

Flatiron/23rd St. BID launches homeless outreach program



Photo by Mort Sheinman

BID outreach workers Samantha Simms and Jacqueline Cohen

The Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Business Improvement District, working in conjunction with Urban Pathways, has initiated a Homeless Outreach program.

A two-person team provided by Urban Pathways began patrolling the district on December 3, offering medical assistance to the homeless when needed and shelter when requested. Until March 31, the Flatiron district's Homeless Outreach team will be on duty from Monday to Friday, for a total of 20 hours a week. From April 1 to June 30, when warmer weather is expected to increase the homeless population on the street, the shifts will increase to 35 hours a week. Twice a month, a five-hour Saturday/Sunday overnight shift or a mid-week overnight outreach will replace two five-hour weekday shifts.

"We know through our own observation that our hard-core

population of chronically homeless individuals are typically within the BID vicinity both day and night," said Jennifer Brown, the Flatiron Partnership's executive director.

She explained that nighttime hours are important both to coincide with the food drops that are made during those times and to reach the homeless who might come into the district only after dark to find places to sleep.

"Working with Urban Pathways, we hope to decrease the homeless population in the district by providing a team of trained outreach workers to provide ongoing assistance, program referrals, and shelter and housing options to homeless individuals in need of services," said Brown.

Urban Pathways is a non-profit agency that provides assistance to the homeless. The Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership BID is also a not-for-profit organization.