



# CHRISTIAN SHELTER

Salisbury, Maryland



## A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2023



### A CAREER OF GIVING AND CARING

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David V. Downes  
Bryan E. Murfree  
Rita A. Plaskon  
Jeffrey C. Downes  
Carlton W. Bradshaw  
Jane A. Hoy  
Gus P. Lebois  
Mark S. Thompson

#### Associate Board Member

Teresa Niblett

#### Emeritus

Ted R. Evans

#### Executive Director

J. Anthony Dickerson

#### Attorney

John C. Seipp

#### Accountant

Robert E. Holloway

Mary Williams, the Christian Shelter's current Administrator, was one of a group of churchgoers that provided evening devotions to the Shelter's guests twenty years ago. Through that church, she became aware of the Shelter and its service to the homeless. Thinking about her first visit so long ago, Mary said, "I just loved the atmosphere at the Shelter!" She had never worked with the homeless before, nor did she understand the reasons behind homelessness. As God would have it, a staff job became available during 2002 and Mary felt called to apply. She was already ministering in her church, and felt there was no better place to serve others. After a successful interview, her Christian Shelter journey began.

Sister Mary – as she is fondly known here – admits having many preconceived ideas about someone who was homeless. Alcohol, drugs, and physical abuse certainly play a big role in many homeless scenarios, but we all know life can be hard and brutal at times, especially when living it without faith. During the early days of Mary's employment, she learned that if she was going to help guests effectively, there were some unresolved personal issues of her own that needed to be turned over to God. She prayed and asked God for forgiveness for things in her past, and in time that process enabled her the spiritual freedom to witness to guests.

"God brought healing and energizing change to my life," she says, and soon she began seeing a much clearer picture of homelessness. For the past twenty-one years, this good sister of faith honored God through her service. We asked her the question, "What kept you strong and focused on your work at Christian Shelter for all of these years?" She thought for a moment and said, "It must be the guests and the importance of everything we teach here. Knowing that there is the possibility of seeing one life changed, this is what keeps me strong."

Today, Sister Mary takes time to look at the heart of a person, to feel and understand what each is experiencing in life. During her many years of service, Mary worked the day and night shift. She's been a staff supervisor for both shifts, and in 2014 she was promoted to the job of Administrator. She worked in every position at the ministry and accumulated an enormous amount of knowledge. She dedicated time to understanding homelessness, and advises others without being judgmental. Her heart believes that everyone who comes to the Christian Shelter has been sent by God, and will have the opportunity to grow in faith if they so choose.

A shelter guest needs to be encouraged, and reminded that just because they are homeless now, it is not going to be that way forever. Mary states that each guest must be encouraged and reminded that there is hope, and to use this time at the shelter to work on improving themselves. Most of us heard negative things said, such as "you can't do anything right," or "you'll never be any good." When one grows up with these hurtful messages, it can become the only identity they know. Often, one cannot believe that they deserve better in their lives.

God has sent many wonderful people to serve and experience His teaching, all gifted with a heart of love for their fellow man. As one serves, they have the opportunity to see the smile on a child's face on Christmas morning, or the peace of mind brought to parents by having a warm and secure family space, or enjoying a wonderful holiday meal. One stands in awe of God's greatness when they witness the enormous amount of food and funding given every year by community donors, and that allows our staff to extend the hand of kindness and care to people in need.

The complexities of serving the homeless are many, and there will always be a need for service to these individuals. Since the early days of the ministry, many volunteers came to serve the guests. A special thanks to the shelter's original founders, who always sought God's will in their decision-making, and to Sister Mary Williams for her genuine empathy and encouragement to all who come through our doors seeking help.



Sister Mary Williams

#### Christian Shelter, Inc. mailing address is:

334 Barclay Street, Salisbury, MD 21804  
Phone: 410-749-LORD • Fax: 410-860-8992  
[www.christianshelter.org](http://www.christianshelter.org)

This shelter  
was planned, built &  
is provided for by...  
GOD  
through  
His people

## WHY IS HOMELESSNESS ON THE RISE?



**H**omelessness is a rampant issue affecting people around the globe. Despite the dedicated effort of individuals, charities, churches and government, the number of homeless people continues to increase. There are multiple reasons for this trend, including economic factors, social problems, and mental health issues.

The current state of most global economies, coupled with high levels of unemployment, under-employment, and low wages all contribute to the problem. Increasing housing costs – along with an affordable housing shortage – steepens the challenge facing more people today. This results in the necessity for people to live on the streets or in temporary accommodation.

There's more. Serious social factors including family breakdown, domestic violence and abuse, substance misuse, and mental health problems add to the weighty formula that results in homelessness. Individuals experiencing these issues often have nowhere else to go and require special support which can be difficult to access if they are already homeless.

Biblical scripture speaks about poverty and homelessness, urging people to show compassion for the poor and those in need. **Proverbs 28:27** states, *"Whoever gives to the poor will not want; but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse."* Meanwhile, **James 2:14-17** urges Christians to take action: *"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."*

In conclusion, homelessness is a complex problem with many underlying causes that require addressing. The gap between the rich and poor in society continues to widen. As Christians,

it is imperative to have a heart for the poor and work together with the government, business leaders, and community organizations to provide affordable housing solutions for the those in need.



J. Anthony Dickerson, Executive Director

## PAPER AND STICKY NOTES EVERYWHERE. HELLO, MISSION TRACKER SOFTWARE!

**T**oday, there are not many companies or organizations that rely on a paper process for information tracking. Over the past four decades, paper went the way of the dinosaur as nearly everybody converted to automated (computer) methods to keep records on just about everything.

Praise the Lord. The Christian Shelter finally abandoned paper too with its purchase of "Mission Tracker" software! The process of intake assessments – which enables us to know and track our homeless guests – was very cumbersome and inefficient. And we knew that. The Shelter's board and staff recently decided the time had come to put paper behind us. After researching multiple options, we decided to purchase Mission Tracker software.

The development of our new software was informed by case workers at homeless ministries just like ours. Mission Tracker has a ten-year track record, and the software company hosts more than 120 clients. Now, we can log into the module to create and update guest entries. The entries and information can be viewed by other

staff members. Case notes on a guest can be entered and seen by staff members who are authorized to see them, making our work more efficient and collaborative. Mission Tracker has valuable reporting features, too, enhancing our ability to assess our operations to better serve the homeless community.

We can also use the "Volunteer Tracker" module to maintain an active database of our volunteers and their activities. We can register, manage, schedule, track and report on an unlimited number of volunteers – even groups of volunteers. This is huge step forward for the Shelter to significantly enhance operational efficiency, information management and organizational accountability.







## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - PLEASE CONSIDER HELPING!



*Kitchen Helpers*

the pandemic restrictions and back to a normal schedule, the number of guests has swelled to pre-pandemic levels and beyond. However, our volunteer numbers have not rebounded leaving the shelter in a very difficult position.

**WE NEED YOU!** We are asking our volunteers from the past to PLEASE consider returning. For those who have not yet volunteered but are willing to share their time, please consider becoming a volunteer at the Christian Shelter and reach out to us. There are many areas that have significant needs, such as the kitchen - prep work, serving and clean up; office coverage to help the staff; general cleaning and small maintenance projects; helping with children after school programs along with shelter's Youth Mentor and other needs as defined by the staff.

**F**or the better part of the past 40+ years, the Christian Shelter has relied on a small dedicated staff along with a tremendous group of volunteers. Without the volunteer community, the shelter would not be able to accommodate the demand that the homeless population creates throughout the year. Prior to the 2020 Covid 19 pandemic, the shelter had a very large volunteer following that was critical to keeping the operation open to the community.

When the pandemic hit, the Christian Shelter was able to survive with just the staff due to restrictions set forth which limited the number of guests allowed at the shelter. Volunteers were not allowed to be on site during that period. Now that we are past

Please visit our website [www.christianshelter.org](http://www.christianshelter.org) and click on the volunteer tab on the home page to learn more about the volunteer opportunities at the Christian Shelter. An application is also provided under this tab that you can complete or simply call 410-749-5673 and speak to a staff person about your interest(s).

Not everyone can provide financial support to the Christian Shelter but many of you can share your time, skills, and talents as a volunteer. Please consider volunteering and helping the shelter continue its mission of ministering to as many guests as possible. God has blessed us with many gifts. How will you choose to use your gifts?

## CHRISTIAN SHELTER PARTNERS WITH DRAPER MEDIA

**I**n May of 2023, the Christian Shelter entered into an agreement with Draper Media/WBOC to help increase exposure to the community through digital marketing and a social media campaign. The goal is to connect with new followers and prospective donors and volunteers using Facebook (Christian Shelter, Inc.) and Instagram (@christianshelter\_salisbury) accounts as well as their website [www.christianshelter.org](http://www.christianshelter.org).

Communications from the Christian Shelter have traditionally been through quarterly newsletters that are mailed via the US postal service to donors and interested parties with whom the Shelter has a relationship and a current mailing address. We have been striving to create an electronic database by requesting email addresses of our current and future donor base so that newsletters and other forms of communication could be sent electronically. This will save the Christian Shelter considerable expense and

time. Currently, approximately 12% of contacts have been entered into the electronic database. The goal is to complete 50% by the end of 2023. With Draper Media's help, we are driving more traffic to the Shelter's Facebook and Instagram accounts as well the website. We are also using a targeted video ad format to help get our message out to the community. The first 30 second video was posted in June 2023 and can be viewed on the website or via a link on the Shelter's Facebook page. Our hope is to tap into Draper Media's vast network and social media contacts to raise awareness about the Christian Shelter, their mission and needs to help build a better more diverse donor base.

Please take the time to like us on Facebook and Instagram, as well as visiting the website to learn more about the Christian Shelter and how you can become a supporter and follower of the shelter. God Bless!

**RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED-SEND TO:**  
CHRISTIAN SHELTER, INC.  
334 BARCLAY STREET  
SALISBURY MD 21804

NON PROFIT ORG.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Salisbury, MD  
Permit No. 94



*Mennonite Children Holding Blankets*



*Mennonite Sandra Brunk*

## **THE SALISBURY MENNONITE CHURCH**

**T**he women and young girls of the Salisbury Mennonite Church over the past winter and spring have made and donated over thirty (30) quilts to the Christian Shelter for distribution to our homeless guests. The Salisbury Mennonite School children also assisted in knotting the edges on some of the quilts as part of an art project.

## **CURRENT NEEDS**

Twin Size Sheet Sets

Breakfast Meats

Lunch Meat

Disinfectant Spray

Coffee, Sugar, Creamer

Cleaners

Laundry Detergent

**PLEASE SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS  
TO RECEIVE ELECTRONICALLY**

**CONSIDER DONATING ONLINE AT  
[www.christianshelter.org](http://www.christianshelter.org)**