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National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day

DuPage County Recognizes December 21st as Day to Remember 6 Community Members

(Wheaton, IL) December 21st marks the first day of winter and the longest night of the year. On this day, DuPage community members will take time to remember the 6 members of our community who died while experiencing homelessness.

This week, DuPage County Board members voted to designate December 21st as **National Homeless Person's Memorial Day**. Service providers present at the meeting where the proclamation was read included:

- Carol Simler, President & CEO, DuPagePads
- 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
- Mary Keating, Director of DuPage County Community Services, Leader of DuPage County Continuum of Care

On Thursday, December 21st at all three of DuPagePads Interim (Overnight) Housing shelter sites, volunteers and clients will gather to remember those who have died from illness or conditions directly related to homelessness. "For many, this service will be the only commemoration of their lives," Simler says.

Homeless people suffer from a high prevalence of physical disease, mental illness, and a high occurrence of trauma with a **mortality rate at least 3.5 times higher than the general public**.

"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**," Simler says, "Homelessness isn't just our problem, **homelessness is a community problem** and it is everyone's problem."

Community members can take action if they see someone unsheltered by calling DuPagePads toll-free Street Outreach hotline at 866.682.3846, ext. 2275. DuPagePads Street Outreach team responds to these calls to engage those who are experiencing homelessness.

Simler shares, "**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.**"

The full resolution and Simler's address to County Board members can be found on DuPagePads website blog.

**When someone believes in you,
everything can change.**

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With 33 years of service, DuPagePads is the largest provider of services to those who are homeless in DuPage County. DuPagePads' solution to ending homelessness is housing, coupled with support services and employment to restore hope and transform lives. The administration office is located at 601 West Liberty, Wheaton, IL 60187. Additional information can be obtained by contacting DuPagePads at 630.682.3846 or at www.dupagepads.org.



Dan Cronin (right), DuPage County Board Chairman, declares Proclamation Honoring National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, with (from left) Karen Ayala, DuPage County Health Department; Mary Keating, DuPage County Community Services; Amy Palumbo, Catholic Charities; Lisa Horne, Family Shelter Services; Christine Lewis, Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans; Harley Jones, 360 Youth Services; Carol Simler, DuPagePads.



Carol Simler, DuPagePads President & CEO addresses the DuPage County Board regarding Winter Solstice Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, with Dan Cronin, DuPage County Board Chairman.

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