

## Shelter Youth Hostel Ministry – Our mission



### Introduction

The Shelter Youth Hostel Ministry is a unique place. We often hear this from our guests and even more often from our cleaners, the ones who participate in the Shelter community for up to a month. And mostly all the volunteers who have worked here throughout the decades, without exception, will say that their time at the Shelter was the time of their lives.

**People change in the Shelter.** This statement is without a doubt true since 1971, when our first hostel opened its doors. Change in some people is drastic and unexpected, while in others the change is a slower but no less important. Changes take place in different forms and for different reasons: maybe it is the stage of life that guests, cleaners or volunteers are in; or perhaps the fact that they are temporarily far from home, where the world looks much different; or the many interesting people that they meet along the way.

But we hope and believe that one constant factor remains: God. As much as everyone has their own stories, memories and experiences from the Shelter, our deepest desire is that the name 'Shelter' points to "the Most High, the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91).

God, who is made visible by His son Jesus, is the beginning and the end of everything we say and do. And the fact remains that the Shelter has made an impact as much on its guest as it has on its workers.

Our mission statement is as follows:

*In a context of hospitality, we in the Shelter Hostels strive to make the gospel of Jesus Christ known through both our words and actions; having a personal approach with each guest is absolutely essential.*

*We train and equip young volunteers to engage in hospitality and evangelism in a culturally relevant manner.*

This is the core of the Shelter. The mission statement continues to be expanded in what follows. Below, the meaning and purpose of the Shelter continues to be reflected among guests along with the volunteers.

## 1. What do we believe? (Doctrine)

We believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ can give freedom and renewal to every person.

We believe that hospitality begins with God, and may be passed on through us to others.

We believe that God invites people into His community; God is a relational God; and man only reaches his/her destiny within a restored relationship with God and fellow man.

We believe that the hospitality setting of the Shelter, which is an active community of young adult Christians, demonstrates a beautiful example of the proclamation of the gospel to young travellers.

We believe that as followers of Jesus we have much to offer, while at the same time we have much to learn and receive.

We believe that the Shelter is a unique and meaningful place for young adult Christians to grow.

## 2. How do we view the world? (Vision)

**Many tourists come to Amsterdam seeking an experience, one that is exciting and memorable.** This search for excitement can be sought after in the nightlife and all the stimulants that Amsterdam has to offer, or by visiting museums and events, tasting the culture of the city. While for some it is simply exploring the city, hoping to run into locals and just having fun.

We realize that one important reason for visiting Amsterdam is this search for excitement. Of course we wish that every tourist has a great experience in Amsterdam, **while at the same time we strongly believe that underneath this search for excitement lies a deeper hidden desire.**

We have come to realize that young people (including our guests and volunteers) are generally in search of three things.

1. adventure
2. places where they can experience or come in contact with other ways of thinking.
3. role models through whom they can be formed and challenged.

### 3. What do we want to do for our guests and staff members? (Mission and Promises)

Where guests are searching for an exciting experience in Amsterdam, we would like to offer them a **life changing experience**.

**Our goal is that** every guest who stays at the shelter receives a *home away from home* experience. We do this simply because we find hospitality important, it is the core business of a hostel. But it also goes much deeper, we strongly believe if **guests know that they are deeply welcome, then the Shelter can be a place where they come home to God**. This is why we say that the Shelter City and the Shelter Jordan are places where the heart can find a home.

In the Shelter, we find it **important that each person gets treated special**. We believe that God can send people to the Shelter where we can mean something for them or we can learn something from them. We place a high importance on **connecting with people**. The staff of the hostels do their best to create an environment where interacting with one another leads to a point of exchanging stories: personal life stories of guests and staff and the stories of God.

The environment consists of high **quality facilities, products and services**; interactions between staff and guests take place through personal contact and events like bible inspiration time, bible meditation, film discussion, city walks, hostel nights, evening prayer, etc.

In the midst of ordinary interactions, life changing experiences can take place for both our guests as for our volunteers.

Summary: Shelter hospitality means:

- offering a **physical home** during a trip (bed, shower, food and drink, comfort, relaxation, entertainment, etc.)
- offering a **relational home** (each guest is a person we value ) and
- pointing to the direction of an **ultimate home**. (To the extent which it is possible, we invite our guests to direct their attention to the reality of God.)

Our Promise reads: **Coming home in the Shelter**

#### 4. What can we do the best? (Our strength)

We are **young, enthusiastic and low key** (easily accessible, available and happy to serve) in addition we take time to **listen to guests**, which allows them to feel at home. **Above all we tell people a great story about God** (also known as the gospel) that everyone needs to hear. No other hostel in Amsterdam is quite like this.

By using our top three strengths, we have a natural way to connect with our guests, who are for the most part just like us, young, enthusiastic and low key.

In the Shelter everyone is free to be themselves. We personally care for the individual. No one is a nobody, including guests and staff. Everyone has a drive, intention, story, opinion and belief and we have a longing to share what fills our hearts (from our side, the depth of the gospel, but not only that).

#### 5. How do we work? (Core values and Ethics)

Christian Hospitality is different than pampering our guests. Christian hospitality has more to do with what comes from the heart, including the host as well as the guest. A welcoming atmosphere will allow guests the space and freedom to experience the full potential they were created for. There will be an openness to hear the true depth of a guest's heart. This can then lead to a conversation over the things that really matter in life.

The Shelter Hostel's desire is to be an oasis of rest, in an often overwhelming city. Through all the interactions and activities that take place in our hostel, we hope these values stand out: sincere, warm hearted, respectful, thought-provoking, and considerate.

We see Christian young adults longing to grow in character, faith, and the ability to be a witness of that faith. They desire a place where they can be **formed and challenged**. The Shelter wants to be a place like that. Under the guidance of a mentor, to provide an environment where our volunteers gain experience by working in the hostel with people who think differently than themselves and through community life with people their age.

In addition to facilitating a practical means for a learning experience, we equip our staff for their work and evangelism in the hostels through the Ministry Training Program (MTP). So they are completely **ready to reach out to the world of today**.

## 6. When have we achieved our goals? (Ambitions)

The word ambition sometimes sounds rigid and competitive. In that sense, the definition does not fit with the Shelter. Nevertheless, it is important for us to formulate and evaluate concrete goals. That is why we do it this way, our **work produces fruit if**

- Our guests show appreciation for their stay (internet reviews);
- In the course of a year, we can celebrate a few life changing experiences of guests or cleaners
- Our volunteers in the Shelter leave excited and realize that they have grown further in their personal relationship with God, knowing themselves, their place in the world and that they can speak more freely about Jesus Christ and what he means in their life.
- Our volunteers felt at home in the community house and experienced the house as a place of relaxing, reflecting and prayer.
- That we can organize quality events such as bible inspiration times, bible meditations, city walks, film discussions, hostel nights, evening prayer, etc.
- The Ministry Training Program meets the everyday life of the Shelter and the world of the volunteers while remaining in touch with the culture.
- The hostels financially break even.

## 7. The Shelter Mission in Action

In daily life Shelter workers Practice Hospitality, Participate in Community and Pursue Hearts for Jesus. These 3 slogans are the DNA, the backbone of the Shelter Hostels; and as such they are the ultimate summary of the Shelter Mission, and the translation of our Mission into actual Shelter life!