

How to Captain a Shelter Meal

Step 1: Go online to <http://signup.com/go/rBJQWBx> and find an open date that works for you (with a green SIGN UP button). You can see dates further out using the next page numbers at the bottom. Sign up for a date that you and any co-captains (spouse or friends) are available for the 7:00 PM drop off time and to help serve. Please put “(Herzl-Ner Tamid)” after your name.

Step 2: Decide on a menu that is *specific* (lasagna rather than “a main dish”) and *limited variety* (better to have only a few different dishes so everyone gets some of everything). Foods that are high in protein are great, as well as soft and easy to chew. You can choose from one of our sample menus on page 2, or create your own. Plan to feed 80 men.

Step 3: Email your menu and date to ShelterMeals@h-nt.org and we will put together a sign-up form.

Let us know whether you are comfortable having dishes dropped off at your house that day for you to bring (if people can’t make it to the shelter themselves), and we can include that on the form. This is not a requirement.

Step 4: Send an email to your friends asking them to prepare a dish. A sample is included below, though you are welcome to edit/rewrite to fit your style:

Dear friends,

We are captaining a meal at the Eastside Winter Shelter on [date] and would love your help to provide dinner for 80 homeless men. Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) strives to mitigate the pain of homelessness by providing meals and basic needs. Herzl-Ner Tamid (our synagogue) is working with CFH to provide multiple monthly meals through the colder months.

Please sign up to cook or buy part of the meal and deliver it to the Eastside Winter Shelter on [date] at 7:00 PM at [link]. Feel free to sign up for more than one item or requested serving, and please use disposable containers. They have ovens to warm food before serving, but all food needs to be cooked before you arrive.

Though not required, you are welcome to sign up to stay and be one of our 7 servers. Note that food should be delivered and volunteers should arrive at 7:00 PM (not before); dinner is served at 7:30 PM.

The shelter is located at 515B 116th Ave NE, Bellevue in the far southeast corner of Lincoln Center Office Park - follow the signs to the EWS area. You can also drop your dish off at our house between [time] and [time] that day. Our address is [your address].

Captaining a meal is very easy and hugely rewarding - if you are interested in captaining another shelter meal yourself, please email ShelterMeals@h-nt.org.

Thank you so much!

[Your name]

Sample Menus

(Numbers in parentheses indicate how many people you'll request to sign up for that item)

Meal 1	Meal 2	Meal 3
20 portions of roast chicken (4)	2-9x13 pans of meat lasagna (3)	2-9x13 pans of chicken & rice casserole with salsa, beans & corn (3)
20 portions of mashed potatoes (4)	1-9x13 pan of vegetarian lasagna (1)	40 portions of cornbread (2)
20 portions of fruit (4)	20 portions of green salad (4)	20 portions of coleslaw (4)
40 portions of green beans (2)	20 portions of fruit (4)	20 portions of fruit (4)
2-9x13 pans of brownies (3)	4 pre-sliced fruit pies (2)	4 dozen cookies (2)

Meal 4	Meal 5	Meal 6
2-9x13 pans of mac & cheese (3)	2-9x13 pans of pasta and sauce (2)	20 portions of sloppy joes (4)
2-9x13 pans of macaroni with meat sauce (2)	2-9x13 pans of meat loaf (2)	1-9x13 pan of vegetarian pasta dish (1)
20 portions of green salad (4)	20 portions of Caesar salad (4)	20 portions of coleslaw (4)
40 portions of carrots, sweet potatoes & yam casserole (2)	40 soft dinner rolls (2)	20 portions of fruit (4)
20 portions of fruit (4)	40 portions of green beans (2)	4 dozen cookies (2)
2-9x13 pans of brownies (2)	4 pre-sliced fruit pies (2)	

Feedback/Suggestions from Previous Meals

We were overwhelmed by the amount of food our friends and HNT members donated – we ended up having enough for 2 meals! Rebecca made the dinner organization very easy to manage by creating the sign-up sheet and by handling all of the details. It was a piece of cake for us. It felt good to solve a short-term need, so that the staff could work on solving the long-term issues. This experience motivated us to continue giving back to our community and helped us realize that **volunteering with our friends is a fun and rewarding way to spend time together.**

-Michelle Goldberg

Captaining the dinner service at Eastside Men's Shelter was **one of the most purposeful tzedakah opportunities that I have been part of.** It was extremely meaningful to help fulfill one of life's most basic needs, and to nourish body and soul. What a really fun way to spend the evening among a wide variety of people who also volunteered to help out. And the men were so very kind, appreciative and gracious, making it all worthwhile! I will happily contribute again in a heartbeat.

-Aileen Okrent

It was very noticeable when the men spotted an item they may not see a lot like seasonal vegetables such as squash, broccoli, cauliflower - pretty sure they see a lot of baby carrots. One of our volunteers responded when I questioned why they would use their farm fresh (literally) vegetables, they responded, 'don't the men deserve something so good'. They had already treated these men with a level of dignity that isn't always reflective when we think of the task of feeding 80 men.

-Nadine Strauss

The six of us who served dinner all had great evening dishing out the food and interacting with the men. **I wish that the many members of the community who don't support a homeless shelter in Bellevue would come spend an evening and see for themselves that there is really nothing to fear.**

-Julie Ellenhorn

You can use a cooler (or foam/polystyrene boxes) to help keep food warm. Wrap the pot in a couple of layers of towels and then wedge it in the cooler. Wedge more towels around as needed to stop it tipping over. It also makes transportation easier.

-Mindy Landsman

What to bring the food in—those huge disposable aluminum pans (used for roasting turkeys etc) so you can just drop off and leave everything. We sealed it tight and it stayed warm... **Don't stress about making too much. It will get eaten.** They are so appreciative!

-Shelley Dillon

They were very appreciative of the quality of the food, the choice of vegetables, and of course the brownies and cookies were a great hit. **There are 2 stoves, each with a large oven and 4 burners.** We brought our food as hot as we could, but then were able to keep things warm in the ovens. There still is **not much room for actually preparing food.**

-Susan Edelheit

It was an amazing experience. The staff were very helpful and appreciative and the men were all so appreciative and polite. We had more than enough food. The staff said the night before there was close to 90 men, but tonight when we left around 8:30, they had about 60 men. The staff person took over saying that they will serve food all night...**They will freeze the rest and use on nights they don't have a sponsor.**

-Sharon Sandler