

Greensboro Winter Emergency Shelters To Open Early

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Greensboro -- On Saturday night, dozens of homeless people slept outside of a Salvation Army store due to a lack of beds inside its shelter.

"It just breaks my heart to see people having to sleep outside," explained Mike Aiken, executive director of Greensboro Urban Ministry, which operates a homeless shelter with 100 permanent beds. On Monday night, all of the beds at the shelter were occupied and 18 people were sleeping on floor mats. "At times, we had even more than 130 people here."

To deal with the overwhelming need, seven churches are partnering with the Urban Ministry to open Winter Emergency (WE) shelters, which will provide an additional 108 beds for the homeless. "We extended the WE season a full month," said Aiken. Last year, the emergency shelters opened on December 15 and closed March 15. This year, the shelters will remain open from December 1 through the end of March.

Last year the WE shelters were funded through Operation Greensboro Cares, a local fundraising campaign. This year, Urban Ministry needs to raise more than \$75,000 to keep the WE shelters operational. "This is a very generous community, and I'm sure the funds will come in," said Aiken.

If you would like to donate, contact Urban Ministry 336-271-5959.