

# Women's Health Education And Learning (HEAL) Program Guide

## **Cause for Action:**

- Homeless individuals have higher rates of morbidity and mortality than the general population, as well as higher rates of mental illness and substance abuse.
- Experiencing homelessness and identifying as female adds its own gender-specific health needs and challenges to accessing care. These needs include, but are not limited to, care and counseling in the following areas: contraception, pregnancy, family planning, sexual health, preventive screening, and social support.

## **Where is the program?**

The program is held on the campus of the [Syracuse Rescue Mission Kieseewetter Emergency Shelter](#), located at 122 Dickerson St. Syracuse, NY 13202.

## **What does the Women's Health and Empowerment Group do?**

Since October of 2015, the Syracuse Rescue Mission has welcomed women into their Kieseewetter Emergency Shelter. Since that time, a group of Upstate students have been working to develop relationships with the women residing at the shelter in order to determine what types of services are needed and the types of positive, health promoting activities in which the women might participate.

## **Who does the Women's Health and Empowerment Group serve?**

The group is limited to serving women who currently reside in the Kieseewetter Shelter or that utilize the Alice C. Barber Day Center, which is attached to the shelter.

## **How does the program provide for this population?**

Activities that emphasize stress reduction, healthy relationships, and self-care are conducted on the Rescue Mission campus. Drop-in activities will also be provided in the future.

## **What would I do as a student?**

Students will coordinate and hold biweekly sessions with the women in the shelter. A key component of these sessions will be to develop positive relationships with the women while discovering their interests and needs. Activities may include movement/exercise classes, yoga and meditation, crafts, health education and general discussion. Since the population is at the shelter temporarily, the program will change based on the needs of the women and the organization.

## **How often would I volunteer?**

As a volunteer you are not required to serve a set number of hours, however, students tend to spend 2 to 3 hours doing group sessions at the shelter on a biweekly basis.

## **What are the community impacts?**

By providing an open and non-judgmental environment for women to improve their mental and physical health, self-empowerment and health promoting behaviors can be nourished.