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# The Intelligencer.

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## YSS Winter Freeze Shelter Opens Doors at New Location

By **ALAN OLSON**  
Staff Writer

WHEELING — The first few days of Youth Services Systems' Winter Freeze Shelter were somewhat slow. Yet with last Wednesday's sudden snowfall and subfreezing temperatures forecast for the end of this week, that may change quickly.

The shelter opened its doors to the public earlier this week, seeing a slow first night. Communications Manager Betsy Bethel-McFarland suspects the slow start was due to a lack of public awareness, but anticipates that the change in weather will see more people come to the facility in short order.

Forecasts have low temperatures in Wheeling in the 20s starting Christmas Eve and into the new year.

The Winter Freeze Shelter, currently in its 12th year of operation, was allowed by the

city of Wheeling to set up in the Hillcrest Behavioral Services building at the former Ohio Valley Medical Center. This greatly expanded their available space, Bethel-McFarland said, and social distancing has not been a challenge. This year, the shelter hosts about 20 beds.

"We're really blessed to have a larger space," she said. "We wouldn't have been able to do this without the space that the city granted us. It's great that people have their own bedrooms and showers, and we have plenty of space to spread out for meals."

"... Even if there were two people to a room, the rooms are big enough that the beds are far enough apart, the ceilings are high and there's good ventilation. As far as the common area goes, there's plenty of room to spread out."

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## WINTER

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Donations to the shelter from various organizations and missions throughout the city have been steadily coming in, including towels brought in through the Wheeling Lions Club, as well as other donations from the city, Vineyard Church, which provides meals, Christ United Methodist Church, and Wheeling Linen, which offers laundry services.

Bethel-McFarland said donations are still being accepted, and that current requests are for bottled water and less fluffy or bulky blankets, which are easier on Wheeling Linen's machines. An Amazon wishlist for the shelter remains available

at <https://tinyurl.com/FreezeWishList>.

The freeze shelter will remain open through Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, with monetary donations going to provide a few Christmas gifts for guests, and will stay open through March 15.





