



September 2017

Director's Corner:



Shannon Woloszynowski

August and September have been busy months at House of Mercy!

We rehoused 4 formerly homeless households and provided transportation back home for three others. One of these families had 7 children! As mom and her oldest daughter sat down to fill out scores of paperwork with Becki, our Housing Based Case Manager, she told us of her family's two-year struggle with finding a path to stability.

She said she and her husband wanted to be an example to their children of how hard work and perseverance can get you through hard times, and she told us about her dream of owning a home. We were able to provide her with information on the Virginia Housing Development Authority's Down Payment Assistance (DPA) grant that can provide eligible first-time homebuyers with funds needed for their down payment. She was excited to have something permanent to work toward and said that her new goal was to be a homeowner by the time her lease was up.

One of the clients we helped back home told us that he was tired of fighting the uphill battle of living outside. His family is in South Florida and was now picking up the pieces after Hurricane Irma swept through. They had been trying for months to get him to come back home, and right now they needed him he said.

At House of Mercy we often say that our ultimate goal with most all we do is permanent housing and stability. Be it rehousing the homeless or assisting struggling families to prevent homelessness—the hope is that we can provide a springboard to stability when people are ready to make that step. One of the ways we are able to do outreach to the local unsheltered homeless is through the Harbor. The Harbor is our day center for the homeless that was one of the start-up projects of the Greater Williamsburg Outreach Mission—it is literally a "room in the House"!

At first glance that Harbor appears to be merely a place of generous hospitality where the homeless can find a place of rest, a warm meal, and supportive services. The reality is, the Harbor is the vehicle through which we build relationships. It is through these relationships of trust that we can begin to assess the broader range of needs, and most importantly, begin the process of rehousing. The Harbor is staffed by volunteers from many of the member congregations of the Greater Williamsburg Outreach Mission. Harbor volunteers check-in guests, cook and serve meals, coordinate showers, assist in job searches, and visit with guests.

The Harbor is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, and we need volunteers! For more information, contact our Homeless Services Coordinator, Brenda Tamborini at the Harbor (757-345-2690), or by email btamborini@bedeva.org. A new volunteer training session is being held October 3rd so don't wait!

God bless all of the generous donors and supporters that continue to make Williamsburg House of Mercy a possibility. It is solely through those donations that we are able to open our doors each day to those in need in the Greater Williamsburg community. Be Mercy~

Upcoming Events:

- The Williamsburg House of Mercy Mobile Food Pantry is **October 6**.
- The Upper County Mobile Food Pantry at Stone House Presbyterian is **October 9**.



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