

Thank you members of the DuPage County Board, for your commitment to insure the quality of life here in DuPage County.

As Chairman Cronin said, I am Carol Simler President & CEO of DuPagePads. This morning, I stand together with the other providers of shelter and support for the men, women and children who are homeless in our county. Karen Ayala, Executive Director, DuPage County Health Department; Amy Palumbo, Director of Community Services, Catholic Charities; Lisa Horne, Director of Safer Living, Family Shelter Services; Christine Lewis, Executive Director, Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans; Harley Jones, CEO, 360 Youth Services; and Mary Keating, Director of DuPage County Community Services. Today we stand together to renew our commitment to end homelessness here in DuPage County.

On December 21st on the winter solstice, the longest night of the year, we will take pause to remember the 6 individuals who were members of our community who died while experiencing homelessness.

This year we will gather with volunteers and clients on December 21st at all three of the DuPagePads overnight shelter sites to remember those who have died this year without a permanent home. Our goal is to commemorate the lives of those who died while being homeless, who died from illnesses or conditions directly related to their homelessness. For many, this service will be the only commemoration of their lives.

We are aware of the impact homelessness has on our social fabric and the cost to our municipal budgets. People who are homeless suffer from a high incidence of physical disease, mental illness, and trauma with a mortality rate at least 3.5 times higher than the general public.

Today and every day in this county, we invite you and members of our community to help us engage unsheltered individuals in our community to provide support and needed services by calling our toll-free number 866.682.3846 x2275 listed on the flyer at your place.

When you call this number, we will ask for information about the individual and then send members of our Street Outreach team to engage these individuals with the goal of moving them to a better place.

In this season of generosity and sharing, let us call to mind our DuPage County citizens who are less prosperous, living in poverty, and without homes; particularly during these winter months that pose extreme hardships and challenges.

Homelessness is truly a sign in our community today that forces each one of us to ask the hard question - what is ours to do? Homelessness isn't just our problem, homelessness is a community problem and it is everyone's problem.

Join us on December 21st, by remembering the 6 individuals who have died homeless as we honor their lives by working to provide solutions to end homelessness in our county. Stand with us that night - because I believe and I think you will concur that every life matters in our county.

Thank you!