



**SHIBHA
NARAYAN**
EWR Supervisor/
Outreach Worker



**PHOENIX
SOCIETY**



EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE: HELPING THOSE IN NEED COME OUT OF THE COLD

Shibha Narayan, an Outreach Worker for Phoenix, was also the supervisor for Phoenix’s first **Extreme Weather Response (EWR)** program this past winter. “Phoenix provided fifteen beds (mats); five for women and ten for men, from November 2018 to March 2019, when required by extreme weather conditions within the city of Surrey,” recalls Shibha.

Shibha, a student of criminology, has no biases when involving herself with the needs of the homeless –and in particular within a shelter setting—though the dynamics to do so can become complicated in very short-order. Shibha explains, “There were some challenging, gut-wrenching moments, like when a guest who appeared to be older came in to access the shelter. As I first saw her it made me feel sad and hurt; it made me think of my grandparents and what would have to happen for them to be in this situation. When we took her information down at intake we noticed that she was nearly 80 years old. When I spoke with her, she informed me that she had been homeless for six months, as she refuses to live with her relatives because the environment is not suitable. Hearing that broke my heart.”

Aside from the physical logistics to house the homeless at Phoenix – which included refurbishing a large meeting room with sleeping mats, blankets and pillows, room dividers and a refrigerator – there was also the human component, where the facilitators embraced the experience with compassion and humility.

Ivan, one of the kitchen staff, helped prepare sandwiches, granola bars, and oranges, for a brown bag lunch, as well as hot coffee and tea. Other Phoenix residents, within their newfound sobriety, supported the facility from 7:30 pm to 7:00 am. Matt, a recovering alcoholic who worked several shifts, reflects on

his experience, “The atmosphere and the smell of booze didn’t trigger me in anyway, but rather drew out of me a greater empathy for the situation.”

“The EWR shelter at Phoenix brought together so many positive values from so many people— and though challenging at times, our experience, compassion and professionalism ensured a safe and warm home for most to have a good night’s sleep,” concludes Shibha, with a kind smile.

PHOENIX CENTRE EXTREME WEATHER PROGRAM: DECEMBER - MARCH

**15 MATS EACH NIGHT
OPEN 76 NIGHTS
847 GUESTS SERVED**