Area churches take homeless to their hearts

Oakland County churches have opened their doors — and hearts to the homeless.

It started five years ago, when area churches were contacted about heigh post to those in need of short-term emergency shelter.

The South Oakland Shelter in Royal Oak would provide the homeless—after screening out those who may have recently used drugs or alcohol—along with cuts and hedding. The churches were asked to use vacant areas — basements, cleavrooms or vestbules—to provide steeping areas for the men, women and children who, for whatever reason, found themselves temporarily without shelter.

Clurch members were to provide abor—cook meats, launder hedding and towels or give rides to guest required to be elsewhere during the Response in the first year 1985, was grarifying, according to Lallian Medicile Subter durient of Steep

Response in the first year (1985) was graftlying, according to Lillian Melville, shelter director. Sixteen churches, on a rotating basis provided 17 weeks of temporary shelter, mainly during the winter, for 73 peo-

Since then, however, more than to thurshes have signed up for the emergency shelter program. They take turns providing one week's residence throughout most of the year. And, since 1987 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Develop

improve the quality of services.

FROM SEPTEABER 1899 to July 1990 the last time period for which there are figurest, the program provided overnight shelter for 577 people, including 110 adult women and 44 children.

"Some 157) were from Detroit of East Detroit," said Melville. 'But we had a substantial number from communities that age considered well-to-do."

mannes that are considered well-toto"Statistics compiled by the Commanity Development Division of
Oakland County, which processes
RUD funds for SOS, States the 577
total includes five from Birmingham, four from the Bloomfield Bloomfield Hills area. 15 from
Southfield, three from RochesterRochester Hills: 11 from Troy, and
five from Farmington Farmington
Hills

Besults providing sheller for some
needy people, the SOS program
helped destroy some stereotypes
Melville sand "A for of folks trans of
the knowless as develot so roughten

If it wasn't for this church.

By Pat Murphy
statifactive

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others enjoyed but before the streets

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They are a group of homeless people spending the week at St. Stephen

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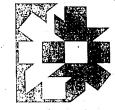
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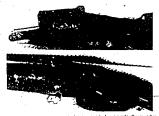
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