

## Jody's Story

Last year, To Our House housed Jody. While participating, Jody, with the help of VA CARES, obtained an ID and became employed. MCEAP assisted Jody with first month's rent and he moved into permanent housing. One of the participating TOH churches "adopted" Jody and assisted him with household goods. Jody volunteers regularly with MCEAP and volunteered for TOH when his "adopted" church hosted TOH.



To Our House addresses the problem of homelessness and the safety concerns associated with being homeless during the winter by providing emergency shelter to single homeless men during the coldest months. TOH informs all police departments, human service agencies, libraries, and other entities identified as potentially having contact with single homeless males of the service.

Homeless single males benefit by receiving shelter, food, and compassionate support during the coldest winter months, November through March. Relationships developed between staff, volunteers, and fellow guests often provide encouragement and can lead to opportunities for employment and/or housing. With the immediate need of shelter being addressed, guests can focus on services and connections needed to obtain income and secure permanent housing.

Volunteers are the heart, soul, and hands of this Program. While the TOH model relies on its volunteers and in-kind community sites, TOH is also providing the community with a great opportunity to serve. Volunteers transport, inventory, and set up cots; support staff at the intake site; plan, cook and serve breakfast, lunch and dinner; launder program sheets and towels; provide conversation and support to the men during the evening hours; provide well check health visits; give haircuts; and sleep overnight at the shelter each night. Churches loan TOH vans to transport guests, and the host churches provide volunteers to drive the men to and from the intake site. Many who support TOH and its service to homeless men state they get as much out of the experience as the guests themselves.

**Donations like yours help To Our House and other United Way partner agencies do meaningful, life-changing work around the New River Valley. Without To Our House, Jody may still be on the streets. When you give to United Way, you help men like Jody get back on their feet.**

For more information on To Our House, visit <http://newrivercommunityaction.org/to-our-house/>