

# Cloverdale's emergency weather shelter sees record turnout

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*Cloverdale Reporter*

Cloverdale's sole emergency weather shelter has been open during the rough weather the community has faced over the past few weeks.

Operated out of Pacific Community Church, which also organizes the Cloverdale Community Kitchen and Cloverdale Christmas Hamper services, the shelter opens during times of extreme cold, rain or snow.

Extreme weather response spaces are typically available from Nov. 1 until March 31 when a community is issued with an extreme weather alert. Typically, in the Metro Vancouver area, the shelters are open when the sustained overnight

temperature is predicted to be between 0 and 2 degrees for two nights in a row, or if a major rainstorm is moving through.

Although the Bill Reid Memorial Shelter is located less than a kilometre from the church, it does not host an emergency weather shelter. It provides 16 shelter beds year-round, and 12 transition suites.

Options Community Services, which runs the Bill Reid Memorial Shelter, provides overnight staffing at the Pacific Community Church shelter, and the church provides space and volunteers to set up and take down.

This is the first year that the Cloverdale shelter has had 25 beds to offer the

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# longer hours

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community. Last winter, the shelter had 15 beds which were often full, said director Matthew Campbell.

"We were able to find some extra space and increase [the beds]," said Campbell. "This year, we haven't had as cold of weather, so the demand hasn't been quite as high as last year."

This winter, the emergency shelter has averaged about 12 people a night. At the end of last week, that number jumped to about 18, and on Sunday and Monday night, the number climbed above 20 people, which is a record for the Cloverdale shelter.

With the rain and wind warning through the last weeks of December, the shelter had been open for nearly two weeks straight when the *Reporter* spoke to Campbell on Thursday, Jan. 3.

In 2017, the shelter was open for much of November, but this year the demand didn't hit hard until later.

"December hit us all of a sudden with the rainstorms," said Campbell.

The other expansion the Cloverdale shelter has made this year is its hours. The space now opens at 9 p.m. on extreme weather nights, compared to the previous 11 p.m.

When those seeking shelter arrive at 9 p.m., they're greeted with a hot chocolate and cookies station that is set up by church volunteers.

The shelter is thankful for the many schools and volunteer groups that have brought in shelter packs over the past few months, said Campbell, which include socks, toothbrushes, and other small care items.

"We've received a lot of [shelter packs] and we're very thankful to the community for their support," said Campbell.

Now the shelter is in need of pillows. If anyone has a pillow they could donate, they can drop it off at the church, located at 5337 180 Street.

Another valuable gesture would be to drop by on a night when the shelter opens, between 9 and 10 p.m., and bring a box of donuts or specialty treats. Other than the hot chocolate