Media Contact: Karen Lemke
Head of Marketing & Community Engagement, Rochester Public Library
Direct: 970-946-2527 | E-mail: klemke@rplmn.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Day Center opens to help people experiencing homelessness

March 23, 2020 – ROCHESTER, MINN. - As COVID-19 continues to spread, community members are teaming up with the City of Rochester and Olmsted County to provide assistance to people experiencing homelessness.

With businesses and community gathering spaces currently closed, many of Rochester's unsheltered residents have faced challenges. According to Mayor Kim Norton, city teammates have been working alongside Olmsted County and a number of local agencies to address local needs.

"Community members are really stepping up and helping us address these critical needs at such a critical time," says Norton.

A temporary Day Center officially opened Monday morning, from 8AM-8PM, in the Mayo Civic Center Exhibition Hall. The center will be open every day.

Audrey Betcher, Director of the Rochester Public Library, says the location will be staffed by teammates from across the city, including those from the library, which closed March 18. "We opened the call out to library teammates first, to make sure we had people to help run the Day Center, and members of our team volunteered right away."

During the open hours, individuals or families experiencing homelessness will have access to the space and also food, water, and bathrooms. "These are the basic needs that no one should have to worry about," says Betcher, adding, "The Day Center setup allows for individuals to have access to those resources in a space large enough to accommodate social distancing."

Food will be provided by Channel One, the Salvation Army, The Landing, and local restaurants, coordinated by Powers Ventures. Meanwhile, the library is providing books and the Mayo Civic Center is providing Wi-Fi for visitors.

"We are committed to doing what we can to support the vulnerable in our community," says Norton.

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