



Severn group
marks 50 years
of preserving
town's legacy



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Crab Soup Cook-Off
to feature 27 entrees

KITCHEN: A9

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Winter relief expands

5 new churches sign up for shelter

By SEAN PATRICK NORRIS
Staff Writer

By adding five new churches and an additional week to its Winter Relief Emergency Shelter Program, organizers at Arundel House of Hope are trying to avoid something they did last year — turning homeless people away.

"We were sheltering 35 people and turning 36 away," Winter Relief Director Phil Bailey said.

"We had to do that for the first five or six weeks. This is so important, sleeping out in your overcoat, on the grounds is pretty painful and dangerous."

The program will begin its 18th year on Oct. 19. The season will last 25 weeks and involve 49 churches hosting the roving homeless shelter. In addition to the extra

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week of service six more weeks will have two sites available.

New churches participating include Arundel Christian in Glen Burnie, Fresh Start Church in Glen Burnie, Lake Shore Baptist in Pasadena, Ark & Dove Presbyterian in Odenton and Chesapeake Christian Fellowship in Davidsonville.

The Rev. Brain Hamilton is lead pastor at Arundel Christian, the church inside the former Harundale movie theater.

"We really wanted to be a blessing to our community," Hamilton said. "We've been blessed with such a nice facility that we asked what can we do to make a significant contribution."

The church will house about 30 men by placing beds in their multi-purpose room. The church is still working on providing showers. Hamilton said they will either partner with a local school or install portable showers.

Bailey said House of Hope needs at least three more

sites to cover the weeks of Nov. 30, Dec. 14 and April 5.

The Rev. Ed Jansen runs The Emmaus Center, an apostolic Catholic Church mission program on Central Avenue in Glen Burnie. It provides spiritual and physical support for the homeless.

"(Winter Relief) probably saves lives because some would die out there without a shelter," Jansen said. "I'm not trying to be melodramatic. The fact is Winter Relief provides housing and shelter for those who would be unable to find it on a given day."

Bailey said House of Hope would eventually like to use their Winter Relief model in the summer for a smaller population. The summer shelter would be more transitional and less emergency oriented. The goal is to have services available 52 weeks a year.

"The sheltering requirement would be much smaller in the summer because it would only be people that are really ready and able to seriously address the issues," Bailey said.

"We are trying to find enough churches who are willing to partner with us to get this done."

People who don't find a space in the program have two other options for shelter: Sarah's House, a shelter for women and children at Fort George G. Meade and Lighthouse Shelter, a general shelter in Annapolis.

In March, the county had its second annual homeless resource day. The first one was held in 2008 at Glen Burnie High School with the hopes of offering employment, health and housing opportunities to the county's homeless.

Accurate numbers for the homeless population are elusive; one of the best measurements is the number of County public school students listed as homeless.

In March, 805 students were listed as homeless, a 200-person increase over the previous year. Numbers for this fall were not available yesterday.

Jansen said it is not just the homeless that benefit from the program.

"The entire community benefits," Jansen said. "Desperate people do desperate things and when they are less desperate they are less likely to do those things."