

## **Urban Ministry calls for aid at overflow shelters**

Saturday, November 7, 2009

By Nancy H. McLaughlin

Staff Writer

News & Record

The need hasn't gone anywhere.

The Greensboro Urban Ministry last year was a major organizer of the Winter Emergency initiative, which involves staffing and food for overflow homeless shelter sites, most of which were located in churches. And executive director Mike Aiken is putting out a call for volunteers who can help again this winter.

Last year, as a result of the recent economic hurricane and the cold weather, Greensboro Urban Ministry's Weaver House Night Shelter for Single Adults was significantly over its capacity of 100 people. Many nights more than 50 men and 10 women were housed on the floor and in chairs at Weaver House in addition to the normal limit of 100 people sleeping in beds, Aiken said.

Last fall, more than 40 homeless families were on the waiting list at Pathways Center, the emergency shelter for homeless families. That's when Urban Ministry, with the support of Operation Greensboro Cares, opened the WE sites in the community.

Urban Ministry will again run the WE program beginning Dec. 1 and ending March 31. First-time participants First Baptist and FaithStep churches will join Grace Community, West Market Street United Methodist, First Presbyterian, Mount Zion Baptist, and Pleasant Garden Baptist as WE sites.

Urban Ministry's Weaver House will open 30 extra emergency beds during this period besides its regular 100-bed inventory.

The WE sites will add 100 to 115 beds. The American Red Cross will supply the WE sites with cots and bedding.

This is where the rest of the community comes in. Plenty of volunteers are needed.

Those interested in helping are invited to attend a training session from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Mullen Life Center, First Presbyterian Church, 700 N. Greene St.

Volunteers are encouraged to eat at 6 p.m., during Hot Dish and Hope, which serves a free meal to the hungry.

Information: Aiken at 271-5959, Ext. 302.