

# Clare House Replacement Project Update



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Clare House has been in the news recently as a result of receiving a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), administered by the Municipality, to provide the funding necessary for the Clare House Replacement Project. The seeds of this project were planted several years ago when, after thoughtful consideration and significant client, staff and community feedback, the Catholic Social Services (CSS) Board of Trustees decided to move forward to replace the current Clare House facility. The project will allow flexibility for longer stays made necessary by the lack of affordable housing in Anchorage and the long waits for subsidized housing by providing an increased number of emergency shelter and transitional housing beds.

Currently, Clare House is only able to accommodate 45 women and children per night in a 7,500 sq. foot space, sleeping in one of two large rooms, fitted with bunk beds in living units separated by a short wall. Families basically live in cubicles. This lack of privacy leaves little room for quiet and meaningful time for parenting and planning. How-

ever crowded, Clare House residents are very grateful to be at Clare House, and there is often a significant waiting list to get in. Families on the waiting list often need to spend the night in their cars, camp, sleep at a hotel or find some type of shelter — most often unsuitable for children.

The physical structure was built in 1969, and was acquired by CSS in 1984. Over its 27 years of service, CH has provided critically needed shelter and case management services.

As many of you know, Clare House is located at the end of an industrial zone at 420 West 54th Avenue; an inconvenient and hazardous setting. Most job interviews, appointments with other agencies and doctor appointments require one or two bus transfers; the nearest bus stop is 1/2 mile away down a road heavily travelled by large trucks. Women often walk in the dark and cold with their children to the bus stop on Arctic Blvd. 54th Avenue doesn't have sidewalks and isn't pedestrian friendly.

The Eagle's Nest hotel located at 4110 Spenard Road is a suitable replacement property currently on the

market and is approximately 17,000 sq. ft. The property includes a 31 room hotel (capacity of 120), a four-plex apartment unit, and a 9,660 sq. ft. excess land parcel with single family zoning. The purchase price is \$1.7 million with additional expenses for necessary renovations and furnishings. We have secured \$1.5 million for the project so far from a State Capital grant, the Rasmuson Foundation, the Block Family Foundation, and the CDBG grant. Proceeds from the proposed sale or lease of the current facility, as well as additional grant and donation funding, are still pending.

**We still need your help to purchase this facility!** Please make your contribution to the Clare House Replacement Project fund by visiting [cssalaska.org](http://cssalaska.org) and clicking on donate. Part of the Rasmuson Foundation funding is a \$50,000 challenge grant. So each dollar you donate will be matched dollar for dollar!