

BECON
10/3/25

It's that time of year again when a crisp morning turns into a nice day – made nicer of course because it's Friday and one day from Saturday. I think the Grizzlies are playing tomorrow as well 😊

Guests

Our only guests today were our speakers – Julie and Ken Koerber (yes just like Mark – his bro, and Mark was at breakfast today BTW) to speak about the homeless shelter they run called Off the Streets.

Announcements

Shawnee always has, and calls on/for, lots of announcements as she is very organized and thorough and connected as I found out after running into Scott at the Cat Tailgate in Bozo last Saturday where his wife had gone missing – not really missing but just visiting with numerous folks and leaving Scott to fend for himself, which, BTW he was doing very well with beer in hand.

- Charlie Loveridge officially got his Exchange Club certificate and pin this morning. He came up last week and was introduced and gave a quick rundown on himself but there were no certs or pins to give him then. So now he is complete. Welcome Charlie!
- Shannon reminded us of the Ian Munsick concert coming up on 10/9 and NILE Ranch Rodeo on 10/18. Some opportunities to work for us all.
- The United Way sent us a TY note for our help with their Community Rally event I believe.
- Remember that the event voted the most satisfying as a BEC member – Dress A Child – is coming up on 10/18 and we need a bunch more people to sign up – and sign your spouse or partner up as well (you don't have to ask them – just do it – they will thank you for that).
- The Membership Committee has a Membership Drive scheduled for 10/15 where you can invite some potential new members to come and check us out. To be held at the Red Door Lounge AND if you would like to sponsor the first drink (before Craig and ENTRE does), it would be much appreciated! 5:30 pm.
- The “Donate” button on the BEC website has gone live we are being told. Try it out if you have a few extra pesos to contribute.
- Here is a quick rundown of upcoming social events:
 - 11/1 – I think this is a Halloween pub crawl
 - 11/22 – Pancakes for Prevention breakfast to start the Cat/Griz festivities off at the Legion followed by tailgating (you can reserve your spot) and the BIG

game available for viewing in the Legion bar. An earlier email was sent outlining this event.

- Tony P gave us an update on what the Patriotism Committee is up to which includes the 9/11 Remembrance Field where 250 American flags will be planted at the MSUB College of Technology lawn; and our Field on Honor flags during the 4th of July at Par 3 (new for us I think). We are looking for a big sponsor for this - \$25K.
- Rumor has it that Bruce and Aaron Glennie are grandparents – are they old enough for that?

Speaker Summary

Julie and Ken Koerber spoke to us about the Off the Streets (OTS) shelter they run out of a couple rooms at the 4th Avenue Inn in downtown Billings. Ken is the Executive Director and Julie is the Community Outreach Director.

Founded by Craig Barthell in 2023, the shelter provides a sanctuary for chronically homeless people in a low-barrier facility – chronically meaning they rarely, if ever, have had roof over their heads – at least in the 3-year period; and low-barrier meaning there are very little rules associated with being able to stay nightly in the shelter versus other high-barrier facilities like the Montana Rescue Mission. Julie mentioned that in Billings alone, 600 people need a place to stay each night. Similar organizations provide shelter for a lot of these people, but beds for at least 80 more are needed.

In 2024, OTS helped 109 people with temporary housing at the 4th Avenue Inn. In this year alone, over 200 people have been served to date. Julie says their “secret sauce” to helping chronically homeless people is not trying to make huge immediate life improvements as this is too overwhelming for these folks. But rather, to make improvements measured in baby steps. OTS’s goal is to help with the mental health and addiction issues their tenants have in a manner that ultimately finds them healthy, housed and with jobs. Women typically stay at the shelter for an average of 19 days and men 40 days.

OTS runs on a shoe-string budget – less than \$10K a month, of which rent uses 92%. The goal is to expand their housing and continue the classes and mentoring to improve the lives of their tenants. Their fund-raising efforts consist of exactly what they did for our group this morning as well as for other individuals who recognize the positive steps they are making for the people they serve and our community - in that they are focusing on educating us all about their mission and hoping grants and donations will follow.

Have a great weekend!