



**Contact:**

Jacqué Breedlove-Harness

417-888-2020

[jharness@cpozarks.org](mailto:jharness@cpozarks.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Community Partnership Launches Merciful Nights Campaign to Support Homeless Services During COVID-19

**April 23, 2020 (SPRINGFIELD, Mo.)** – Community Partnership’s Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness (OAEH), the HUD Designated regional Continuum of Care, has established a COVID-19 Task Force to develop and implement a containment, quarantine and isolation plan for those who are homeless. Task force members include the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, City of Springfield, Greene County Office of Emergency Management, Mercy, CoxHealth, MSU Care, homeless service providers, and community advocates.

**Purpose:** Following CDC guidelines, the Task Force is working actively to address the immediate challenges facing our homeless community, including the provision of a Shelter in Place option for those who are unsheltered. To this end, we hope to provide 150 hotel rooms for 150 households who are hyper-vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.

**Community Challenge:** Community Partnership seeks to raise funds to provide alternate sheltering through hotels/motels for 150 unsheltered homeless households for 4 weeks.

**Business Challenge:** Hotel owners and operators are asked to offer rooms at a special rate of \$150 per week for up to 4 weeks through Community Partnership’s One Door program.

**Prevention through containment is optimal and is the primary goal to address current need:**

- Homelessness on its own increase’s vulnerability to infection of COVID-19 and increases the likelihood that the virus will result in longer hospital stays and longer recovery times for those released from hospital care.
- Members of the COVID-19 Task Force estimate that 175 individuals are currently unsheltered and accessing meal sites daily. Service providers and advocates are currently providing approximately 5,000 meals per week at frontline feeding sites and deliveries to alternate shelter

locations while practicing physical distancing and following health and safety recommendations from the CDC and Greene County Health Department.

- Of the 175 that are frequenting our frontline service system, more than half meet hyper-vulnerable criteria or elevated vulnerability criteria, meaning they are elderly, pregnant, and/or have a chronic health condition, such as COPD, asthma, respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes, and others.

### **Merciful Nights offers COVID-19 Containment**

- Nationally, homeless service planning councils are coordinating hotel and motel stays for the unsheltered homeless. This allows for households to shelter in place and stay connected with basic need services, as well as access to healthcare service.
- Through the Merciful Nights Campaign, Community Partnership is seeking additional funding to reach our goal of providing hotel rooms to 150 total households through May 2020.
- We are seeking hotel partners that will offer a weekly rate of \$150 per week per hotel unit.

To contribute to the Merciful Nights campaign and help provide locations for our local homeless population to shelter in place, visit [cpozarks.org/covid19](http://cpozarks.org/covid19) or mail a check to Community Partnership of the Ozarks at 330 N. Jefferson, Springfield, Mo. 65806.

###

### **ABOUT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OF THE OZARKS**

The mission of Community Partnership of the Ozarks is to facilitate and promote the building of resilient children, healthy families, and strong neighborhoods and communities through collaboration, programming and resource development. For more information on the Partnership's collaborative efforts and programs, visit [www.cpozarks.org](http://www.cpozarks.org).