

## Invitation to homeless teens shifts to mothers

### *Advocates trying to sort out offer by casitas' owners*

**By Natalie Storey**

The New Mexican

An offer by two local businessmen will help house homeless mothers this winter, but local advocates for homeless teens say many of their problems remain.

At a City Council meeting Wednesday, Paul Margetson offered homeless teens the use of three casitas at Las Palomas on behalf of himself and partner Neil Rosenshein. However, he said Friday that he would rather have homeless mothers and possibly other homeless young women stay there instead until mid-March.

"Let's make this a lovely community for as many people as we can," Margetson said. "We want to help people get back on their feet. ... It may sound simplistic, but I'm sincere about it."

Youth Shelters & Family Services, which runs a street outreach program, a shelter and a transitional living program, is working with Margetson and Rosenshein on the details of housing young women and their children at Las Palomas. Karen Rowell, the director of the group, said the question of who will provide supervision at Las Palomas has not been answered, and the group plans to meet with other nonprofits that serve the homeless in Santa Fe, such as St. Elizabeth Shelter, which houses homeless adults.

"We are still sort of tugging with this generous offer and trying to figure out how do we

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make this fit with all of the needs," said Melissa Frank, the development director at Youth Shelters.

Advocates have long decried the lack of beds for homeless people in Santa Fe. St. Elizabeth Shelter fills up this time of year and has only one small room for families or single women with children.

It runs an overflow shelter for men at The Salvation Army, but women are not allowed there.

Youth Shelters cannot accommodate women with children at its shelter, which serves youths through age 17.

This year, an alliance of local faith groups has agreed to help by housing women and children beginning this month.

Margetson's offer might help ease the situation, but a permanent solution still is needed, Rowell said.

"There is a group of young people who are not appropriate for our shelter but have reservations about going to other places," she said. "This will help fill the gap."

Frank said Youth Shelters knows the need for shelter exists because it had contact with 25 homeless teens last year. Margetson said he and Rosenshein would be willing to house other single mothers, not just teenagers.

Margetson has lived in Santa Fe for more than 20 years and formerly managed Eldorado Hotel. He is the manager and also a partner at Hotel Santa Fe.

He and Rosenshein own most of the property next to Las Palomas, 460 W. San Francisco St., and he said he received a positive response to his plan from a neighbor Friday.

The winter months after Christmas are off-season for Las Palomas, where rooms, with kitchenettes and laundry facilities, go for \$150 a night, Margetson said. There is room for nine women and their children.

Margetson said he and Rosenshein were galvanized to help after they read about residents

of McKenzie Street who opposed Youth Shelters' plan to move its Street Outreach Center into their neighborhood.

Rowell said the Street Outreach Center, a drop-in, daytime facility whose lease on McKenzie Street was canceled this month, still is without a home.

Two offers have been made of buildings to house the program, but neither was in the downtown area, where Youth Shelters can best serve homeless youths, she said.

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