



We have been working on a new partnership for the lodge with the First Step Shelter out on US92 in Daytona Beach. They opened in late 2019 and the shelter is a comprehensive “come as you are” homeless assistance center serving adults from throughout Volusia County, Florida. We have had several meetings of our exploratory committee members (Gary VanOpdorp, Frank Tamberelli, Don Clark, Lou Greci and Cheryl Shaw) and with the shelter.

Applications for grants are in progress and hopefully we will get this effort funded soon and underway. Currently, we have tentative plans to provide a new grill as well as cook and serve lunch one day a month. When we serve the meals, we will also have ‘goodie’ bags to distribute for the residents. Right now, serving them means only 25-30 meals but that will grow in the future. The shelter is currently locked down and cannot take untested applicants—Covid-19 can’t last forever— and as time goes on they will continue to grow their population. The shelter original had an arrangement with the jail for food but has moved on to take over meals themselves to provide a better selection for the residents.

It won’t take much for Elks to get involved even more, they have an amazing kitchen and all it takes right now is a donation of food and a couple of people to cook and serve. We can take a meal off the calendar for them.

Along with the effort to feed them they have identified a need for shelving in the closets. We have already had a group out there to take measurements to see if we can get that taken care of. Things look promising to get the materials covered by a grant and we have handymen lined up to do the work.

Hopefully, this is just the beginning of our relationship with the shelter and that we will be able to help them even more in the future. Keep your ears open and let someone know if you want to be involved.

