence is to deliver some difficult news. If you read the word "Hopefully" in the above paragraph, that is because I am hoping and praying that there are no more bone-chilling nights ahead of us this winter. The reason is because, sometime last night, the CSS building experienced a water main break on the line that fed the sprinkler system. The worst area was in the Warehouse Section of the building which was under two feet of water. It also lost one of its walls. The VA Section and the CSS Section and the Emergency Overnight Shelter Section all sustained heavy damage. Unfortunately, the EOS is essentially out of business. We lost all of our sleeping mats, all of the bedding, the great majority of the extra clothing and provisions we had on site and much of the food. Additionally, the restoration company estimates that it will take approximately four weeks to refurbish to building as there was structural damage that needs to be repaired.*

*If there is good news here, it is that this episode did not happen four days ago, or earlier, when we were continually hosting 25 people each night ! Yes, I believe in miracles.*

*I wanted you to hear the news from me. I am still in shock at the enormity of the destruction I viewed today. It was a mess ! Our initial steps are to inspect the items still on-site and determine if any can be salvaged. Then we will be working with insurance to file claims for our losses. And, I won't lose sight that we **DO** live in NE Ohio and the weather can change on a dime. We will investigate what to do in the event of a cold snap.*

*In the meantime, please pray for warm temperatures to keep the new friends and acquaintances we have recently made, out of harm's way. Thanks again for all you all have done to support the Emergency Overnight Shelter for the unsheltered folks of Akron.*

David Churbock