

Update: Mission Moment

The Shelter's Rebekah Miller

Dusk has fallen and most of our community is cleaning up after dinner and settling in for the evening with their families. But for Rebekah Miller, her work is just beginning. Rebekah Miller oversees the LUM emergency shelter as the Live-in Shelter Coordinator. Rebekah's official residence is Greenwood, but she has lived in North Carolina and Texas and has spent summers as a youth in New Orleans with her family. Rebekah is a 2nd-year, scholarship student studying civil engineering at Purdue University.



Shelter Facts

- Last year 607 individuals stayed at the LUM shelter.
- The average homeless guest spent 20 nights at our shelter during the year.
- Two-hundred eighty nine (289) homeless individuals worked one-on-one with LUM case managers to leave our shelter for a home of their own.
- It cost \$86,874 to operate the LUM Shelter in 2012 (which averaged out to \$9.16 per guest, per night). Included in this total are case management services, food, staffing, utilities, fire protection and shelter maintenance.
- Nightly operations at the shelter are run by volunteers. It takes four trained volunteers to run the shelter – a total of 1,460 volunteers each year.
- A simple meal of soup, stew or chili is provided to the homeless at our shelter each night, donated by various churches, organizations and clubs in our community.
- Guests of LUM's shelter who have just started a job or who are receiving disability assistance are required to pay LUM \$3 cash each night they stay at our shelter. The money is matched by LUM then held in escrow to help pay the guest's damage deposit and first month's rent for a new apartment.
- Guests at the LUM shelter are required to do simple chores like washing dishes and sweeping floors to help keep the facility clean.
- The New Opportunity Fund is a \$50,000 merit-based fund raised through the LUM Campaign for the Future that helps shelter guests leave our facility for a home of their own.



Last fall (2012) Rebekah was looking for a job. Like most students she turned to the student employment website to see what was available. The LUM posting for a part-time, overnight position at the emergency shelter stood out and intrigued Rebekah. Since her youth, Rebekah has been attracted to "mission-type" work.

attitude is uplifting. She has gotten better at listening, being non-judgmental, and outwardly portraying a positive attitude.

Rebekah freely offers that this experience has had more of an impact on her than the shelter guests. She learns something new about herself each night. Rebekah shared that this opportunity for her is guided by God as is the rest of her life.

Working at the shelter from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. allows her to spend her days focused on her academic pursuits. For Rebekah the LUM shelter position is perfect because the hours don't interfere with her school work and she's passionate about serving others.

Rebekah knows that after graduation she wants to work overseas with a not-for-profit, non-governmental agency that utilizes her engineering expertise. Rebekah shared that her dream job would involve "digging wells in Africa" for safe drinking water and doing disaster relief construction work.

In addition to her studies and work with LUM, Rebekah is a leadership team assistant with the Women in Engineering Program teaching, mentoring, and tutoring local middle school



A once aspiring missionary, Rebekah has hoped for many years to travel the world and offer her expertise to make life better for villages and communities. So when Rebekah informed her family that she accepted a position at the LUM emergency homeless shelter not one of her friends or family members were surprised.

Rebekah was part-time in the fall and was offered the full-time position at the LUM shelter in January 2013.

Each night, shelter guests begin lining up around 9 p.m. and Rebekah with her volunteer crew is ready to greet each guest. The check-in process is detailed and



specific and the expectations of the guests are firm. Rebekah moves the process along efficiently and with the warmth of a good friend.

Her nightly goal is to create a safe environment where guests respect each other as well as feel valued and comfortable. Rebekah accomplishes this by balancing being a servant with reinforcing rules and giving structure. Her demeanor is calming and her

students.

Joyce Fasani, the LUM emergency shelter program director, thinks very highly of Rebekah and her work with the shelter thus far.

Joyce stated that "Rebekah adds the ideal combination of professionalism and compassion. She has a way of commanding respect and gaining trust quickly with our guests. We are fortunate to have her on our team."

Volunteer Opportunities

Might you or your group be interested in volunteering at the LUM emergency shelter?

Training dates are set for February 11 & 21, March 7 & 18, and April 15 & 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the LUM Shelter (525 N. 4th Street, Lafayette).

If you'd like to provide a meal for the homeless, call or email LUM Shelter Director Joyce Fasani at (765) 423-2691 or jfasani@lafayetteurbanministry.org



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