

Early Success for the Route 1 Homeless Ministry

1 A single mom scheduled for brain surgery was keeping her family together in a motel. Fear that her three children would be taken from kept her from seeking help. She had a Housing Choice voucher but was physically unable to look for an apartment. One of our congregations cared for her children during the surgery, helped them find an apartment, cleaned it and moved them in. Her son was helped to enroll in a GED program.

1 During January's bitter weather, an unemployed woman was found living in her broken-down car. Fear of the unknown kept her from accepting temporary winter shelter. A mechanic connected with one of our churches had the car towed and repaired at minimal cost all covered by donated funds. With a volunteer's encouragement, the woman found confidence to accept shelter. She's now employed and working toward achieving permanent housing.

**"I was sick all week.
That food and heater saved my life"**

1 Two men suffering from mental illness received psychiatric evaluation and prescriptions. Now back on their medication, both are looking for employment and permanent housing.

1 An admitted alcoholic living in the woods was reunited with his church and is currently sober.

1 After one bitterly cold weekend in February, a man told us, "I was sick all week. That food and heater saved my life"

1 Six persons got their ID and Social Security cards, an essential step to receiving social services and gaining employment. Two persons have applied for Housing Choice vouchers.

In just six months, 33 churches, organizations and businesses have come together to provide **over 1,600 meals, hundreds of clothing items, equipment and supplies, and over 1,300 hours of volunteer time.**

Our very grateful homeless brothers and sisters ask that we pass on their thanks to these generous contributors:

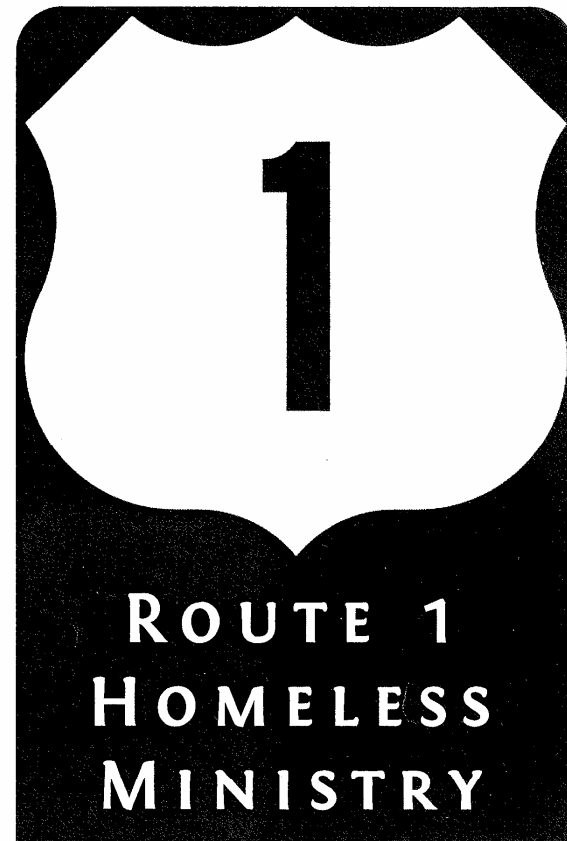
Alive Community Church * Ascend One Corporation * Bethany Lane Baptist Church * Bethany United Methodist Church * Bridgeway Community Church * Calvary Community Church * Celebration Church * Christ Church Link * Christ Episcopal Church * Christ Memorial Presbyterian Church * City of Hope * Columbia Baptist Fellowship * Columbia Presbyterian Church * Columbia United Christian Church * Community Baptist Church * Covenant Presbyterian Church * First Baptist Church of Guilford * GenXaret, Inc. * Glen Mar United Methodist Church * Grace Community Church * Grace Episcopal Church * Kittamaquundi Community Church * Koinonia Fellowship * Living Hope Presbyterian Church * New Hope Lutheran Church * New Life Mennonite Church * Salvation Army * St. John's Episcopal Church * St. Peter's Episcopal Church * St. Stephen's AME Church * The Elkridge Love Mission * Trinity Episcopal Church * Unitarian Universalist Church.

Services to clients have been provided by Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, Howard County Health Department, and Howard County Mental Health Authority.

Seed funding for this project was provided by the Department of Citizen Services, The Horizon Foundation, Columbia Foundation, and United Way of Central Maryland.

Add your name to this list!

**Contact Anne Dunn
Project Coordinator
410-461-4638**



'Lord,
when did we see you **hungry** and feed you,
or **thirsty** and give you something to drink?
When did we see you **a stranger**
and invite you in,
or **needing clothes** and clothe you?
When did we see you **sick** or in prison
and go to visit you?'

The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth,
**whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers
of mine, you did for me.'**

— Matthew 25:37-40

**"...AN AMAZING
OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT
TO HELP THE HOMELESS!"**

Through the Route 1 Homeless Ministry, the faith community and others are reaching out to Howard County's most vulnerable, giving them hope, dignity and the assurance that there are people who care about them.

Starting with two churches in December 2007, we've since grown to include more than 30 churches and have served around 65 different homeless individuals living along the Route 1 corridor.

As the weather warmed this Spring, the number of homeless has nearly doubled and we're regularly providing meals and other assistance to about 40 persons.

Our volunteers' caring and sympathetic support has led to trusting relationships and candid communication opening new possibilities for the homeless.

What touches us most is the plight of these folks: fear, frustration, or a lack of basic skills keep them from the social services that could help. For some, mental illness makes them unable to navigate the process or trust the providers. Some are suffering from addictions that prevent them from setting any long term goals. The greatest obstacle is that most do not have identification or Social Security cards and lack the money, communications, transportation and mailing address needed to get their birth certificate — the one document that underpins the entire ID process and the first step in re-entering society.

As you may know, without ID you cannot be permanently or legitimately employed. So they find themselves stuck at the bottom with the first rung of the social services ladder tauntingly out of reach.

We are cheered by the successes and challenged by the continuing struggle of the others.

**YOU WAKE UP IN THE WOODS WITH
NO MONEY, NO ID, AND ONLY THE
CLOTHES ON YOUR BACK. IT'S BEEN
A LONG TIME SINCE YOU'VE BEEN AT
YOUR BEST AND TODAY'S NOT
LOOKING ANY BRIGHTER...**

**YOUR GOAL FOR THE DAY IS TO FIND
FOOD AND AVOID POTENTIALLY
HOSTILE ELEMENTS UNSYMPATHETIC
TO YOUR PLIGHT. YOU'LL ALWAYS
BE TREATED WITH SUSPICION AND
YOU'LL NEVER QUITE BE SURE JUST
WHO YOU CAN TRUST. IF YOU MAKE
IT UNTIL NIGHTFALL UNSCATHED,
YOU'LL GET TO TRY TO FALL ASLEEP
— IN THE WOODS — KNOWING THAT
THE NEXT DAY MEANS DOING IT ALL
OVER AGAIN.**

**THE LATEST SEASON OF SURVIVOR?
No.**

**WELL, SORT OF —
YOU'RE HOMELESS IN AMERICA.**

**THE ROUTE 1 HOMELESS MINISTRY
USES THE STRENGTH AND
RESPONSIVENESS OF THE FAITH
COMMUNITY TO BRING OUR
HOMELESS BROTHERS AND SISTERS
OUT OF THE WOODS AND OFF THE
STREETS AND BACK INTO
COMMUNITY.**

Recognizing that more needs to be done, plans are now being made to open a Day Resource Center where we can provide food and supplies, showers and laundry, internet and mail services, and access to counseling and other mainstream social services, medical and psychiatric care, and employment opportunities.

Most importantly, a Center will allow the volunteer staff an opportunity to respond to needs with loving concern for individuals who have been alienated from families and from our community and have very little hope or support.

Our ministry thus far has had a tremendous impact on the lives of the homeless people in our community. But there is so much more we can do to provide hope and dignity to hurting people. So we ask for your involvement and support.

To move ahead, we are asking for donations or pledges of financial support and more volunteers. The homeless will be grateful for the continuing generous support of the churches.

**To learn how you and your
congregation can be part of this
growing effort, contact:**

**Anne Dunn, Project Coordinator,
Email: Anne@SpiritOfCommunity.net
410-461-4638**

**Donations to the Route 1 Homeless Project are
fully tax deductible and may be sent to our
fiscal agent:**

**Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, Inc
6700 Freetown Road
Columbia, MD 21044**

**Be sure to designate your donation
"Route 1 Homeless Outreach Project."**