

March 11, 2025



BOISE RESCUE MISSION
MINISTRIES

CEO Rev. Bill Roscoe's Response to BoiseDev's Article "Bills Would Ban Sleeping Outside in Idaho's Largest Cities, Block Interfaith Sanctuary Move"

I read the article in the paper about the two pieces of legislation related to camping and siting of homeless shelters, and I want to clarify 2 things:

The article states, "*Boise Rescue Mission also is in the process of opening its [Next Step shelter in a former nursing home on the Boise Bench](#), which is surrounded by residential properties. Boise Rescue Mission first proposed the project, which will have 58 transitional living apartments of various sizes, in 2021 and it has been under construction since.*"

In the first sentence they refer to our Next Step Curtis Transitional Living Facility a "shelter", and later rightly state, "58 transitional living apartments." This building opened on April 29, 2024, and it is certainly not a "homeless shelter".

In the article related to the camping legislation, they write: "*The city's definition of "available" takes into account if someone is barred from staying at the faith-based Boise Rescue Mission shelter, which has more capacity, because it has rules on how long someone can stay if they choose not to participate in their programming or if they have physical disabilities that a shelter cannot accommodate.*"

Interfaith Sanctuary is the only shelter in Boise where families with children can stay together instead of splitting up men and women, leaving single dads with children or families with boys older than twelve with fewer options."

The vast majority of families experiencing homelessness are single women with children, thus we focus on that group. However, we do provide for intact families and single men with children, up to providing a voucher for a motel room when necessary. Recently, I heard Jody Peterson from the Sanctuary say that their shelter is only accepting adults at this time. The Rescue Mission, however, can accept men, women and children.

The article also mentions the fact that we are "faith based" implying that some religious activity is required of guests, and that Sanctuary is the "only low barrier shelter" in Boise.

The implication that we have capacity because we kick people out is ludicrous. We have capacity because we help people recover from homelessness and they move out to independent living, opening up space for the next person. Every year for the past ten or so years we have helped between 250-500 people leave the shelter for independent living. We are moving people out of homelessness, not providing a permanent bed to accommodate homelessness.

As I have stated many times, Boise Rescue Mission IS a low barrier shelter; we have intoxicated people sleeping in our shelters much of the time; *but we are not a "NO" barrier shelter*, in that Guests must be orderly, respectful of others and comply with the very simple rules of conduct on the property.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill".

Rev. Bill Roscoe,
President/CEO
Boise Rescue Mission Ministries

Contact Us: info@BoiseRM.org | (208) 343-2389 | PO Box 1494, Boise, ID 83701 | BoiseRM.org