

PACEM (People and Congregations Engaged in Ministry)  
Independent/Unaffiliated Charity, CVC  
#03345

A COMMUNITY UNITES TO KEEP  
HOMELESS PEOPLE SAFE IN THE  
WINTER

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Since 2004, PACEM (People and Congregations Engaged in Ministry) has provided over 73,000 total bed nights of emergency shelter to people who are homeless in central Virginia. For the last eleven winters, PACEM has worked to provide shelter to people who don't have anywhere else to go during the coldest 22 weeks (154 nights) of the year. We operate a men's shelter that averages about 40 guests each night and a women's shelter that hosts about ten guests a night. During the 2014-15 shelter season, PACEM served 201 guests which stayed in our shelter for a least one night. The average length of stay was about 37 nights per guest.

From the last Saturday of October through the end of March, around 90 church congregations and community groups from throughout central Virginia (Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Greene County, Fluvanna County, Louisa County, and Nelson County) and from different faiths and backgrounds all come together to make PACEM happen. 28 church congregations served as host sites for our shelters last winter. Each host provides the physical space for the shelter (cots, pillows, sheets, blankets, etc.) as well as a warm evening meal for our guests. These host sites often partner with other church congregations and community groups to provide the meals as well as evening activities (haircuts, foot care, games like bingo, music, art, etc.) and hospitality.

Volunteers prepare and serve the food, lead activities, and stay overnight at the host congregations. 25-30 part-time, seasonal staff members are trained and work in the shelters to keep everyone safe and to deal with emergencies as needed. A year-round Case Manager/Advocate and our staff work with every one of PACEM's guests throughout the shelter season to help them take steps out of homelessness and connect to services they need to get their own place. Whether it's finding a job or an apartment, applying for Social Security or Disability benefits, getting help with substance abuse or mental health issues, or reconnecting with family/friends, we work to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring for our guests.

PACEM works with the Salvation Army, the Shelter for Help in Emergency, Region Ten's Mohr Center, and local law enforcement to make sure that everyone in our community

has a roof over their head when the temperature is below freezing. PACEM saves lives and has been since 2004. For more information, log on to [www.pacemshelter.org](http://www.pacemshelter.org) or email [volunteer@pacemshelter.org](mailto:volunteer@pacemshelter.org) to find out how you can get involved in this life-saving ministry and community-wide effort in central Virginia.