

Welcome Home providing shelter in Greensburg

Begun in 1995, Connect, Inc. provides a full continuum of care to homeless, near-homeless, and low income individuals, children and families in Washington, Greene and Westmoreland Counties.

One such service is Welcome Home, an emergency shelter for single women and families who don't have a legal residence or are in need of temporary housing because of a financial or housing crisis situation.

Located at 218 S. Maple Avenue in Greensburg, the facility can accommodate up to 10 women and four families. The maximum length of stay is 60 days. Established in 2002, Welcome Home is the only women and family shelter in Westmoreland County.

Residents at the home sign an agreement covering specific responsibilities. For example, the residents help in laundry, and maintaining the common areas. Each guest or household is asked to contribute 25 percent of their net monthly income toward the services they receive, but their stay is not contingent upon their contribution.

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, Welcome Home temporarily housed 110 single women and 119 individuals in families, providing 8,697 nights of emergency shelter.

Connect, Inc. collaborates with many local service agencies to provide life skills classes to the guests at the facility.

Such classes include:

- Meeting weekly, a nutrition group provided by Penn State Cooperative Extension offers healthy recipes and provides guests with proper kitchen sanitation, food storage and nutrition lessons.
- Budgeting, home maintenance and smart shopping groups are held by Connect, Inc. staff on a monthly basis.
- Westmoreland Community Action offers a bi-weekly informational session for the guests, covering topics such as crisis management and the use of the County Crisis Line, Housing in the County, and Head Start opportunities.
- The Blackburn Center provides weekly domestic violence/victim issues education to increase the guest's awareness of these stressful situations and how to cope with them.

An affiliate of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services Inc., Connect, Inc. also operates seven units in the Westmoreland Permanent Supportive Housing Program in the Mon Valley portion of Westmoreland County.

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