

March 2010

## Message from the Director

If you heard a child and its mama crying in a car in a parking because they had no place to go, would you take them in? Steadfast House does. If you knew a family at risk of freezing to death in their own home, would you give them the money to buy fuel, even if you didn't know where your next dime was coming from? Our Crisis Ministry does.



Reverend Scott Rogers

ABCCM responds faithfully in these kinds of situations, as we think you would want us to, even sometimes giving away money that we do not yet have. We believe that if you were aware of these situations, you would find a way to support us in those hard decisions.

We know that many churches have had to cut their budgets and that they are behind in their offerings because of missed Sundays due to snow. ABCCM continues to work in the snow through its volunteers and staff. We do not take snow days and we do not shut down our shelters. The increased demand created by this winter's weather and the reduction in donations have created for us a financial gap. The gap is currently \$114,000. It's a lot of money, but it also helped about 300 families and homeless persons who would not have made it without that extra care.

We are asking volunteers, church members and churches to consider a special gift to help us fill this gap. Ten dollars from each person would go a long way. Perhaps our churches could have a special offering...maybe a special worship service. Perhaps you will feel a tug at your heart, to dig a little deeper and offer some support. Maybe you could tell you neighbor who is doing a little better. Have you seen our commercial about transforming lives?

ABCCM is committed to transformational ministry. We transform a crisis into safety and warmth. We take away someone's pain by extracting a rotten tooth; our volunteer

doctors offer healing and hope; we provide needed medications. We need your support and your prayers to continue this strong ministry of healing of hope for our neighbors in need. Please join us in those prayers as we struggle through the rest of this winter and as we open our arms wider to those families at risk.

[To Donate Online](#)

## Crisis Ministry Makeover

The ABCCM Crisis Ministries welcome thousands of families into their facilities each year—families seeking assistance with heat, food and clothing along with other aid. Each person who walks through our doors is greeted with a smile and treated with respect. Even our buildings are meant to communicate to our clients that they are valued. However, the traffic that our properties see takes a toll on their appearance. Walls get dirty and worn, carpets get stained, windows smudged, landscapes can get overgrown or weather damaged.



Vitaliy Vlasenko & Paul Chernous give the Crisis Ministry a Makeover

The Downtown Crisis Ministry received a recent makeover from one of Buncombe County's painting contractors and members from the Source of Life Evangelical Missionary Church. Alex Chernous is the owner of Advanced Company of WNC, a full-service painting and restoration company. This past winter Alex found he had some free time on his hands and, remembering the services that ABCCM has provided his neighbors, he decided to use this time to give something to the Ministry.

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Alex went to his church and recruited members to help him paint the interior of the ABCCM Crisis Ministry on Cumberland Avenue. Alex says that his Ukrainian church is very involved in the community and his minister, Anatoliy Reznickeno, encourages its members to volunteer in the name of Christ. At Alex's request, the needed paint was generously donated by Sherwin-Williams. On Saturday morning a crew of adults and teenagers arrived with their brushes, rollers and ladders. Drop cloths were scattered up and down the hallway. The rattle of buckets and the swish of brushes were mixed with the sounds laughter and stories told in Ukrainian. Seasoned veteran painters took the younger volunteers in tow and began teaching them the fundamentals of applying paint to a wall. With all the camaraderie, it felt like a sporting event rather than a work detail.

In a few hours the job was complete and all stood admiring their hard work. The tired rooms looked fresh. The dingy hallway now sparkled. Our neighbors from the Ukrainian church had given our Crisis Ministry a much needed facelift. "They did a beautiful job," says Sheryl Olsen, Crisis Ministry Senior Coordinator. "Everyone loves the color!"

If you or your church would like to volunteer some time on a property project please contact [Cheryl Wilson](#).

## Senior Citizens Remember the Forgotten

In December, six residents from Givens Estate Retirement Community went out of their way to provide Christmas cheer to one of the most ignored populations in Buncombe County. These volunteers packed Christmas gift bags for inmates at the Buncombe County Detention Center (BCDC). They packed 460 bags with tooth brushes, tooth paste, lotion, shampoo, slipper socks, and lip balm. Simple gifts? Yes, but much needed and highly appreciated ones. For most of these men and women behind bars, this was the only gift they would receive. At Christmas and throughout the year ABCCM volunteers remind those incarcerated that they are not forgotten.

Jail Ministry volunteers provide many services in the Detention Center. They operate a mobile library containing donated novels and religious books. Reading is one of the few constructive pastimes permitted to the inmates.



Having devoured one work, the women and men must wait for the return of the book cart in order to find something new to read. Our book cart volunteers are some of the most welcome visitors at the BCDC.

Bible studies are another popular and important reminder to our inmates that they are not forgotten. These studies provide support that encourages inmates to focus on positive steps they can take to help themselves. These Bible studies are led by volunteers who are asked to listen first and then provide suggestions based on a Biblical text for solutions.

During the holidays, people in the Detention Center feel the absence of friends and families acutely. Rarely do they receive visitors during this time. Few are those who get letters or cards. However, the retirees from Givens Estates, like all our volunteers, remind the prisoners that they are remembered and loved – by the Lord and by His people.

To learn how you can assist in the Jail Ministry visit the [Jail Ministry website](#) or contact [Chaplain Norm Sanders](#).

## Severe Weather Shelter

They came from riverside campsites in east Asheville. They came from sleeping in cars in north Buncombe and from under south side overpasses. They came seeking relief from the overflow conditions in other emergency shelters. One came from sleeping on his buddy's living room floor in hopes of a better night's sleep. On a dangerously cold January afternoon, ABCCM opened the doors to a severe weather shelter that provided safety during the worst weather conditions western North Carolina has seen in a generation.

With open arms, people were welcomed from all over Buncombe County. There was a variety of stories about becoming homeless. Some lost their homes because of a recent illness or job loss. For some it had been a very long time since they had a place they could call their own. Others had just lost their home, something they never believed could have happened to them. Some admitted that they were homeless because of alcohol and drug abuse. However, no matter what their circumstances, all had one thing in common. After several days and nights of subfreezing weather, all were much appreciative of having a safe, warm place to escape the cold.

Early in January, ABCCM responded to an urgent concern from our area churches. They were worried that with the lingering extreme cold, some of our homeless neighbors might be having difficulty finding space in the city's already crowded emergency shelters.

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ABCCM was asked to temporarily reopen the shelter facility on Coxe Avenue. This shelter had been closed since our homeless Veterans moved to the Veterans Restoration Quarters near the VA Hospital. We were asked to open this facility for only one weekend as a contingency plan to support the Rescue Mission, Salvation Army, A-Hope and ABCCM's other emergency shelters.



Out of the cold and enjoying a hot meal

As soon as the severe weather shelter was opened, people began arriving, but not all of them were homeless. That weekend over fifty volunteers responded to a cry for help by providing needed supplies and manpower to care for our homeless residents. These volunteers came from downtown churches and country congregations. They came from area businesses and from condominiums up the street. They came as concerned individuals, as mission groups and as conscientious families. They came bringing blankets, pillows and towels. They brought hygiene kits and clothing.

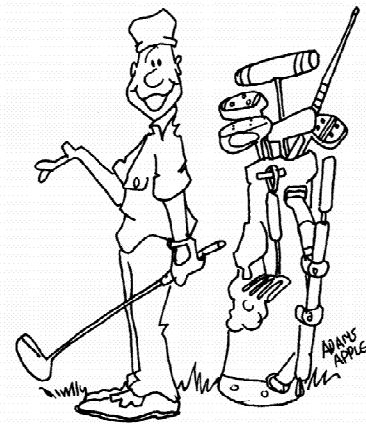
Some came to fellowship with the homeless women and men, listening to their stories and offering encouragement and prayer. Other volunteers organized games. One family created a theater on site equipped with a double feature and popcorn. People arrived from all over the county to supply everything that was needed to operate the shelter. Everywhere you looked, the Church was doing what it does best—loving those that others ignore.

Whenever a crisis arises, the churches of Asheville and Buncombe County have always come to the assistance of those in need. This winter, with its large accumulation of snow and extreme cold, has proven once more that the Church is ready to answer God's call to feed the poor, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless, to care for the sick and to love the lost. **Thank you** to all the volunteers who made the severe weather shelter a success and thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who serve each day in the many ministries of ABCCM. Visit our website: [abccm.org](http://abccm.org) and find the ministry you like best and come join us as a volunteer!

## New Ministry Opportunity

Beginning in April, ABCCM is opening day shelters for homeless women and men. These shelters will be available for people who spend the night in one of the area's overnight shelters or women who stay with Room at the Inn. It will provide them a warm and safe place to be during the day. Staff and volunteers will provide them with job training and life skill classes. The goal is to prepare this population for reentry into the workforce and to guide them in their job search. We are looking for volunteers that are free on weekdays who can provide fellowship or who can lead a class such as knitting. If you can give as little as three hours a month, you can make a difference in someone's future.

To learn more or to volunteer contact [Mark Houghton](#).



## 26th Annual ABCCM Benefit Golf Tournament

**Thursday, April 22nd  
Reems Creek Golf Club  
12:30 pm Shotgun Start**

Get a foursome together and plan for a fun day. . .at the same time you are helping ABCCM replenish funds which have been depleted during this winter.

For more information, to sponsor a hole or to sign up your foursome, call Cheryl Wilson 259-5300 x 327

[Downloadable Registration](#)