

**ROOM IN THE INN (<http://www.roomintheinn.org/>)**  
**Important Instructions and Answers to FAQs**

**GENERAL**

St. B's volunteers host 12 carefully screened homeless guests every Saturday evening through early Sunday morning from November 1 through March 31. Various helpers are needed to:

- provide **transportation** from the Campus for Human Development on Saturday evening and back again on Sunday morning
- team up with other volunteers to purchase and prepare a hot **dinner and sack lunches**
- **distribute JeSU items**
- **host** the guests overnight by sleeping at St. B's
- provide **breakfast** foods for the overnight hosts to serve (do not have to be present to serve)
- do 3-4 loads of **laundry** (St. B's linens and towels) each week.

**Volunteers may choose to help with one or all of these tasks.** Males and females are equally encouraged to volunteer with each of the tasks.

<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Suggested Timeline</b>
5:45 pm	Volunteers arrive to set up and cook
6:10 pm	Drivers depart for RITI
7:00 pm	Guests arrive and set up bedding in gym
7:10 pm	Blessing over dinner, dinner is served, welcome, and rules discussed, etc
8:15 pm	Cleanup is complete, JESU items have been distributed
8:30 pm	Lights out (or whenever seems right)
10:00 pm	Parish Hall closes so that overnight volunteers can get some sleep
<b>Sunday</b>	(note: schedule may need to change if a guest needs to be downtown earlier)
5:45 am	Overnight volunteers awaken and <b>START THE COFFEE</b>
6:00 am	Awaken guests and solicit assistance with gym cleanup
6:10 am	Breakfast available
6:30 am	Cleanup and load vans for return trip to downtown
6:50 am	Arrival at RITI in time for guests to draw tickets for next night

The people to whom we offer shelter are our guests. We treat them with courtesy and respect. Remember, most have been out in the weather all day, and have been shunned by most people they meet. Although we treat our guests with dignity, we can expect them to observe a few rules:

- (1) There is to be **no smoking** in any church building (this applies to the volunteers as well as guests) for safety reasons. Invite smokers to use the front porch.
- (2) The guests sleep in the gym. Volunteers may sleep in the gym, but most prefer to sleep in the parish hall, allowing them to wake up a little early to set up breakfast.
- (3) Shower facilities may be used and are to be left clean. **It is the responsibility of the overnight volunteers to see that the bathrooms are properly cleaned.**
- (4) Guests have been instructed not to panhandle, but sometimes it happens. **Please do not give money to guests.** It is far more kind, and far more effective stewardship, to make note of the request and make the Room In The Inn staff aware of the reported need. Donations may be made to Room In The Inn, and you can be assured that the money will be used appropriately.
- (5) The overnight hosts are in charge and may enforce any other rules they consider appropriate (e.g. a time for lights out).

**ANSWERS TO THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS**

**SIGNUP PROCEDURE:** Those willing to help should please sign up using the sign-up sheet in the lobby outside St. B's Parish Hall, or use StBs [signup genius site](#). Or call/email Matt Poag or Jim Pichert (contact info below). In general, they will identify one volunteer as the "lead" volunteer for each week, mostly to simplify communications. If you sign up but are not contacted, call one of the other volunteers for the night, or contact Matt or Jim. Although the basic duties of preparing dinner, driving, staying overnight, providing breakfast and doing laundry may be handled by different individuals, it is important to know who the other volunteers are.

**TIMES:** Drivers, dinner hosts, and overnight hosts should meet at the church at approximately 5:45 PM on the Saturday evening(s) for which they've volunteered. Drivers and overnight hosts should prepare cots, linens and donated clothing for guests' arrival and help with dinner setup as needed before they depart for the Campus for Human Development at 705 Drexel Avenue near the downtown arena (<http://www.roomintheinn.org/map>). Dinner hosts are also expected to finish cleaning up the kitchen before they leave, which is usually no later than 8:30 pm. The general timeline goes something like this:

### **Saturday**

5:45 pm      Volunteers arrive to set up and cook  
6:10 pm      Drivers depart for RITI  
7:00 pm      Guests arrive and set up bedding in gym  
7:10 pm      Blessing over dinner, dinner is served, welcome and rules discussed, etc  
8:15 pm      JESU items distributed, complete cleanup  
8:30 pm      Lights out (or whenever seems right)  
10:00 pm     Parish Hall closes so that overnight volunteers can get some sleep

### **Sunday**

(note: schedule may need to change if a guest needs to be downtown earlier)  
5:45 am      Overnight volunteers awaken and **START THE COFFEE**  
6:00 am      Awaken guests and solicit assistance with gym cleanup  
6:10 am      Breakfast available  
6:30 am      Cleanup and load vans for return trip to downtown  
6:50 am      Arrival at RITI in time for guests to draw tickets for next night

**KEYS:** The lead volunteer will be issued a set of keys for the Parish Hall, gym, RITI supply room (first door to the left as you enter the gym, kitchen (this key also opens the janitor closet across from the kitchen) and the supply area in the gym.

**PICK-UP:** Three cars or 2 vans will be needed to pick up 12 guests. **The large white church van is often available, but you must be "cleared for takeoff" well beforehand to use it** (for insurance issues and training). Only a handful of parishioners are currently qualified to drive it. Both men and women have served as drivers. All our guests care about is arriving safely! Leave no later than ~6:20 PM from the church and pick up guests at the Room in the Inn facility on Drexel Avenue just off 8th Avenue South. Directions are at the end of this handout.

**TWO BLANKETS PER GUEST: Drivers will be offered one blanket for each guest. Due to our drafty gym, insist (politely) on getting 2 blankets per person. Everyone will be happier.** You'll also be given a form to be completed when the guests are returned.

**UNLOAD:** Guests should put their belongings in the gym and set up cots. Cots, sheets, pillow cases and pillows are in the RITI room supply cabinets (first room on the left as you enter Celebration Hall (former gym). Distribute **ONE OF EACH** to those who want them. The guests should also take the blankets brought from downtown, which must be returned to the downtown center in the morning.

**SUPPER:** A basic meal, hot if possible, should be served at approximately 7-7:30 PM, soon after the guests arrive. Drivers and overnight volunteers should let the cooks know if they intend to eat, and should help with supper if necessary. Keep in mind that some guests are probably following a very irregular diet, and spicy food may cause problems. The best compromise is to provide food with mild seasoning, but have hot sauces (Tobasco and its ilk) available for guests to add to suit their individual tastes. Help other volunteers get out of the kitchen, mix in, have dinner with the guests and engage in conversation. Volunteers may use the kitchen facilities and supplies including both washable and disposable plates, cups, forks, knives and coffee), but everything should be cleaned up and put away (No dishes left to air-dry please--put them away or run the dishwasher so hosts can put clean dishes and silverware away). Additional supplies may be found in the storage area to the right of the stage in the Parish Hall.

**HINT: Serve decaffeinated beverages;** you will help everyone have a restful night. Giving thanks before the meal is essential. One or more meal volunteers may wish to do the following to coordinate things:

1. create a menu outline; many groups use an online sign-up source to arrange meal plans.
2. count up the people attending = generally 12 guests, 2 hosts, plus all the dinner volunteers, so ask those contributing to keep that number (~20+ persons) in mind as they prepare
3. talk/email among yourselves: ask those contributing to the meal to choose from the menu outline or volunteer a suitable substitute; circulate the final list to confirm that all are agreed
4. prepare the food at home and bring it or, if you wish, prepare it at the church (limited ovens, but a great kitchen). NOTE: the ovens take a LONG time to heat to cooking temperature.
5. use the timeline in the FAQs as a guide for meal timing.
6. keep it simple, smile a lot, and interact with the guests as though you were having an open house event.

**Lunches:** provide 12 (often sandwich with sides of snack chips of some kind, piece or lunch-size fruit, and perhaps a dessert-type item. Sandwich bags, brown lunch bags, and grocery sacks are available in the box to the left of the freezer. For RITI meal ideas, see <https://mail.yahoo.com/d/folders/1/messages/AMwAgnAuo8uoW8ewTgvbKHd1BXU?.src=ym>

**FINANCES:** Who pays for the dinner, lunches and breakfast? Many volunteers provide the resources for the meals. When money is an issue, we look for other alternatives. Because there may have been leftovers after other St. B's events, there are often, but not always, items available for RITI use in the St. B's freezer. St. B's office staff may know, so call to see what may be available. Several groups take advantage of this offer each season, and it has worked out very well. If you go this route, just be sure to get the food out of the freezer and into the refrigerator (or to your home) on the prior Thursday so it has time to thaw. If you leave it at the church, mark everything clearly as being "For RITI on Saturday (with date)." And if you need to cook anything at the church rather than bring it from home, you will want to estimate cooking times and plan your arrival accordingly (and be sure to get a key from Matt or Jim or one of the other coordinators to let yourself in). If the leftover scenario doesn't work out, contribute what you wish, tell Jim Pichert what you spent over that, and he'll gladly reimburse you.

**St. B's HOSTS:** During the meal one of the hosts will take the opportunity to give a genuine welcome and explain our few rules (no smoking indoors, hosts are there to promote safety and good fellowship). It's also a good idea to announce wake-up times and the morning schedule. Then we take the opportunity to explain simply and lovingly that we offer our hospitality because Jesus first loved us, we've come to know him, and that we'd be honored to discuss Him further with anyone who'd like to do so. Try to account for all linens and towels - they belong to St. B's, but have a tendency to sprout legs. Please put the soiled laundry in two large containers with lids, and place the containers next to the gym door to be picked up by the laundry volunteer. Prior to the first service, **please make all restrooms, kitchen, hallways, "Celebration Hall," and Wallace Hall swept, cleaned as needed,** and presentable. Please also **take full garbage bags to the dumpster** near where we park the vans, and **put fresh trash bags in the indoor containers** (you may find some black trash bags in the box to the left of the freezer).

**BREAKFAST:** Please bring enough for 14-15 persons: milk and juice to drink; cold cereals, fruit, pastries, doughnuts, and/or muffins are popular. A gallon jug of milk and a gallon of juice is generally sufficient. Dry items do NOT need to be individually wrapped; we serve family style. St. B's provides coffee, tea, and paper products. Breakfast will be served at approximately 6:05-6:30 AM, so it is best to keep it simple. **Those providing breakfast foods do not need to serve breakfast** (but are welcome to do so if you wish). If you prefer, you may simply drop off the food at the church ahead of time (any time Wednesday through Saturday evening) in bottles and bags clearly marked "Room In The Inn" (and the date for their use) so the overnight volunteers know which foods are for our guests. Check with the church office to see whether the church will be open on Saturday before 6 pm when RITI volunteers arrive.

**FOOD SUPPLIES:** Feel free to use leftover supplies in the refrigerator or the kitchen cupboards marked "Room In The Inn." **If your meal yields leftovers, take them home with you if they won't keep. If you think they'll keep, plainly mark them for Room In The Inn, DATE them, and let Matt Poag or Jim Pichert know their availability for others to use!**

**LAUNDRY:** Laundry volunteers, please return clean and folded laundry to the gym (outside the first door on the left, marked RITI) before the following Saturday night. Laundry volunteers should feel free to discard any items that have clearly outlived their usefulness.

**CLOTHES:** If clothing in addition to JeSU items has been donated, it will be in a box(es) in or on top of the RITI storage room supply cabinets. Put them out in the gym. The guests are welcome to pick out things they need, but within reason. For example, if a person seems to have a good coat, and he or she wants to take another one, suggest they leave one for someone who doesn't have any. Use your judgment. Please leave the clothing in some semblance of order.

**CONVERSATION:** Treat our guests as you would wish to be treated. Begin conversations by introducing yourself with your first name and ask for theirs. Some will be suspicious if you seem to want a last name. Some will not want to talk, and that wish should be respected. Others will open up almost immediately. **Ask about the classes they take at the Campus. Invite them to discuss spiritual matters.** Homeless folks have seen and heard it all, and many are far more spiritually-minded than the rest of us. The aim is to love our guests and to let them know that our hospitality is a reflection of our love for Christ.

**TV:** We may or may not have a TV connected to a DVD available in the RITI storage room. Use discretion if a guest wants to play a DVD. You may choose to bring and play a DVD of your choosing. Instructions are available in the TV cabinet.

**SHOWERS:** Guests are welcome (and encouraged) to use the showers, but should leave them clean. Supplies of soap and shampoo are in one of the supply cabinets. Ask that used towels be placed in a laundry basket in the gym, **not left on restroom floors.** **OVERNIGHT HOSTS** should check the bathrooms before departing to assure readiness for worshippers.

**LIGHTS OUT:** Some guests just want to go to sleep as soon as possible. Others like to read, converse, or watch TV. Just let the guests know that you are turning out the lights at 8:30-9:00 pm (or earlier if you and they wish) so they can get their things in order before it gets too dark. The light switch is in the control box on the wall immediately to the right as you go into the gym. You can decide when to turn out the lights in the parish hall. The volunteers who stay overnight are in charge. Just let the guests know your preferences.

**TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERS WHO STAY OVERNIGHT:** Block open the upstairs mens room door and leave the restroom light on. The door tends to close noisily and many guests will use the restrooms during the night. The door to the ladies restroom should NOT be blocked open. **Bring a flashlight and an alarm clock.** To get as good a rest as possible, bring your own pillow and bedding. Leave valuables at home or keep them on your person overnight (theft is remarkably rare, but has occurred). Some regular overnight volunteers bring their inflatable or foam mattresses. **Since we often host female guests, St. B's women are just as needed to volunteer to stay overnight as men.**

**TEMPERATURE:** there's a thermostat on the divider wall across the hallway and opposite the Children's ministry office door. Other thermostats are in the boiler room, so may not be accessible. We've programmed them for 68 degrees, but drafts and high ceiling may make the gym feel cooler. **DRIVERS: FOR THIS REASON, REMEMBER TO ASK FOR TWO (2) BLANKETS PER GUEST WHEN YOU PICK UP.** Separate thermostats control heating and cooling. If it's too warm in the parish hall, feel free to open a window in the parish hall near where you're sleeping.

**WAKE-UP:** Turning on gym lights usually works, and 6:00 AM is a good time. This gives guests time to eat, use the restroom and get back downtown just before 7:00 AM. Some guests need to be back downtown a little earlier to catch a bus or a ride to a job. Experience suggests that it's best if one of the overnight hosts addresses the group during dinner to learn whether anyone needs to be back downtown at a specific time. Plans can be adjusted accordingly.

**SNACKS:** Most mealtime volunteers prepare sack lunches or snacks for the guests to take with them. This is not required, and not everyone does it. If you wish, leftover breakfast items may be taken to the Room in the Inn building for distribution by the staff.

**CLEANUP:** Before departing, bathrooms **must** be checked carefully and cleaned thoroughly. If a mess appears to include body fluids (blood, saliva, etc.), clean up wearing rubber gloves and use disinfectant cleaner, which can be found in the closet across from the kitchen (Key is on the RITI key ring) and in one of the Room in the Inn cabinets. The Parish Hall should be ready for classes. **Please put garbage bags in the dumpster on the south side of the sanctuary and put**

**new bags in the garbage cans.** Take leftover foods with you unless they can be stored and used another time or given to Sunday School classes. Stored foods should be marked “RITI,” dated and refrigerated, frozen or placed in the cupboard. Let [jpichert@yahoo.com](mailto:jpichert@yahoo.com) or [poagjam@gmail.com](mailto:poagjam@gmail.com) know that these foods are available.

**FIRST AID:** There are first aid kits over the sink in the kitchen (back right as you enter the kitchen from the hallway). It’s unusual to need them, but sometimes folks will come in with scrapes and ask for salve and/or a bandage or band-aids. If you choose to give away an entire tube or box of anything, **please be responsible to replace it**, or at least let the RITI coordinator know so that materials are available when the next need arises.

**FIRE ALARM:** The fire alarm system is not keyed in to the fire station. If it goes off, alert the guests to leave the building. **Safety first.** Call the fire station. Fire extinguishers are located throughout St. B’s, including the kitchen. If you suspect a false alarm, make a quick inspection, taking along a fire extinguisher. Alarms are located near EVERY exit, and any one or more may be tripped. The alarm may only be turned off by following the instructions on the alarm switchbox inside the boiler room (near women’s lower floor restroom), just to the right as you go in the door. Call Matt Poag or Jim Pichert if you have trouble with the alarm.

### **JESU Clothing Ministry: 10 Easy Steps**

1. Arrive at St. B’s at 7:00 p.m. on your Saturday night.
2. Get a rolling cart from the kitchen and roll it to the RITI supply cabinet.
3. Unlock the appropriate cabinet.
  - JESU clothing is in the last cabinet (look for the JESU sign).
  - The cabinet may be open, but if not, the key is located in a magnetic key hider on the outside left side wall of the cabinet, near the cabinet bottom.
4. Retrieve from the cabinet the plastic bins containing socks, undershirts, and underpants and the jeans. Items are organized in bins by size and type, except for jeans.
  - Place the bins on the rolling cart from the kitchen. You can hang the jeans from the cart handles or fold and place on one of the cart shelves.
5. Roll the cart with the clothing to the hallway outside the parish hall.
  - Sometimes the RITI dinner team will set up dinner in the gym. If this is the case, just roll the cart near the eating area.
6. Announce to the RITI guests that new socks and underwear and a limited selection of jeans are available for any who would like them. Invite the guests to stop by the cart after they have eaten.
7. As homeless guests leave from dinner, offer them one pair of socks and underpants, and one undershirt.
  - You’ll need to ask sizes. If you run out of a requested size, simply offer the closest size. If they don’t want it, fine.
  - Display the jeans (if any). Tell the guests they are welcome to a pair of jeans if there is a pair that will fit.
8. Afterwards, return the bins and the clothing to the cabinet.
9. Lock the cabinet, place the key in the magnetic key hider and return the magnetic key holder to its spot on the left side outer cabinet wall.
10. Celebrate! You have been a blessing to those less fortunate!

**PROBLEMS:** If a medical emergency arises, call an ambulance. If it is not an emergency, a sick guest should be taken to General Hospital on the Meharry Campus off DB Todd Boulevard (19<sup>th</sup> Avenue North) in North Nashville. It is best not to give guests medications other than aspirin or Tylenol. If a guest is violent, or uncooperative enough to make violence seem a possibility, call the police and the Room in the Inn emergency number, 251-7064 (Violence is *extremely* rare, but has occasionally been threatened over the years St. B's has participated in this program. Any unlawful behavior or incident must be reported to police. All guests are pre-screened by Room in the Inn staff. Uncooperative or un-sober persons stay downtown).

**QUESTIONS:** If you have questions, please call or text Matt Poag or Jim Pichert (Jim is at 615-483-2123) or send an email to [poagjam@gmail.com](mailto:poagjam@gmail.com) or [jpichert@yahoo.com](mailto:jpichert@yahoo.com).

**OTHER IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:**

Room In The Inn (RITI):	615-251-7019
EMERGENCY	911
RITI Emergency Number:	615-251-7064
Police (non emergency):	615-862-8600
General Hospital:	615-862-4000
Fire Department:	615-862-8585

**RITI website:** <http://www.roomintheinn.org> -- see how RITI fits into the comprehensive services of the Campus for Human Development

**DIRECTIONS TO ROOM IN THE INN**

Room In The Inn is located on Drexel Avenue just off Eighth Avenue South. From the church:

1. Exit St. B's parking lot and go north on Belmont Park Terrace to the stop sign at Harding Place. Turn right (east) on Harding Place and proceed to Granny White Pike (first stoplight).
2. Turn left (north) on Granny White towards downtown. Granny White turns into 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
3. Turn right on South Avenue or Division and proceed to 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Turn left on 8<sup>th</sup>.
4. Immediately after you travel under the railroad overpass on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, proceed a little further to Drexel Avenue and turn right. Turn right again at the Room In The Inn entrance. Proceed to the top of the U-shaped driveway.
5. Tell the workers inside that you are from "St. Barth's" and that you need 24 blankets--2 per guest. **That's important in our gym where much of the heat goes up to the high ceiling.**
6. The volunteers will take care of the rest. Kindly wait for them to check off everyone who gets into your vehicles. Exit and retrace your steps to St. B's.

Thank you for your willingness to volunteer. God bless you.