

## BUUF in Action:

### *The super volunteers of Interfaith Sanctuary*

The Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship has played a key role at Interfaith Sanctuary, and we currently have more than a dozen people who regularly volunteer at the homeless shelter, now in its permanent location at 1620 W. River Street in downtown Boise. But special kudos are due to two BUUF people who have gone “above and beyond” at Sanctuary since its inception three winters ago.

Jeanette Ross has been working with Sanctuary since its very beginning, when the shelter had no permanent home. She remembers using her van to shuttle food and boxes between locations and getting up early to pick up milk for coffee on the way to her 5:30 a.m. shifts. Jeanette says that volunteering at Sanctuary is “much like a few hours with the relatives you barely remember. Misunderstandings, mistakes, miseries, then an unexpected connection, a joke in passing, a word of thanks, a flare of irritation - we’re all family (One) Sunday night, three of the Sanctuary teens hung around to chat with me as I sat in a little puddle of light at the intake desk. I had to send them off to bed, finally, using that almost-forgotten Mom voice, so the adults could sleep.”

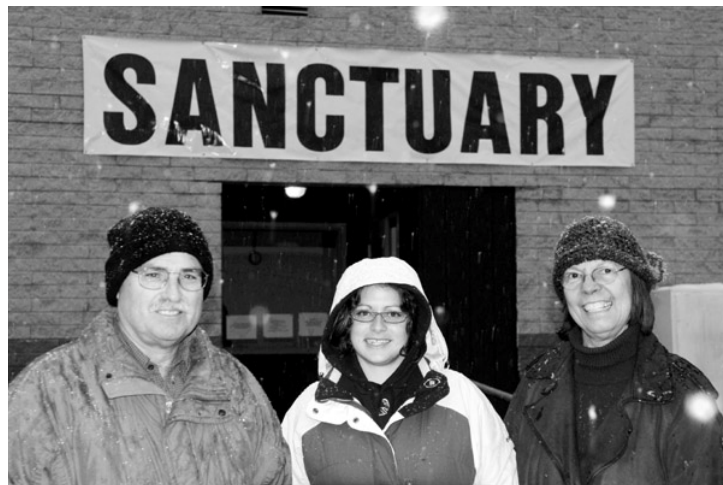
Rick Groff worked more than 100 hours at the shelter last winter, and this season he has pulled together a team to work at Sanctuary every Sunday night. (He and Jeanette co-lead the team, each working every other Sunday.) Rick says volunteering at Sanctuary allows him to “give back to the community for the peace, prosperity, and freedom that I enjoy. Interfaith Sanctuary represents my values by its caring and interfaith but not overtly religious environment and its acceptance of guests regardless of sex, race, religious affiliation, or state of sobriety.” Rick says he’s had his share of sad moments at Sanctuary, meeting women who’ve been physically abused and people who are struggling with physical addictions. But, he adds, “I am always amazed by the compassion of our community when exposed to the needs of the less privileged.”

Rick and Jeanette report that more BUUF members and friends have stepped up to help at Sanctuary this winter, but that additional help is still needed. (See the “Volunteer Opportunities” section for more details.) Prospective volunteers are welcome to visit Sanctuary for an hour or two on a Sunday night to see how it operates. Please let Rick or Jeanette know if you’d like to stop by. For more information and directions to the shelter, which is just off River Street at the I-184 Connector (near the skateboard park), see [www.interfaithsanctuary.org](http://www.interfaithsanctuary.org).

## Volunteer Opportunities

A group from BUUF will join the Martin Luther King-Human Rights Day march on Monday, January 21. The procession starts at 10:45 am outside the Student Union Building on the BSU campus. Look for the BUUF banner!

BUUF fields a team every Sunday night to work at the Interfaith Sanctuary homeless shelter. Team co-coordinator Rick Groff says, “We could use more volunteers, especially women. The women would be fire-watchers in the women’s/family area once every few weeks from 5:30 p.m. until about 10 p.m. If someone wanted to schedule volunteers, but not actually work, and then remind the team members by phone, that would be great also.” Sanctuary also badly needs volunteers for Friday and Saturday nights. Contact Rick Groff at [rbgroff@cableone.net](mailto:rbgroff@cableone.net) to learn more and sign up to help.



*BUUF volunteers Rick Groff and Jeanette Ross with Fawn Pettit, Director of social services for the Sanctuary (center), at the Sanctuary entrance on a cold and snowy January night.*