



Miracle Hill
MINISTRIES

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Miracle Hill on the Front Lines of Battling War on Homelessness
National Survey Indicates One in Three Face Homelessness for the First Time

GREENVILLE, S.C.-- A new national survey indicates that among the homeless individuals served by rescue missions (faith-based crisis shelters and rehabilitation centers), more than one in three adults who seek help are facing homelessness for the first time.

These results were noted in the 25th annual Snapshot Survey from the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM), which provides a one-day count of those being served by rescue missions. The October 2014 survey, taken at 135 missions throughout North America, tabulated responses from more than 20,000 individuals served. Miracle Hill is a member of AGRM.

At Miracle Hill, homelessness is a new experience for 25 to 30% of the people it is presently serving.

“We’re thankful to have the kind of community support that allows us to reach a wide range of people who are affected by homelessness and hunger,” notes Bill Slocum, VP of Adult Ministries at Miracle Hill. “Especially during the holidays, the practical help of food, clothing, and a hot holiday meal reminds our neighbors in need that they are not alone. That reminder is especially important for families and individuals who are dealing with the challenges of being homeless for the first time.”

“When the general public pictures homelessness,” says AGRM President John Ashmen, “the image is usually of individuals who have spent a lifetime fighting the undertow of addiction. Such folks definitely are part of the scene, but we have to remember that the economy is still a huge factor. Many of the people visiting a rescue mission today,” he points out, “never knew a month ago that they would be looking for lodging or other assistance in such a place.”

“Rescue missions will continue to have an important role in meeting the challenges of the first-time homeless,” Ashmen adds. “Missions offer individual attention that can prevent these individuals and families from becoming chronically homeless, and can help them find options to stabilize their lives—including emergency assistance, health care, job and life-skills training—which is tangible help. Missions also provide spiritual support, which is long-term hope. That’s why rescue missions are so unique in these settings and perhaps why 81 percent of those surveyed say they prefer to seek help from an agency that has a spiritual emphasis.”

This year’s Snapshot Survey also provided some other interesting results among the more than 20,000 people responding. One finding that might run against a stereotype often held by those outside the homeless community is the degree of education of those who are homeless. Of the adults surveyed, 69 percent have a high school diploma or above. In fact, 21 percent have some college education. Often, the local rescue mission is their daily source of services for sustainability.

“Day in and day out, it is our privilege to offer a variety of ways to help those who come to us,” said Miracle Hill’s Bill Slocum. “We consider ourselves blessed to be in this community, where time and again neighbors make the effort to give of their time and resources to those we serve.”

For more information on Miracle Hill, please visit www.MiracleHill.org or call 864.268.4357.

Visit www.agrm.org/2014snapshot for a statistical comparison of the overall survey findings from the last four years.

Miracle Hill Ministries is the largest and most comprehensive provider of shelter and food to homeless children and adults in Upstate South Carolina. The organization houses, clothes, feeds and offers counseling and spiritual support to on average 560 struggling individuals each day through outreaches located in Greenville, Pickens, Spartanburg and Cherokee Counties. Find out more at www.MiracleHill.org.

Now in its 102nd year, **The Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM)** has nearly 300 rescue mission members across North America, including Miracle Hill. AGRM member ministries serve approximately 50 million meals, provide 25 million nights’ of shelter and housing, distribute 30 million pieces of clothing, bandage the wounds of hundreds of abuse victims, and graduate more than 20,000 homeless men and women from addiction-recovery programs into productive living. For more information, visit www.agrm.org.

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