In from the Cold

So far this winter season, we have had 27 white flag nights. During this time Greensboro Urban Ministry’s Weaver House lobby is opened to host an additional 25 men and women in addition to the 100 guests already sheltered on site. Using the City of Greensboro Winter Emergency Response Plan as a guide, the city and agencies declare white flag emergency conditions when temperatures drop to a wind chill of 25 degrees or colder for two or more hours. We partner with the Interactive Resource Center, YWCA, and the city to ensure those who are living outside have a safe and warm place to go.

Partnerships are essential as we seek to serve during the critical winter season. Our congregational partners open their doors and extend the warmth of Weaver House in their own facilities through the WE! Program. It’s humbling to think of the manpower and logistics it takes to set up additional shelter sites from December to March.

As you look through this special Winter Newsletter, I hope you will see the opportunity and change that can occur when we open our doors and help our neighbors come in from the cold. You can directly impact this work today with a gift to our winter fund. We are only able to facilitate this work because of you.

WE! Help Needed
Currently, we have one less WE! Site this winter season and need a fifth site ASAP for up to 20 women through March. If you know of a Congregation that can offer space in their facilities to serve as a WE!, contact Mark Sumerford at 336.553.2645 or sumerford@guministry.org.
Winter Fund: How You Can Help

In addition to the volunteer hours and donated meals, we estimate that it will cost $42,200 to run the WE! Program this season. Your contribution to Greensboro Urban Ministry provides funding for site expenses, transportation, and case management. Gifts to the Winter Fund are put directly in use to support providing a safety net for those experiencing homelessness, but more importantly provide opportunity. You can make a gift today with the envelope provided or online at greensborourbanministry.org.

WE! Program
GUM Weaver Extension Sites

WE! is an extension of Weaver House Shelter and provides a safe, comfortable place for those individuals experiencing homelessness to spend the night during the winter months (December 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019). Organized through an innovative, family-model approach, registered guests stay at the same WE! Site for the duration of the winter. This eliminates uncertainty and stress for the guests and allows volunteers to build community during this season.

Guests work with case managers to focus on improving their situation by connecting with community resources, obtaining stable housing, and seeking employment that will lead to self-sufficiency. Volunteers at WE! sites provide a welcoming environment for our guests and some become passionate advocates, raising awareness of hunger and homelessness within their congregations and the wider community.

Special Thanks to our Congregational Site Hosts
• Faith Step Ministries Church
• Grace Community Church
• Mt. Zion Baptist Church
• West Market United Methodist Church

As an extension of the Weaver House Shelter Program, the WE! Program follows Weaver House admission guidelines. For more information or to refer, please contact Weaver House at 336.553.2665. To volunteer, contact Gail Lewis at lewis@guministry.org or 336.553.2642.

Help GUM #FeedGSO on April 5 & 6

Save the Date! Local grocery stores, News 2, and three dozen congregations are teaming up with Greensboro Urban Ministry for the spring #FeedGSO Community Food Drive on April 5 and 6, 2019. Shoppers can easily contribute nonperishable food items to GUM’s food pantry on these special days by adding a few items to their cart and dropping them off with volunteers outside of participating grocery stores.

Visit https://greensborourbanministry.org/events/food-drives/ for a list of needed items for the Food Pantry.

If you can’t participate but want to support this critical event, make a gift to Greensboro Urban Ministry’s food pantry online. Visit our website at greensborourbanministry.org and designate your gift for the food ministry.

Last year Urban Ministry distributed 1,435,348 pounds of food to households in need in the Greater Greensboro area!
Creating Warmth and Community in the Cold

Following the death of his grandmother in 2018, Kasim moved from New Jersey where he had a job driving a fork lift, to Greensboro to be near cousins. Kasim’s grandmother not only cared for him but also helped him navigate permanent memory issues resulting from short term memory loss. When the transition to Greensboro did not go well, Kasim found himself living in the park.

“My cousins did not want anything to do with me and told me to go to the homeless shelter,” Kasim shared. Upon finding Potter’s House Community Kitchen at Greensboro Urban Ministry (GUM), Kasim received a hot meal but more importantly support. “Every time I came to eat there was this man that kept saying ‘come back, come back.’ So I did.”

In September, Kasim met Angel Baptist in her first week as a case manager for GUM. “I explained my problem to her and she said, ‘I got you.’ Next thing I knew she was connecting me to Goodwill to start a job training program. She asked when I could start, and I said NOW!”

“When I first met Kasim, he had no ID, no place to live, and no prospects for work,” shared Angel. “Quickly, we were able to get him an ID so that he could look for work. Kasim did great establishing a work history through the Goodwill job training program and now is an employee.”

When the weather started to change this winter, Angel connected Kasim to one of GUM’s WE! (Weaver Extension) Sites at West Market Street UMC. “It’s a beautiful place,” Kasim says again and again. He is not just referring to the building, but the people and the way they make him feel. “They really take care of you there.”

For the past 10 years, West Market Street UMC has served as a winter shelter. They have also seen the transition from emergency shelter, housing different individuals each night, to an extension of Weaver House providing shelter to the same group each night during the winter months with the wrap around support of our Case Management team. They partner with Christ United Methodist Church, First Lutheran Church, Trinity Church, and Westminster Presbyterian Church, to provide the volunteer support and meals for the guests they house each night.

“It becomes a family,” said Debbie Taylor, Director of Outreach for West Market Street UMC. “You see the same faces each night. We really encourage our teams to eat with our guests and connect. Volunteers are always surprised how nice and grateful guests are.”

“What I love most about this program is that we are giving them the opportunity to not have to worry about the day to day struggle of what will I eat, where will I sleep, but instead give them a moment to plan ahead,” shared Debbie. Several guests leave the WE! Sites with job opportunities or housing. Two of Debbie’s Outreach staff members were WE! Site guests. As for Kasim, he’s saving for a place of his own.

“Ms. Debbie reminds me of my grandma,” Kasim says. “She’s a nice lady. She looks after me, but calls me on my stuff.” It is that sense of warmth and community that brings about solutions to poverty.
Serving Greensboro Together

Let’s Dine out on Tuesday, May 7! #SGT4Hunger

Serving Greensboro Together is an annual event with over 100 participating restaurants donating 10% of sales that day to Greensboro Urban Ministry's Potters House Community Kitchen. A list of participating restaurants will become available in early April and will continue to be updated as restaurants join the event. https://greensborourbanministry.org/events/serving-greensboro-together/

If you know of a restaurant that would like to participate, please contact Cheryl Ledford at 336.553.2641 or ledford@guministry.org.

Please like our Facebook page and find us on Twitter and Instagram (@gsourbanmin) to get the latest updates on the work that you make possible through your support of GUM.