

*** MEDIA ADVISORY ***

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Minvilla Manor Groundbreaking

The Volunteer Ministry Center (VMC) will be breaking ground on Minvilla Manor, formerly the 5th Ave. Motel, on Tuesday, September 8th at 10:00 a.m.

Minvilla Manor will offer 57 rent subsidized apartments for formerly homeless men and women. With on-site case management and 24 hour awake staff, Minvilla Manor will provide hope, home and health to 57 formerly homeless individuals.

"VMC is honored to be able to renovate this historic building; it will become something that will benefit the entire Knoxville community," said Ginny Weatherstone, CEO. "Many people and organizations have worked hard to make this happen and we are grateful to all of them." David Arning of Southeastern Housing Foundation has served as the developer for this project. Allan and Associates are the architects; Wood Brothers Construction is the contractor.

Minvilla Manor is located across 5th Ave. from VMC's new facility which was completed in March of 2009. VMC's main facility offers homeless prevention services through the Bush Family Refuge; housing and case management services through the Resource Center; and dental services through the VMC Dental Clinic. Cherokee Health System provides both primary health care and mental health services on site.

Minvilla Manor is an important piece in the Knoxville/Knox County Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. The first strategy of that plan involves the concept of "housing first" and states that assisting homeless individuals into permanent supportive housing is the most effective way of ending homelessness. Each individual also works with a designated case manager who helps them acclimate to a more stable and productive lifestyle. VMC has been using a housing first approach for two and a half years. Their success rate of helping people retain that housing is 88%, above the national average of 80 to 85%. Minvilla Manor will expand VMC's capacity to house the homeless.

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.

The Volunteer Ministry Center was established in 1987 by concerned individuals and churches from the downtown area who observed a growing number of homeless people on the streets during the day time hours. Over the past three years, VMC has gradually adapted its programming to place a greater emphasis on efforts to help the homeless into housing as quickly as possible. Case Management is a key component of this model. Accountability is required within the case management relationship. VMC has placed over 250 individuals in housing over the last three years with ongoing case management as a feature of each placement.

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