

*** MEDIA ADVISORY ***

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Hope, Home & Health

The Volunteer Ministry Center (VMC) will be holding a processional from its current building located at 103 S. Gay St. to their new facility at 511 N. Broadway on Saturday, March 7, 2009 at 11:15 a.m.

VMC will serve the breakfast in the dining hall and then the processional will leave from the Gay St. building and walk to the new building where tours and lunch will be offered. All media are invited to attend the processional activities.

"Our new facility will allow us the opportunity for more effective service," said Ginny Weatherstone, CEO. "We are grateful to the community that has made this building and this move possible. We will now be able to help even more individuals attain their goal of housing."

VMC's new facility will offer homeless prevention through the Bush Family Refuge, a volunteer operated program that assists the marginally housed who are facing a crisis. The Resource Center will provide assistance to the homeless who wish to access housing and who enter a Case Management relationship with a VMC staff member. Classes will be conducted at the Resource Center and meals will be served by volunteer meal groups. Dental clinic services will be offered by VMC at no cost for the homeless. Cherokee Health System will provide both primary health care and mental health services on site in a new clinic facility.

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. In its original Gay Street location, VMC offered the only day shelter, providing day time accommodations to the homeless. 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 150 individuals in housing over the last two years with ongoing case management as a feature of each placement.

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