

First Universalist Church of Southold Provides Safe Shelter for Homeless

The First Universalist Church of Southold (NY) is beginning our third year participating in Maureen's Haven, which offers a safe shelter for the East End's homeless population. Two Friday nights a month, we house up to twenty-eight men and women, offer a hot dinner and breakfast, bag lunch for the next day, and warm place to sleep. We have air mattresses, sleeping bags and pillows, which are set up dormitory style in our parish hall and downstairs in our RE rooms. Upwards of 35 members and friends participate during the course of any given Friday night -- through contributions of food and supplies, serving meals, staying overnight or cleaning up. On September 24, we held our second annual Chili Cookoff with proceeds split between Maureen's Haven and Katrina relief efforts.

To say that participating in Maureen's Haven has been transformational for the congregation understates the situation, but also puts the emphasis on the wrong place. We're doing the right thing, but the end result is that not only are men and women literally not freezing to death, we find that we are strengthening as a community.

Rev. Beth Marshall
First Universalist Church of Southold