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## **Blanchet House Announces Plans to Open Emergency Shelter for Women in Downtown Portland**

**Dec. 10, 2024** - Blanchet House is pleased to announce the future opening of Bethanie's Room, a nighttime emergency shelter for women. The up-to-75-bed shelter will occupy the main sanctuary of St. Stephens Episcopal Church, where Operation Nightwatch operates its evening community center. The new shelter will operate 365 nights a year to provide women, including trans-women, a safe space to sleep and stay.

Currently, there are no emergency nighttime shelters for women in downtown Portland without a waitlist, a terrifying gap in our social safety net that Blanchet House hopes to mend.

The shelter will be named in memory of Bethanie, a houseless woman who frequented Blanchet House's free cafe and tragically died from a hit-and-run early this year. Bethanie's Room will honor her memory and aim to prevent other women from suffering and facing similar fates.

Bed reservations will be made by partner agencies and through a dedicated referral line for outreach teams and organizations who care for unsheltered women at night. Women in need of shelter will be able to come to Blanchet House for a referral and a free cab ride to Bethanie's Room. Blanchet House will work with partner agencies to connect Bethanie's Room guests to supportive services that will help them transition to more stable, permanent housing.

"We feel morally compelled to open Bethanie's Room to ensure no woman has to sleep on the streets," said Scott Kerman, Executive Director of Blanchet House. "This shelter is a crucial step in addressing the homelessness crisis and providing women with a safe place to be at night, a time which can be incredibly dangerous for them."

The estimated cost will be \$1 million in the first year for renovations to meet safety standards, the hiring and training of staff, and the procurement of supplies and equipment. Blanchet House will seek funding from the City of Portland, individuals, foundations, and businesses. If preparations and requirements proceed smoothly, Blanchet House hopes to open the doors to Bethanie's Room in Spring 2025. To financially support Bethany's Room, contact Steve Cook at [scook@blanchethouse.org](mailto:scook@blanchethouse.org).



**About Blanchet House**

Blanchet House is a nonprofit organization in Portland, OR offering food, clothing, and life-saving transitional residential programs.

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