



PROGRAMS

Behind the Scenes at IHS

2015-02-09

Operating a 24-hour emergency shelter that houses an average of 250 men, women, and children can feel a bit like running a day care, a nursing home, a halfway house, and a psych ward all at once. Everyone who comes to IHS is struggling, and some are at the lowest point of their lives. Relatively speaking, every single one of them is in crisis. The way that our operations staff manages all of these personalities and problems is quite simply amazing.

IHS is a safe harbor for people who have nowhere else to go. We do our best to take in anybody who wants help, and this includes people with physical disabilities, substance abuse issues, severe mental health problems, and individuals recently released from prison. From intake to exit, it's our operations teams that deal with these people on a daily basis. They do everything from helping them get settled in to their new temporary home to helping them get new clothing, and sometimes even helping them shower or use the bathroom. Whatever the guests need, our operations staff will try to provide. For many of our guests, our staff is like family, sometimes the only family they have.

Some days run smoothly. Everyone cooperates and everything goes as planned. Staff members go about their daily tasks of monitoring guests, making sure people take their medication, serving meals, keeping the shelter clean, receiving and sorting donations, helping people get new clothes, feeding the fish... Even on a good day, it's hectic.

Not every day is a quiet one. An argument may ensue and staff members will have to step in to deescalate the conflict. Frequent medical emergencies mean regular visits from first responders. We've even had occasional power outages, and staff must ensure that all of our guests are safe while the backup generators are in use. With so many people to look after, it's truly a testament to our amazing staff that things are generally so calm and well-organized.

So, how does it feel to be on the operations team at IHS? Nobody can say it better than the staff themselves.



“Since working here, I have learned the true meaning of patience. To deal with the many different types of people that we meet on a daily basis, you learn to be compassionate towards each individual as their circumstances vary in so many ways. I have grown a lot since working here, and I look forward to many more years to come.” - **Eleanor**

“The joy of being able to give support and help, whether it be an ear to listen or simply just to show them that you care and that there is hope, is so important. We become a part of their lives. It's such a blessing to witness the journey and the success. “ - **Mona**

“We, as operations staff, deal one on one with the many hardships of people that come to us

very broken. My job is to make sure that they will be protected, supported, and cared for to the best of my ability. “ - **Foloi**

“What I enjoy the most is being able to promote a positive atmosphere. I enjoy proving wrong the negative stigma of the homeless shelter by assisting the guests to the best of my abilities.” - **Faitolo**

“This job comes with a lot of challenges, and as an operations staff you have to be firm but fair in making decisions, doing the right thing for the right reason at the right time, and knowing your boundaries with the guests. I love my job because it allows me to give back and hopefully make the guests stay here a little more comfortable.” - **Iwalani**

“One cannot help but to love just what it is that we do here. We are counselors, security guards, nurses, advocates, mothers, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts and anything else you can think of that represents family or ‘trusted servants’.” - **Cindy**

The bottomless patience and compassion that our operations staff exhibits is at the very core of our mission here at IHS. You can show your support by making a donation or becoming a volunteer. Be a part of the solution and support our operations team and the entire IHS Ohana in ending homelessness in Hawaii.