



To Our House

To Our House (**TOH**) is an interfaith and community services volunteer organization, serving single, homeless men in the New River Valley of Southwest Virginia.

TO OUR HOUSE END OF SEASON 3 NEWSLETTER 2013

The 2012-2013 To Our House (TOH) season got well underway after a successful completion of the second season of the program. Like years past, the summer months provided an opportunity to gather volunteers and prepare for the third season. This season was full of fellowship, warmth, and compassion. Each night, guests were transported to the host site and provided a hot meal, shower, and a warm and safe place to sleep. Most importantly, volunteers welcomed the men and made each guest feel valued and cared for.

The TOH model works because of the quality and commitment of the volunteers and what they bring to the host sites each night. A celebratory appreciation event for all our volunteers was hosted by TOH staff and the Policy Council in April at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church. Members of Pembroke FUMC generously catered a delicious buffet, prizes were donated by NRV restaurants and businesses, and two letters of appreciation from TOH guests were read to the group, one crediting “the churches” and TOH with “saving the life of this homeless man.” As experiences were shared, it was evident that mutual and heart-felt blessings occur between both guests and volunteers alike.



Volunteers from churches and organizations involved with TOH gather at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church for fellowship and to celebrate a successful third season of TOH!



The 2013-2014 season will run from November 2013 through March 2014

During the off-season, we collect supplies, arrange the shelter schedule for the next season, and most importantly build bridges in the community to connect our guests to the resources they need to move beyond homelessness. To Our House is a grass-roots organization that coordinates space and volunteers to provide shelter and compassion for homeless single men in the New River Valley. To become a Host or Support organization, or to get involved, contact the Program Coordinator, Carol Johnson at nrfamilyshester@gmail.com. For a presentation to your organization or congregation, contact Rev. Morris Fleischer at nmoumc@pemtel.net. If you wish to participate in expanding our vision and service, you are invited to join our meetings on the 4th Wednesdays each month at 3 PM at Fieldstone United Methodist Church in Christiansburg.

Service 2012-2013:

- Served the NRV for **21 weeks**
- Provided **1,206 bed nights**
- Sheltered **29 guests**
- Age Range of Guests: **18-64**
- Homeless less than 3 months: **15**

The highest number of guests in one night during Season 3 was **14 guests!**

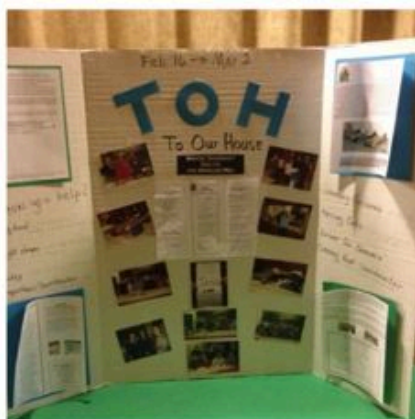
Volunteers 2012-2013:

- 12** host organizations
- 40** support organizations
- 3,618** meals served
- 1,235** volunteers
- 6,350** volunteer hours
- 2,850** AmeriCorps hours



"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."
— Anne Frank





Successes during the Season:

- 11 men** received permanent housing while in the program
- 4 men** became employed while in the program
- 2 men** began the disability process



Since Season 1 in 2010...

- 7,548 meals** provided
- 80 homeless men** served in the New River Valley
- 2,516 bed nights** provided

Special Notes:

Thank you to Fieldstone United Methodist Church for the space that they provide each month for the TOH Policy Council to conduct their meetings and for use of their van to provide transportation during the season.

Thank you to the 2012-2013 Policy Council Members and TOH Staff: Pat Akers, Mary Blakely, Corina Clark, Ina Dunford, Rev. Morris Fleischer, Domanick Fountain, Sarah Howlett, Carol Johnson, Rev. Bill King, Janne Mathes, Gabe Martin, Rhoda Myers, Loren Rees, Rebecca Rees, Nichole Slaughter, Hilary Smith, Melanie Smith, Terry Smusz, Brenda Sternfeld, Megan Stuart, Rev. Susan Verbrugge, Don Waite

Support was also provided through interested citizens from the community:

AmeriCorps
Blacksburg Transit (BT)
Budget Inn, Christiansburg
Department of Social Services
Homeless and Housing Program
Inn at Virginia Tech
Janice McCree, LMT
Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program (MCEAP)
NRV Superbowl
The Palisades Restaurant
Taco Inn, Radford
Virginia Cares

“During that stint I was surrounded by warmth and meals and a group of homeless men who became like family to me not to mention the TOH staff and each and everyone at all the churches. The TOH Program literally saved my life. Thanks to the program I am slowly but surely getting back on my feet.” - TOH guest, 2013

Volunteers: The heart, soul, and hands of TOA

Host Churches/Organizations 2012-2013 (12 total)

Blacksburg United Methodist Church
Blacksburg Presbyterian Church
Fairlawn Presbyterian Church
Fieldstone United Methodist Church, Christiansburg
Grace Episcopal Church, Radford
Grove United Methodist Church, Radford
Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Blacksburg
Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church, Christiansburg
New Life Christian Fellowship, Community
Congregation, Blacksburg
Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Christiansburg
Pembroke First United Methodist Church
St. Mary's Catholic Church, Blacksburg

Support Congregations/Organizations 2012-2013 (40 total)

Baptist Collegiate Ministries at VT (BCM)
Blacksburg Baptist Church
Blacksburg United Methodist Church
Castle Rock Baptist Church, Pembroke
Christ Episcopal Church, Blacksburg
Christiansburg Mennonite Fellowship
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Pembroke
Cornerstone Pentecostal Church, Narrows
Grace Episcopal Church, Radford
Fieldstone UMC, Christiansburg
First Baptist Church, Radford
First Christian Church, Narrows
Inn at Virginia Tech

Supports *cont.*

Jubilee Christian Church Dance Team, Fairlawn
Mt. Lebanon UMC, Pembroke
Mt. Olivet/Newport UMC
Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church, Christiansburg
Narrows UMC Men's Group
New Dublin Presbyterian Church
New Life Christian Fellowship, Community
Congregation, Blacksburg
New River Community Action, AmeriCorps
Members
Northstar Church, Blacksburg
Northstar Church, Pulaski
Oak View Christian Church, Newport
Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Christiansburg
Pearisburg Presbyterian Church
Pembroke Christian Church
Pembroke First United Methodist Church
Pembroke UMC Women
Pulaski Volunteers
Presbyterian Church of Radford
Rotary Club of Blacksburg
RSVP of Montgomery County
St. Mary's Catholic Church, Blacksburg
St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Blacksburg
St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Christiansburg
To Our House, Policy Council
Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Blacksburg
Unity Christian Church, Radford
Wesley Foundation at VT





To Our House

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TOH Newsletter, Vol. 3 by Rebecca Rees and Megan Stuart

The TOH model relies heavily on the in-kind contributions of space, food, and time of those organizations involved. In addition, financial contributions also make possible other essential elements, such as the cost of staff to organize and provide overnight coverage for the season. For safety and liability purposes, TOH must rely upon trained overnight staff, knowledgeable in proper medical, mental health, and safety standards. Your support ensures that TOH will continue to allow the at-risk members of the New River Valley to remain in their community while they work towards finding permanent housing. All donations to TOH are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law.

Mailing Address:

To Our House

c/o New River Community Action
1093 East Main Street
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