

Case Study: Women of Nations Eagle's Nest Shelter



Meeting Shelter Clients' Basic Needs 7 Days a Week

Operating an emergency shelter for people fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault and dating violence is a 24/7 operation. At Women of Nations Eagle's Nest Shelter in Saint Paul's West Seventh neighborhood, clients are coming and going, sometimes at off hours of the day. Clients range in age, ethnicities and sexual orientation, and stay just a few days or more than a month.

For however long they stay, clients receive free basic housing, meals and snacks, clothing, personal hygiene supplies and laundry facilities, as well as extensive wraparound services to help clients move to safe, permanent housing and to re-establish their lives. With 44-beds, Eagle's Nest Shelter is the second largest of its kind in Minnesota and is almost always at capacity.

Providing a Port in the Storm

With clients facing varying degrees of trauma, a warm bed and a warm meal are ports in the storm. Women of Nations relies on CKC Good Food to reliably provide lunch and dinner to its clients seven days a week. The shelter provides a cold breakfast daily from foods obtained through Second Harvest Heartland and donations.

Despite having a full commercial kitchen, Women of Nations chose to outsource its food service program to simplify its onsite operations and reduce its overhead after its last staff cook left.

Accommodating Special Dietary Needs 7 Days a Week

CKC Good Food provides meals that comply with the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program. During the week, lunch and dinner meals are delivered hot from CKC Good Food's central commissary in Eagan. On Fridays, the shelter also receives a quantity of cold deli sandwiches and salads and shelf stable meals to be served over the weekend.

"Because we have families of different backgrounds, we need to accommodate a variety of special dietary needs," said David Armitrano, Director of HR and Finance. "CKC Good Food can easily accommodate those needs, like no pork or no fish. We've never had a complaint about the food."

(more)

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Because of the transient nature of its clients, Women of Nations has its clients sign up for meals the day prior to service and then submits its final meal count to CKC Good Food. It orders about 25-30 meals for lunch and 30-35 for dinner, which is a manageable quantity for CKC Good Food to add to its prep process one day prior to service.

“CKC Good Food is really attentive to our needs,” Armitrano said. “We can call day or night, and whatever our concern, it’s always taken care of that day or the following day.”

On one occasion in the dead of winter, the shelter’s delivery didn’t come. Armitrano called CKC Good Food in a panic, knowing the shelter’s clients couldn’t go without a meal. The solution: CKC Good Food bought pizza for the shelter that evening. In contrast, the shelter’s previous food service company faced a similar situation and left the shelter hanging.

In its work with Women of Nations, CKC Good Food demonstrates its core values of diversity, helping others, collaboration, meaningful work and innovation.

About Women of Nations

Founded by four Native American women in 1982, Women of Nations’ services are based on are Native American values. In addition to the shelter and related support services, Women of Nations also conducts violence-prevention programming for Native American organizations and communities. The nonprofit is funded through the Office of Justice Program, foundations, private donors and through fundraisers like its annual Grand Slam WWE wrestling event, which draws celebrities and guests from around the world and raised more than \$90,000 in its first four years.