

On Tue, Nov 21, 2023 at 9:03 AM Beth Mouch <[Beth](#)> wrote:

Good Morning. Yesterday we received an email stating that we would know within an hour the status of the electrical issues at the Barrier. It's 8:00 AM on Tuesday and still have not heard back from anyone. This presents a great issue to us. We cannot plan a Thanksgiving meal for the people at the Barrier because we cannot carry the food we want to cook up the stairs. The freight elevator has been out for almost 2 ½ weeks so we have not been able to order anything. The electricity has been out in the kitchen for 4 days.

I think you can understand that it is impossible to run a kitchen under these conditions. We are trying to do our best to provide sandwiches at lunch and dinner and will keep doing this as long as necessary. This morning, the Mayor said on TV that the City is moving homeless persons into housing and giving them "rap around services that we know that they need".

If we really want the Low Barrier Shelter to succeed, it appears that issues at the Shelter need to be dealt with in a timely manner. Our "cooks" at the shelter are not just cooks we hired to provide daily meals. We hired one of the highest ranked caterers in our area to oversee and provide healthy nutritional meals to those who probably have not received a healthy meal in quite a while. Her cooks are supervised by a graduate from the Culinary Insititute of America. In addition to preparing healthy meals, he understands and knows how kitchen equipment works. I found it very insulting that he was accused of negligent use of the stove/oven.

One of our workers relayed to me that he has seen guests shooting up inside the Barrier. He has also seen people having intercourse inside the shelter. I have written several notes regarding the trash piled up in the hall, the overflowing dumpster, human and animal feces outside near the building. There are broken bicycles piled up on the property. Some of these issues are addressed after I ask Alison to look into them. Some of these issues do not directly affect the kitchen. However, ALL of these issues do directly and indirectly affect the well-being of the guests. We cannot expect people to improve physically, mentally, and emotionally when they live in unsanitary, sometimes septic conditions. If a hospital operated like the LBS, it would be closed.

The citizens of New Orleans complain about the homeless on the streets. We CAN provide better services for them, but we can't do it under these conditions. I think two issues stand out: 1) financial reorganization; 2) initial and on-going training for staff. Working at the Shelter is not an easy job. It is difficult to stay "up" on things when the environment in which one works is deplorable. We cannot expect staff to be professional when their surroundings are far from professional. Just ask yourself if you would work in these conditions?

Thank you for your time. Sr. Beth