



## For the Homeless, It's No Winter Wonderland

When the first winter breeze blows through the trees, people begin thinking about sipping hot chocolate, curling up in a cozy blanket, and staying inside. Cold weather brings people together as we yearn for warmth and connection. Winter is the perfect season for these things...except for those who don't have a home.

For the homeless, winter can cause anxiety and uncertainty. Many will scramble to find decent, gently used coats and blankets to stay warm. Some may receive the help of friends or family to battle the weather. But some of our most vulnerable, single, homeless adults may not have a support system at all. Even some homeless families with children find themselves exposed to the elements when staying outside. Those who sleep outdoors in the cold face the risk of dehydration, frostbite, and/or hypothermia.

The cold not only affects the homeless, it also impacts the lives of low income families and individuals with scarce resources. Many people still find themselves suffering from extreme weather conditions due to a lack of proper heat or electricity. Lack of access to a proper diet may also increase the chances of sickness. All of these factors raise concerns as we strive to serve those who are most vulnerable.

The winter season is one of the most crucial times of the year for Greensboro Urban Ministry to provide services to the community. Thanks to your generosity and the vital partnerships we have with community agencies and faith groups, we provide support to the most vulnerable in the following ways:

- Each night during the winter we provide a warm, welcoming, and safe shelter to 100 men and women at our Gate City Boulevard location and to 16 families at The Pathways Center.
- Through partnerships with the YWCA, Faith Step Ministries, West Market UMC and Grace Community Church, 57 additional adults are provided with emergency temporary shelter from December through March.
- Financial assistance is provided to men, women and families through our Emergency Assistance Program that keeps the heat on and helps people avoid eviction.
- We will provide emergency groceries, including meats and fresh vegetables to approximately 2,000 households per month.

All of these services are made possible through community partnerships, from those who give financial support, from collaborative work with local agencies and faith groups, and from the hundreds of hours that volunteers contribute each month through our agency.

Together, we can continue to serve our neighbors in need through the winter.

Please consider making a gift to the **Winter Fund** in support of our services this winter. Your generous financial gift can help decrease the anxiety winter can bring to those fighting to stay warm, clothed and fed.

*As* I write this note, I am looking out the window of my office. Across the street, in the archway of a building, are a blanket and some personal items that belong to a woman who frequently sleeps there. We have offered her shelter and other assistance over the past several months. Sometimes, she agrees to come inside to receive shelter and food from us. Other times, due to her personal struggles, she is unable to make the choice to accept our help. On some cold mornings, I have come to work and have seen her sleeping under blankets and coats, trying to stay warm.

My heart aches for this dear woman. Our team of caring staff continues to make every effort to reach out to her to offer help and hope as best we can. I am also burdened for the scores of others in our community who do not have a warm and safe place to sleep at night...our many neighbors who experience homelessness during the frigid nights of winter.

I am thankful for friends like you who give financially. Your support helps us remain on the frontlines of help and hope for those in the community needing a warm and safe place to lay their heads this winter. Because of you, we stand ready daily to give vital aid to those who find themselves unsheltered this winter. And while I long for the day when our neighbor who sleeps across the street is ready to come in from the cold and receive our full measure of compassionate support, I am thankful for those we are able to fully help every day.

As you read this newsletter, please consider a generous gift of support to us today to provide crucial shelter for our neighbors in need. Together we are making a difference in the lives of many!

For those who need us,

*Rev. Myron W. Wilkins*  
Myron

### UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 23rd	HOPE FEST
MARCH 28th	PTI Run on the Runway
APRIL 24th & 25th	Spring FOOD DRIVE
MAY 5th	Serving Greensboro Together
October 4th	CROP WALK

For details on these events, please go to our website!  
[www.greensborourbanministry.org/events/](http://www.greensborourbanministry.org/events/)



# Volunteers Are Priceless

Without volunteers, our nation would be lacking many essential services for its communities. Greensboro Urban Ministry would not exist without the strength of our volunteers who have contributed countless hours over the past 53 years.

When questioning your thoughts about why volunteering is so important, and about personally volunteering, assisting those who are less fortunate should be the most compelling reason to take the plunge. There are additional compelling reasons as well.

First, non-profits rely heavily on volunteers. In fact, there are many organizations which are run completely by volunteers. Second, studies have shown that volunteering positively impacts the well-being of the volunteer. In a paper published by Harvard Health, the authors noted that volunteers benefit from something they call the "happiness effect." In other words, we all win... it's as simple as that!

In spite of--or even because of--the stresses of life and our supposed lack of time, we should really make the time to get out there and volunteer! Do good, feel happier, build relationships, learn new skills and have an impact on something and someone important to you and to our community. You don't have to jet across the world to make a difference; you can contribute in your own backyard by volunteering with GUM.

There are countless opportunities throughout GUM for you to make an impact:

- Volunteers do everything from greeting clients to making meals.
- Volunteers interview families in crisis and provide support and guidance.
- Volunteers gather and sort donations of food and deliver full bags of groceries to families who have come in for emergency food assistance.
- Volunteers serve as Stephen Ministers and console clients through the organization.

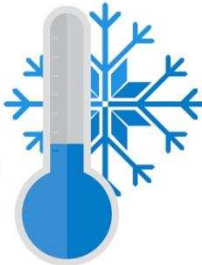
Creative writing, filing, playing music, providing free haircuts, and so many more opportunities await you as a GUM volunteer. All that is missing is **YOU!**

If you are interested in working with us, as an individual or as a group, we are excited to find the connecting point for you here. You can learn a great deal about volunteering by visiting our website, [www.GreensboroUrbanMinistry.org/volunteer](http://www.GreensboroUrbanMinistry.org/volunteer), and you can also contact Gail Gore-Lewis, Director of Volunteer Services, at [lewis@guministry.org](mailto:lewis@guministry.org).

## GUM WEAVER EXTENSION SITES

- Greensboro Urban Ministry provides shelter 365 nights a year for 86 men, 14 women, and 16 families. During the coldest months of the year (December to March), Urban Ministry partners with other community agencies and congregations to create additional Weaver Extension (WE) sites.
- The Greensboro YWCA, Faith Step Ministries, West Market UMC and Grace Community Church have partnered with GUM this winter to provide a safe, warm place for an additional 57 adults! We would like to say THANK YOU to these 4 host site partners for their faithful partnership and support!
- Thanks to their partnership, more of our neighbors in need will have a warm place to sleep at night rather than struggling to stay warm outdoors!

## What is a Winter White Flag Night?



This winter, when shelters are at capacity, and the temperature drops to a wind chill of 25 degrees or lower, the city will declare a "White Flag Night". The White Flag initiative is part of Greensboro's Winter Emergency Response Plan, designed to ensure that those who are living outside have a safe place indoors in which to escape the frigid temperatures.

Greensboro Urban Ministry and other local agencies will serve as "Warming Centers". The city identifies a "Warming Center" as a large heated space with chairs rather than beds that allows people to sit indoors and out of the cold.

In addition to the 100 adults sheltered nightly in GUM's Weaver House shelter and the 57 people staying at one of the winter extension sites, GUM will open its lobby and host up to 20 more men and women overnight. Last winter, over 20 White Flag Nights were declared from November through January, and additional nights were declared in February. This year, our winter has been milder, but when the white flag is waved.... GUM's "Warming Center" will be ready!

During 2019,  
Greensboro Urban  
Ministry Provided  
Nearly **75,000**  
Nights of Shelter for  
Homeless Individuals.