

Community of Faith Mission is a faith-based, non-governmental low barrier emergency shelter ministry, which, through the efforts of volunteers, provides emergency shelter and food on a weekly basis from November through March for men, women, and families who are homeless in the Greater Williamsburg, Virginia area.

www.cofm.info

Spring 2016 Newsletter



Shelter Schedule 2015-2016

Nov.15-22	St. Bede Parish Center
Nov.22-29	Williamsburg Community Chapel
Nov.29-Dec. 6	Crosswalk Community Church
Dec.6-13	Williamsburg Presbyterian Church
Dec.13-20	Williamsburg United Methodist Church
Dec.20-23; Dec. 26-27	Williamsburg Christian Church
Dec.27-Jan. 3	Williamsburg Church of Christ
Jan 3. -10	New Town United Methodist Church
Jan.10-17	St. John Baptist Church
Jan. 17-24	Williamsburg United Methodist Church
Jan.24-31	Bruton Parish Church Parish House
Jan.31-Feb.7	Hickory Neck Episcopal Church
Feb.7-14	Life Church
Feb.14-21	Williamsburg Community Chapel
Feb. 21-28	Walnut Hills Baptist Church
Feb.28-Mar. 6	Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church
Mar. 6 - 13	James River Baptist Church
Mar.13-20	Smith Memorial Baptist Church

Fourth Season Recap

The fourth year of the emergency winter shelter wouldn't have been possible without the support and helping hands of our 32 Shelter Hosts and Partners. They have provided every aspect of hospitality and comfort that goes into the emergency winter shelter as well as logistical support for the emergency winter shelter for those in our community without a home.

We would like to recognize the efforts of our intern, Josiah Day. We are also happy to report that the new nightly Shelter Manager program has been well received. Shelter Manager Kris Magnussen will return for the 2016-17 shelter, and we will hire a second shelter manager for two nights each week. We have received a lot of positive feedback from our partners that having our Shelter Managers at Host Sites provided partners with support that was helpful particularly when any issues arose at the shelter. This year we took a new approach to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day hospitality. We would like to thank the Days Inn Colonial (downtown), Pineapple Inn and Housing Center, and Quarter Path Inn and Suites for generously providing hotels for our shelter guests for Dec. 24 and Dec. 25.

Our guests always appreciate and use the hygiene kits that we are able to provide, thanks to partners such as Wellspring United Methodist Church, Smith Memorial and St. John the Baptist who together provided 600 hygiene kits.

As always, we lean on the support of a number of agencies in the area, including law enforcement and county officials, the Virginia Regional Peninsula Jail, the R.F. Wilkinson Family YMCA and social service agencies and service providers. Through our referrals to other community resources we have seen more guests move out of the shelter to other housing alternatives earlier in the season, allowing us to better manage our shelter guest numbers. We only went over our 25 person per night capacity two times. We hosted our second annual Warm up Williamsburg event this year, providing a delicious, hospitable way to both raise money and connect with our partners. We also want to thank Pete Henderson of Henderson, Inc. for donating much needed storage for our supplies; and Riverside Supply Company for donating paper products.

We are now planning for the next shelter season. Signups will be April 11 and 12 for slots for the 2016-2017 season. See page 3 for details!

Shelter Host Sign-ups for 2016-2017

Mon April 11 and Tues
Apr 12 beginning at 9
a.m. See p. 3 for details.

Shelter Partners

2015-2016

Our Shelter Partners play a vital role by providing volunteers, food, and support to Shelter Hosts. Thank you!

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

First Baptist Church

Greater City

Hickory Neck Episcopal Church/St. Martin Episcopal (co-hosts)

James City Community Church

Kingdom Life Church

King of Glory Lutheran Church

New Zion Baptist Church

St. Olaf Catholic Church

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Stonehouse Presbyterian Church

Temple Beth El

Unity Fellowship Church

Williamsburg Baptist Church

Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists

Zion Baptist Church

Sheltering Families

We are frequently asked how many families stay at the shelter. The short answer is very few. In our four years of operation we have had only four families stay at the shelter. None our first two years, and two last year, one of which stayed a short period of time. This year we only had two families stay at the shelter, with children present for only nine nights.

COFM will always provide shelter to families in need, however, philosophically our Board believes that a homeless shelter is not a good environment for children. Whenever a family arrives at the shelter our policy is to immediately try to refer families to another resource in the community that can provide a more stable sheltering alternative. This is common practice among other rotating shelter programs. Lynn Finding, the Executive Director of PORT, a shelter program in Newport News, stated that PORT

will allow a family to stay one night before calling social services the next day to try and make other arrangements. Like other established shelter programs, we too recognize children need stability and moving day to day and week to week is not in a child's best interest. Additionally, when there are no shower facilities or bus service to school, good hygiene practices and regular school attendance suffer. Our program has been fortunate over the last four years. We have not had to reach out for support for families very often because agencies and service providers have continued to make sheltering families a priority. When a family has shown up at a COFM site, we have had the support of Avalon, City of Williamsburg and James City County Social Services, Saint Bede Outreach and United Way to help families find more permanent sheltering alternatives.

Soup Tasting Fundraiser a Success

Our second soup-tasting event, Warm Up Williamsburg, raised more than \$10,000, 100% of which goes to COFM. We hope to use these funds for shelter operations and our reserve fund to hire a part time Executive Director for Fall 2016.

The Jan. 29 event, held at Williamsburg United Methodist Church, featured food prepared by chefs throughout the community. For a complete listing of our generous sponsors and participating restaurants, and donors, please visit our website www.cofm.info.



Warm Up Williamsburg Committee: Left to right Missy Carr, Vicki Walsh, COFM Board Member and Chair Annabelle Socha, Pam Schlickemeyer, and Mary Jo Headley

Shelter Week Sign-ups Will Begin April 11

For shelter season 5, we will be using a different process this year for sign-ups. We understand many church calendars fill up quickly so we want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to schedule their shelter week well in advance.

Beginning Monday April 11, we will begin shelter week sign ups through the COFM website for the 2016-2017 shelter season. This process will continue for two days ending April 12. We will not be using a first come first serve sign up process due to the fact that so many requests came in during the first three minutes last year and many requested the same dates. In the interest of fairness, and to better serve the program we thought we would try a new format.

At the end of the week we will look at all of the shelter week requests

and make every effort to honor your preferred dates. However, to best serve the shelter program and assign all 18 weeks, we might need to honor your second, third or fourth week choices. With 18 weeks of shelter offered we ask that you provide at least three and preferably four weeks that work for your congregation. Last year we were able to honor most first and second choice weeks for Host Partners. Our experience has shown that many congregations request the January and February weeks as their first and second choice. Please keep in mind that those months make up only nine weeks of the 18 week schedule so please try to include weeks outside of that time period in your submission. Thank you for your continued support of our shelter program!

Newsletter Editor News

Lynn Blankman, who has served as our industrious and creative newsletter editor for several seasons, has moved. We will miss her! She was committed to using her gifts and talents to serve COFM and the vulnerable in Williamsburg. We know she will be a blessing to her new community.

We welcome Madeline Vann, MPH, who is serving as our current newsletter editor. Madeline has volunteered with the emergency winter shelter and works locally as a freelance health and medical writer. Welcome aboard!

Part-time Shelter Manager Needed

The COFM Board is seeking a part-time shelter manager to work for two nights a week from mid November- mid March next season. Training provided. Manager will be responsible for all tasks related to shelter

operations. Excellent verbal, written and interpersonal skills a must. Candidate must be able to problem solve, be assertive, and be a team player. Resumes and interested parties should respond to www.cofm.info after May 1, 2016.

Bus Ticket Donors

The City of Williamsburg Human Services and James City County Social Services have been very generous with the provision of bus tickets for our guests this season. The majority of shelter guests do not have their own transportation. We are very grateful for the bus ticket donations as they allow guests to use WATA to get to and from the shelter and to appointments around town.

Season 4 By the Numbers

16	Host Partners
16	Shelter Partners
126	Nights of shelter
105	Individual guests
68%	Percentage male/female guests
32%	Children
2	Age range
3-73	Repeat guests from 2014-2015 season
27	Hygiene kits provided
600	Volunteers who cooked, served, shared fellowship and offered hope
2400+	Meals provided
4000+	nights at capacity
7	nights over capacity
2	nights over capacity

Many Thanks!

We are very grateful for the continued financial support, materials, and time provided by congregations, individual donors, and businesses.

Please check our website for a complete list of donors and sponsors.

COFM - Scenes from Season Four

with thanks to those congregations forwarding photos

Ring the Freedom Bell on behalf of COFM



Board Members Kenneth Haywood, Kathy Banfield, Renee Collins and Bill Johnson Ring the Freedom Bell at hisotirc First Baptist Church.



Musical entertainment for shelter guests at Grace Covenant Church.



Top left: Volunteers at Life Church. Top: Shelter volunteers. Middle left: Double Take A Capella warms up for WUW. Bottom: Culinary Institute of Virginia Chefs at WUW.



Above: Bruton Parish Canterburians prepare to serve shelter guests. Middle left: Host and shelter partners at Walnut Hills Baptist. Borrom left: Shelter guest is treated to a hair cut at Smith Memorial Baptist Church.



“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” --- Helen Keller

Visit the COFM Website

Do you want to keep up with the latest news and developments from COFM? Sign up on the website to receive this newsletter: www.cofm.info, or our facebook page.

We want thank our former web deisgner Dave Banks, who generously provided his services to COFM for three years.

Board Member Todd VanTasel, Director of Technology, has taken over as webmaster. In that role, he will be making some changes to our website over the summer. Stay tuned to find out how to better get the word out.

