

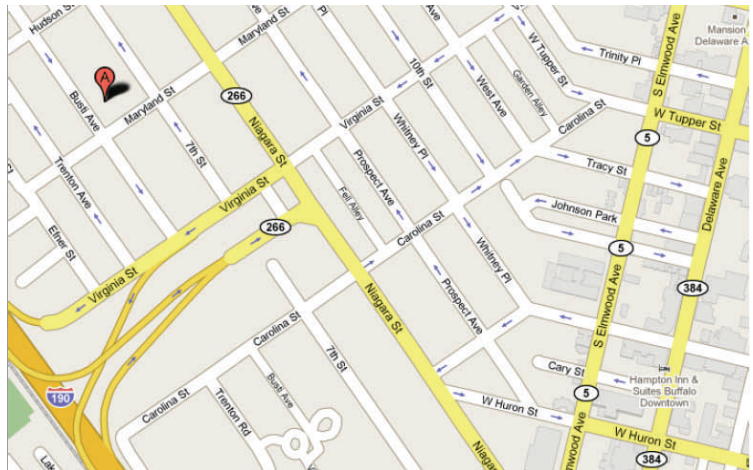
# **CODE BLUE**

**Between November 15 and March 15, when the temperature dips below 10°F or 0°F with the wind-chill, a CODE BLUE is called.**

**During the CODE BLUE a warming shelter is opened up that night at:**

**Father Belle Center  
104 Maryland St.  
Buffalo, NY 14201  
(Corner of Busti & Maryland)**

**From: 8 pm - 8 am**



**Come to the warming shelter during the CODE BLUE and you will get a hot meal, cot, and a safe, warm place to stay for the night.**

**Dial 2-1-1 or Crisis Services at 834-3131 for more information.**

# **CODE BLUE: BUFFALO'S COLD WEATHER EMERGENCY PLAN**

## **HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS**

On January 14, 2009, as night time temperatures in Buffalo dipped below zero, members of the WNY Coalition for the Homeless (WNYCH) took it upon themselves to open up several warming shelters for homeless individuals who could not find shelter from the extreme cold weather. That night and the next two nights the WNYCH formed outreach teams to sweep the area, find people still outside, and invite them to shelters to warm up. WNYCH members quickly realized that their efforts would have been much more effective had a plan been in place before the extreme cold weather hit and decided to develop a plan for the next winter. This plan, titled Code Blue, will bring together several local agencies who have agreed to donate time and resources to fill a huge emergency services gap for homeless individuals in the City of Buffalo.

## **KEY ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Western New York Coalition for the Homeless**

The Western New York Coalition for the Homeless (WNYCH) will be responsible for declaring that a Code Blue is in effect using criteria outlined in Attachment 1.

After a Code Blue is declared, the WNYCH will notify the Fr. Belle Center, the Homeless Alliance of Western New York, and all members of the WNYCH Outreach Committee (see Attachment 2). Communication will be established with the National Weather Service for verification of predicted weather conditions.

Volunteers trained by the Red Cross as well as AmeriCorps volunteers will staff the Fr. Belle Center *beginning at 8 pm and ending at 8 am on the night a Code Blue is called.*

WNYCH Outreach Committee members will go into the community the night a Code Blue is called to find and invite homeless individuals to the Fr. Belle Center to warm up.

As the Code Blue is deactivated, WNYCH Outreach Committee members will work with Crisis Services after hours and the Erie County Department of Social Services to attempt to secure proper shelter for individuals leaving the warming shelter and meet the criteria for such services.

### **Homeless Alliance of Western New York**

The Homeless Alliance of Western New York (HAWNY) will fax a Code Blue alert to the fire and police departments, the media, and all agencies involved with Code Blue.

## **Father Belle Center**

Commencing November 15, 2009 through March 15, 2010, the Fr. Belle Center will make available their building as the primary warming shelter location when a Code Blue is called. The space includes a kitchen area, showers, restrooms, and a gym for the purpose of providing emergency shelter accommodations for homeless men and women. Additional rooms in the building may be made available to be used for more private accommodations or for service providers/caseworkers to offer their services.

The Fr. Belle Center will work with the WNYCH, Red Cross, and AmeriCorps to coordinate the volunteers who will staff the warming shelter during the Code Blue.

## **Red Cross**

The Red Cross will train volunteers who will be staffing the warming shelter at the Fr. Belle Center in basic disaster services. It will also be providing cots to the Fr. Belle Center for homeless individuals to use.

## **Crisis Services and Lake Shore Behavioral Health**

Crisis Services and Lake Shore Behavioral Health will develop a “homeless sensitivity” training that will be added to the Red Cross’ basic disaster services training for Code Blue volunteers.

Crisis Services will also provide information to those calling about the warming shelter at the Fr. Belle Center.

## **Friends of Night People**

Friends of Night People will prepare food for the individuals accessing the warming shelter, which will be kept warm in the Fr. Belle Center’s kitchen.

## **2-1-1**

2-1-1 will provide information to those calling about the warming shelter at the Fr. Belle Center.

## **Attachment 1**

### **CRITERIA FOR THE DECLARATION OF A CODE BLUE**

*Based on information provided by Dr. Piver and Dr. Podolus of Sister's Hospital, a Code Blue may be called from November 15, 2009 through March 15, 2010 when:*

- *Temperatures are predicted to be below 10° F or 0° F when the wind chill is factored in,  
or*
- *During severe freezing rain, heavy snowfall, or*
- *During a National Weather Service declared blizzard/emergency.*