



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri Opens a Temporary Winter Emergency Shelter Serving Homeless Families With a Blessing of the Facility on December 2nd, 9:00 a.m.**

**Springfield, Mo.** – Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri, Inc. (CCSOMO) is celebrating with a blessing ceremony of the recently opened winter shelter for homeless families and homeless women in need of medical respite at the former site of the Rancho Motel, located at 1720 E. Kearney Street, in Springfield. **Roman Catholic Bishop Edward M. Rice of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau will bless the shelter on Wednesday, December 2, at 9:00 a.m. All media are invited to attend.**

The motel is currently owned by O'Reilly Hospitality which partnered with CCSOMO to provide the facility at no cost to meet the sheltering needs of homeless families in our community. CCSOMO will operate the facility through April 2021 as the Rancho Emergency Shelter and Housing Program. Initial funding to pay for the operations, maintenance, and staffing of the program and shelter was provided by the Greene County CARES ACT Relief Fund which ends December 31, 2020. CCSOMO sought and was awarded additional funding under the Emergency Solutions Grant CARES Act to continue to operate the emergency shelter and provide housing services. CCSOMO Executive Director Maura Taylor serves on the Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness Board, Homeless COVID Task Force, and Crisis Cold Weather Shelter Committee, where the critical need to house homeless families was identified, partnerships were formed, and funding was found to make the shelter a reality.

“The Pandemic has put more families at risk of homelessness due to the loss of employment and/or reduction in work hours. The Rancho Emergency Shelter and Housing Program will provide homeless families with safe shelter and on-site services, which include case management, so households can move along the continuum from homelessness to permanent housing and self-sufficiency,” Taylor said.

The shelter will house in individual units up to 16 homeless families with children and homeless women in need of medical respite. “Up to four rooms have been designated for homeless women discharged from local hospitals following medical procedures who need a place to recuperate and heal,” states CCSOMO Director of Housing Programs Cindy VanBuskirk.

One Door, Springfield’s Coordinated Entry Point for the Homeless, will refer families to CCSOMO for placement at the Rancho Emergency Shelter. Families in need are urged to contact One Door at 417.225.7499.

CCSOMO currently has six families housed and receiving on-site services at the former motel site, which is conveniently located along a bus route for those working or seeking employment. Taylor states, “CCSOMO is blessed to have developed partnerships that resulted in an old motel being repurposed into a warm, safe place that provides meals, security, and services for homeless families and their children.”

CCSOMO can always use volunteers and donations, such as blankets, hygiene products, or monetary gifts. On Thanksgiving Day, CCSOMO had two volunteers who cooked a turkey with all the trimmings for the residents. If you would like to donate or volunteer, please contact CCSOMO at 417.720.4213 to learn more on how you can help or visit [www.ccsomo.org](http://www.ccsomo.org).

*Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri is a faith-based 501(c)(3) agency whose mission is to provide quality, compassionate social services that meet local needs. CCSOMO provides a wide variety of programs throughout the 39 southernmost counties of Missouri.*