



File Photo

Youth Services System Executive Director John Moses looks over one of the examination rooms located inside the organization's Winter Freeze Shelter.

Shelters Preparing As Temps Plunge

Forecast Calling For Subzero Conditions

By **ALAN OLSON**
Staff Writer

WHEELING — Though the start of the week brought the snow, the later half of the week will likely bring the cold, and the Youth Services System's Winter Freeze Shelter is preparing for the plummeting temperatures to drive people indoors.

According to the National Weather Service, low temperatures fell into the single digits last night and are forecast to drop below zero tonight.

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Lows aren't forecast to escape the teens for much of the next few days into Wednesday.

Betsy Bethel-McFarland, Director of Communications for YSS, said Thursday that her organization is preparing for an influx of people who normally don't utilize the shelter to do so when the weather reaches extremes.

"When the temperatures get this low, it's really dangerous outside. ... Thirty minutes with exposed skin at temperatures in the teens, you get frostbite," she said. "We're preparing for more people to use the shelter over next week when the temperatures are really cold."

"We hope that people who typically don't come to the shelter, and stay with us over the winter, will come in out of the cold and stay safe."

Bethel-McFarland said the shelter was preparing by scheduling a full staff, and ensuring that there was enough food and bedding for everyone. She added that the community had been exceptionally helpful with recent donations.

"That should not be a problem, because this community has been so generous this year, and all years," she said. "Last year and this year, we have seen a really big influx of in-kind and monetary donations. That really speaks volumes about the community that we live in."

Bethel-McFarland also said YSS plans to open the church at the Hazel-Atlas building during the afternoon and early evening hours, when other shelters are not open. House of Hagar and City of Wheeling Homeless Liaison Melissa Adams, she said, have been extremely helpful in this effort.

"After the Catholic Charities day shelter closes, but before the winter freeze shelter opens for the night, we're working on finding people, along with the House of Hagar, we're working to find people to make this happen," she said. "It's so there's a place for people to go in between times."

Donations to YSS are always accepted, Bethel-McFarland said, which help shelter families which would otherwise be spending nights sleeping in their cars.

"We get them every week, and we're able to put them in hotel rooms, thanks to donations from the community."

Elsewhere in the Ohio Valley, the Salvation Army in Wheeling provides shelter to men, and the Salvation Army in Bellaire provides shelter to anyone, according to published reports. The YWCA in Wheeling provides shelter to those suffering from domestic abuse situations, and Northwood provides shelter to those with a substance abuse disorder.