



## NEWS RELEASE

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**SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY, August 21, 2015** – As we approach temperatures near 90 degrees in the coming days, it's hard to recall that just a few months ago we experienced one of the harshest winter's that this area has seen, let alone think about the approaching winter months; however, the Code Blue Saratoga Springs (CBSS) Steering Committee has done just that. At a recent strategic planning retreat, the CBSS steering committee spent several hours discussing the longevity of this valuable community service and a variety of options on how best to carry it forward. The steering committee is excited to announce its selection of Shelters of Saratoga (SOS) to serve as the lead agency of CBSS at a press conference to be held on Tuesday, August 18, 2015 11:00 a.m. at The Salvation Army, 27 Woodlawn Avenue, Saratoga Springs.

CBSS will become a standalone program of SOS, with its own operating budget. SOS has served as the fiscal agent of Code Blue since its inception. Members of the current steering committee will either become members of the SOS governance structure or serve in an advisory capacity. The Salvation Army Saratoga Springs is the intended site for the 2015-16 program.

In response to the need for a true emergency shelter in Saratoga County, CBSS was brought about in December 2013 to fulfill this unmet need through a collaboration of the City of Saratoga, faith-based groups, and nonprofits serving the homeless. CBSS is an emergency shelter serving homeless people who might otherwise remain unsheltered during periods of extreme winter weather. During the 2014-15 CBSS season, the program was open 85 nights, provided shelter for an average of 36 individuals per night and provided dinner only to an additional average of 10 individuals.

"Approaching our twenty-fifth year of service as a homeless service provider, Code Blue is a natural fit for the SOS continuum of services" says Michael Finocchi, SOS executive director. "As an established and experienced nonprofit agency, SOS can provide the stability that the Code Blue initiative requires to remain a viable and developing program."

In 2014, the SOS mobile outreach and youth outreach programs made over 1,500 face-to-face contacts with homeless or at-risk youth, adults and families in the Greater Saratoga region. SOS assisted over 400 men and women through their homeless shelter program. In addition to providing food and shelter, SOS case managers identify and refer houseguests to appropriate service providers, such as medical professionals, housing providers and prospective employers so they can get back on the road to self-sufficiency. Additionally, SOS owns and manages seven affordable housing units in downtown Saratoga Springs. When available,



former SOS shelter houseguests can become tenants of these units, providing long-term housing solutions.

“The trust and introduction of services that is implemented during an individual’s stay at the Code Blue emergency shelter lays the groundwork for him or her further reaching out for support,” stated Finocchi. In the past two seasons, several guests staying at the Code Blue shelter have been referred to SOS as a next step. “If we can get someone off the street and into an environment of structure and stability, that’s success,” he continued.

“The SOS staff and board of directors look forward to further cultivating relationships with the individuals and agencies that have made the Code Blue program highly successful,” says Finocchi. “We are truly committed to making an impact and ending homelessness in our community. “

The SOS mission is to provide individuals with safe shelter, support services and sustainable strategies to end homelessness in the Greater Saratoga region. SOS relies heavily on the community’s generosity to meet the complex needs of the hundreds of individuals they serve each year. For more information, visit [www.sheltersofsaratoga.org](http://www.sheltersofsaratoga.org).

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