

*** MEDIA ADVISORY ***

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One person, one apartment, one job at a time...

The Volunteer Ministry Center (VMC), in collaboration with other local agencies, has placed seventy-three (73) people in permanent, supportive housing in 2008.

Taking a 'Housing First' approach to homelessness means going after the root cause of homelessness – the lack of permanent housing. Volunteer Ministry Center is taking a lead role in the City of Knoxville/Knox County Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. Housing First is the first strategy of the Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness.

"Housing First is an innovative approach to homelessness that places the City of Knoxville and Knox County on the cutting edge of homeless services. We are proud to partner with all the agencies that make the Housing First approach successful", said Ginny Weatherstone, chief executive officer of VMC.

The mission of VMC is to work with any homeless individual who comes to the Volunteer Ministry Center so that he/she will achieve housing within a definite and limited period of time, and then will access whatever support services are required to maintain her/himself in that housing. The Volunteer Ministry Center will work to prevent homelessness for those who are marginally housed.

Founded in 1987 by KICCUP, (Knoxville's Inner City Churches United for People) to fill a gap left by traditional missions, VMC now offers four programs designed to assist Knoxville's poor and homeless. VMC's Resource Center provides shelter, meals served by volunteer groups, access to basic facilities and case management to help people get into housing. The Refuge assists those who are marginally housed. VMC also makes medical, mental health and dental services available at no charge to those who are staying in a shelter. The Jackson Apartments are 16 rent subsidized apartments for formerly homeless men.

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