

Endowment Provides Firm Foundation for Housing and Homeless Council's Future Growth



In the parable of the wise and foolish builders, Jesus encourages His listeners to build their house on a foundation of rock, so that when the rains come down, the streams rise, and the winds blow, it will not fall.

In 1989, the United Methodists who started the Housing and Homeless Council for the North Georgia Conference put this parable into practice by creating a firm financial foundation that would safeguard its future growth.

“They had the foresight to put 25 percent of the annual Homeless Offering into a permanent endowment with the then North Georgia United Methodist Foundation until it crossed the \$1 million threshold, which it did in 2005,” said the Rev. Virginia Tinsley, director of the Housing and Homeless Council. “One hundred percent of the Homeless Offering now goes toward grants to help organizations such as Action Ministries and Habitat for Humanity that minister to the very poor and homeless persons.”

The investment goal is for income from the endowment to cover 100 percent of the Housing and Homeless Council's administrative costs so that it can be completely self-sufficient from conference apportionments. The deficit is currently supplemented through the North Georgia Annual Conference 5K Run/Walk and other fundraisers, donations, and the sale of handcrafted designer pins.

The Housing and Homeless Council awards at least 75 grants each year. Since the first Homeless Offering was collected in 1990, over \$3.7 million has been given out to help transient, homeless and needy persons in North Georgia. The grant monies are used to build houses, provide food, maintain facilities, and assist with transportation, rent, utilities, and furnishings.

The Foundation manages over \$100 million in investment funds on behalf of United Methodist churches and entities in Georgia. A few years ago, the Housing and Homeless Council decided to invest in the Development Fund. “We are receiving above-average interest rates, while our investment is being used to help churches,” Virginia said. “I also like the fact that all of our funds are invested in a socially responsible manner.”