

North Congregational Church
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For Immediate Release

Providing Shelter, Enjoying Fellowship

Farmington Hills' North Congregational Church once again hosted South Oakland Shelter (SOS), their second year doing so.

SOS was established in 1985 by seven religious congregations in Oakland County. SOS works with a diverse range of people struggling with homelessness, including first-time homeless individuals and families, the chronically homeless, veterans, domestic violence victims, and people battling substance abuse, mental health issues, and frequently both. Partnering with 67 congregations, SOS operates a rotating shelter system to house and feed the homeless populations. Since its founding, SOS has cared for more than 12,208 homeless children and adults.

North Congregational Church hosted 36 SOS guests for a week. Volunteers from many organizations helped with setting up, preparing and serving meals, and transporting guests. North Congregational Church worked in partnership with volunteers from St. Gerald Catholic Church, the Indian Christian Association, and the Farmington Hills Muslim Community Mosque.

In addition to religious organizations, members of the Farmington High School athletic programs helped out by preparing a Friday night Mexican feast. The teenagers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to served, and enjoyed their conversations with the SOS guests

This was truly a community effort, a partnership of many organizations and many faiths.

A Community Event – Fellowship with Service

The interfaith team supporting SOS that week took the opportunity to organize something special for the guests and the volunteers. Dinners were normally served at North Congregational Church. On Tuesday, however, the Farmington Hills Islamic Cultural Association hosted a barbeque and event at their center on Twelve Mile Road.

Over 150 people attended, representing all the volunteer organizations, adults and children. Prior to dinner members of the Farmington Hills police department and a pick-up team of volunteers

faced off in a volleyball match – great fun, although the volunteer team could use a bit more practice. A delicious meal was prepared by La Shish of Dearborn.

Several speakers addressed the happy gathering, including Farmington Hills Mayor Ken Massey and State Representative Christine Greig. Both remarked on how gratifying it was to see members of the community of all faiths and backgrounds gather in fellowship to enjoy one another's company and serve in a good cause.

Said Rev. Dr. Mary Biedron, senior minister of North Congregational Church, "Hosting South Oakland Shelter has been a wonderful experience of serving the needs of our community and honoring God's call to offer hospitality and care to those in need. We hope that the many ecumenical and interfaith relationships started this week will continue to flourish and grow."

For more information, contact <http://www.southoaklandshelter.org> or www.NorthCongregationalChurch.org

Preparing North Congregational Church for SOS Guests



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Barbeque and Volleyball at the Farmington Hills Islamic Cultural Association



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Buffet...