

To Our House  
Federation of United Way of Montgomery, Radford & Floyd  
07501  
Overcoming Homelessness  
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June 4, 2015  
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A year ago, Melvin Robertson found himself homeless after a 13-year tour of military duty and employment stints at a local hospital and restaurant. Health deteriorating and with home improvement jobs providing sporadic work, Melvin's Floyd landlord suddenly decided to sell his rental home and gave him a 30-day notice. Robertson was unable to find a place he could afford and had no one to turn to for help. So, last winter, Robertson became a To Our House guest. Each night he was transported to a warm church set up with blanketed cots, and offered a hot meal by a cadre of dedicated volunteers. He could shower, have company or entertainment, or just sleep, and was provided with information on housing, employment, and other available resources to help him get back on his feet. Within five weeks, Robertson was connected with resources that enabled him to move to a Christiansburg boarding house. But, to show his gratitude, one of the first things he did after obtaining his own room was go back to the To Our House program as a volunteer.



In the next five months, he secured a position as a NRCA AmeriCorps member, serving with the To Our House Program. Several nights a week, homeless guests are greeted by Robertson, who performs intake and supportive services, including helping guests navigate the system of resources available for housing, counseling, employment, and financial support. "This is an opportunity where I can give back. I can relate to these guys. If I can just make one guy's life easier, my day is made," said Robertson. "I love what I do. I love helping the guys that come through, giving them comfort. No matter how hard it is, how rough it is, I tell them, you can make. Don't give up." Robertson now lives in his own apartment. "To Our House has made me stronger. It's given me self-confidence and compassion. I'm able to give back. And I'm loving life."

Visit To Our House's website for more information at [www.toourhouse.org](http://www.toourhouse.org). To get involved with To Our House and find ways you can help, please contact To Our House at (540) 382-6186 or [nrfamilyshelter@gmail.com](mailto:nrfamilyshelter@gmail.com).