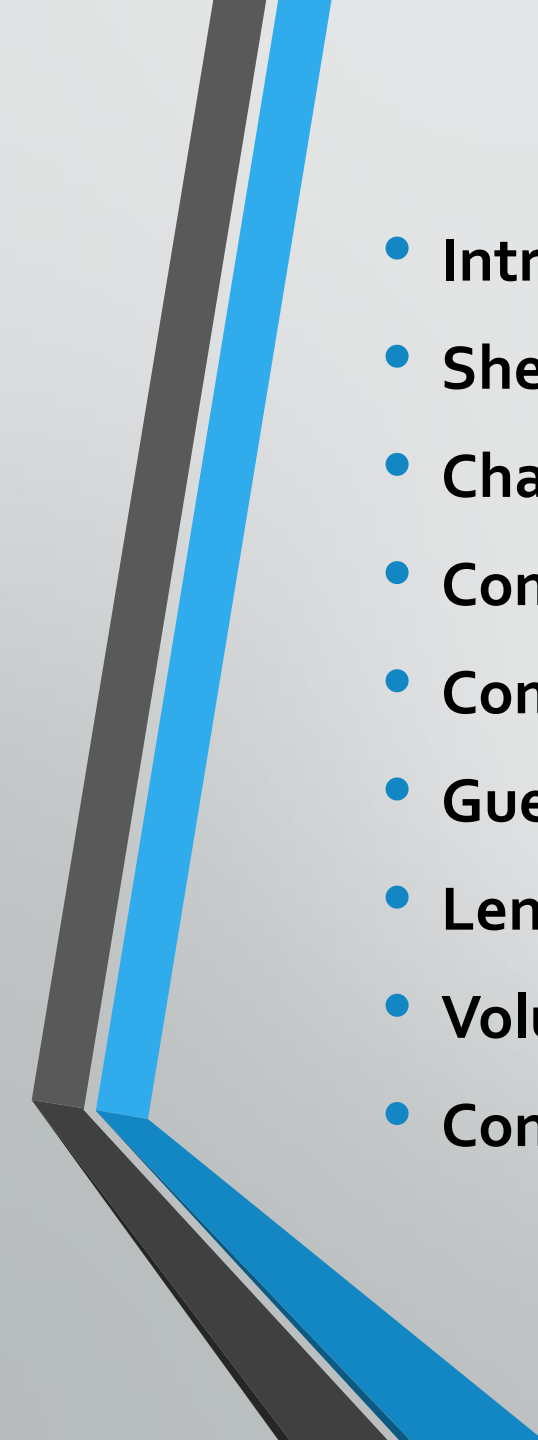




# LINK of Hampton Roads

Year End PORT Winter Shelter Report

2023

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# Introduction

- The winter shelter year-end report provides an overview of the services provided to homeless individuals during the winter months. The report highlights the challenges faced by the shelter and the impact of its services on the community.
- The winter shelter operates from November through March, providing a safe and warm place for unhoused persons to eat and sleep overnight. The shelter is staffed by LINK who are trained to provide assistance and support to our unhoused guests. Also, thousands of volunteers provide an army of support, who without their participation, LINK would not be able to provide the extensive meals and ancillary support.

# Shelter Operations

- The PORT Winter Shelter operates seven days a week, providing a safe and warm place to sleep for over 100 individuals and families each night. In addition to shelter, the facility provides essential hygiene kits, clothing, and dinner and breakfast to go for all guests. Two shelters were provided due to increased numbers of guests.
- The shelter is hosted at rotating sites throughout the Newport News area, partnering with local churches to offer a welcoming, safe and supportive environment.
- The shelter is committed to not only providing a temporary safe haven, and also supporting individuals, transitioning out of homelessness. With the help of intake workers, security personnel and volunteers, guests receive case management and job referral/placement and housing referral services to assist in finding stable employment and a permanent place to live, while remaining safe and cared for in the shelters.
- The shelter strives to create a caring community that fosters hope and empowerment for those experiencing homelessness.

# Challenges Faced

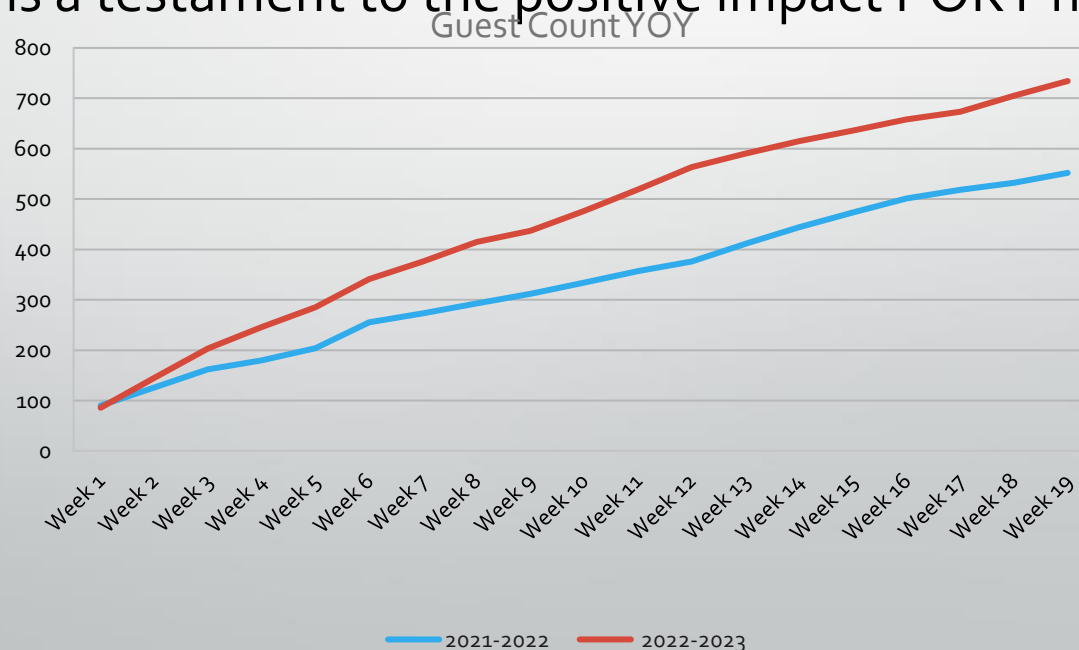
- The PORT Winter Shelter faced a number of challenges this year, 2022/2023 season, including having adequate staff and volunteers to operate the shelter. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many people have been more hesitant to meet in close quarters with others. The PORT shelter was able to operate with additional PPE support and following Covid guidelines this season with only 28 total cases of reported Covid.
- Additionally, the shelter experienced an outbreak of the norovirus during the last week, which affected staff, security, volunteers and guests requiring additional measures provided by the city, to ensure daily hazmat cleanliness and prevent further spread of the virus.
- Finally, the shelter faced challenges in dealing with incontinence among elderly guests, which required additional resources and attention to ensure their comfort and dignity.
- Despite these challenges, the interfaith support continued, albeit not with the same number of volunteers as in prior years. LINK's PORT Winter Shelter continued to provide a vital service to individuals experiencing homelessness. Staff, security and volunteers worked tirelessly to address issues and ensure that the shelters remained a welcoming place for all who needed it.

# Community Impact

- LINK's PORT program has had a significant impact on the community by reducing the number of people sleeping on the streets during the harsh winter months for 32 years! By providing warm shelter, essential supplies, and support services, LINK's PORT program has helped many individuals and families in the Newport News area who would otherwise have been forced to brave the cold and dangerous conditions of the streets.
- LINK's PORT efforts have not only made a tangible difference in the lives of those served, but they have also helped alleviate the burden on local emergency services and the broader community.
- Furthermore, LINK's commitment to helping individuals transition out of homelessness has resulted in several positive outcomes. LINK (not a direct service agency for homeless placement through rapid rehousing/homeless prevention), has directly housed three individuals and a Board member employed a couple to work at a hotel. LINK also hired an individual for their Veterans Emergency Housing Program, demonstrating that dedication is needed to not only provide temporary relief but also continue to address long-term solutions, when possible, for the unhoused.

# Comparison to 2022

- The impact of LINK's PORT shelter on the community has continued to grow year after year, with the organization providing vital support to more individuals in need. Last year, the shelter served 554 individuals, offering a warm place to stay and other essential resources. However, this year, the organization has expanded its reach, serving 739 individuals in need, an increase of nearly 36%.
- Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the shelter has remained steadfast in its mission to support those in need, and the increased number of guests served is a testament to the positive impact PORT has on the community.



# Guest Demographics Overview

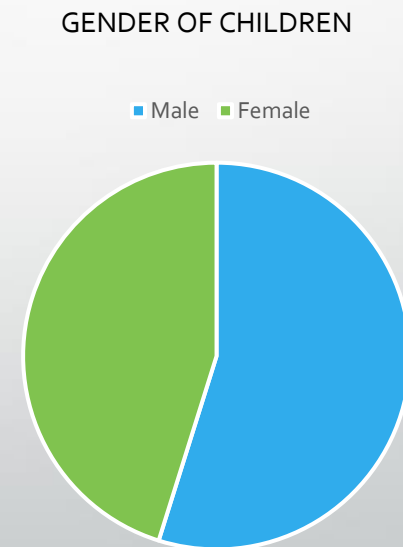
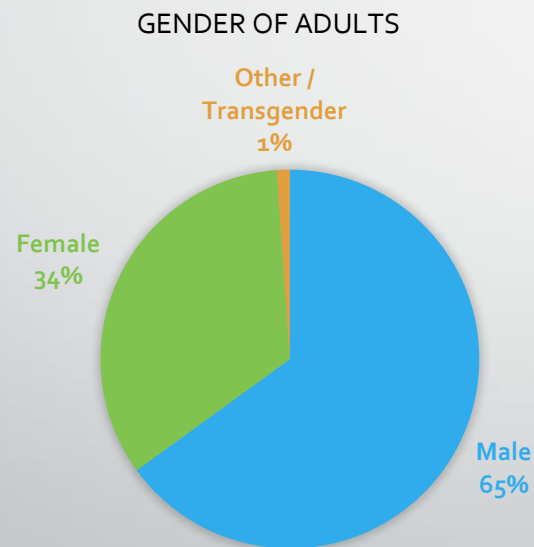
- The data presented in the following slides is based on information collected up until the night of March 17<sup>th</sup>, at which point accurate demographic information was no longer collected due to a norovirus outbreak, where in the city of Newport News staff oversaw and ran the last four days of PORT. Therefore, the data presented represents a total of 739 guests who were served by the shelter up until March 17<sup>th</sup> ***and an additional 10 guests during the last five days .***



# Guest Demographics

## Gender

- Of the 739 guests who received services at the PORT Winter Shelter up until March 17th, the majority were male adults with 422 individuals, while female adults accounted for 217. There were also 7 individuals who identified as transgender or other gender. Among the children who stayed at the shelter, there were 51 male children and 42 female children. These gender demographics highlight the importance of providing inclusive services to a diverse group of individuals who experience homelessness.

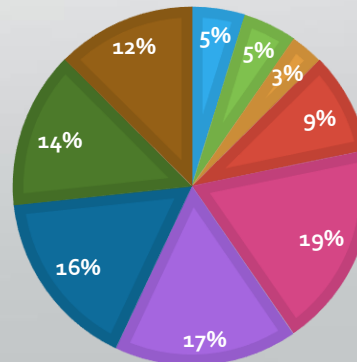


# Guest Demographics

## Age

- The age demographics of guests at LINK's PORT Winter Shelter up until March 17th were diverse, with the largest group being adults between the ages of 25 and 34, with 137 individuals.
- The next largest groups were adults between the ages of 35 to 44 and 45 to 54, with 124 and 12 individuals, respectively.
- Those aged 55 to 61 and those aged 18 to 24 were also well represented with 105 and 65 individuals respectively.
- There were 35 children under the age of 5 and 36 between the ages of 5 and 12. Additionally, 22 guests were between the ages of 13 to 17, while 93 were 62 years old or older.
- These demographics illustrate the diverse age range of individuals who experience homelessness and the need for targeted services that address the unique challenges faced by each age group.

■ Under 5   ■ 5 to 12   ■ 13 to 17   ■ 18 to 24   ■ 25 to 34  
■ 35 to 44   ■ 45 to 54   ■ 55 to 61   ■ 62 and over

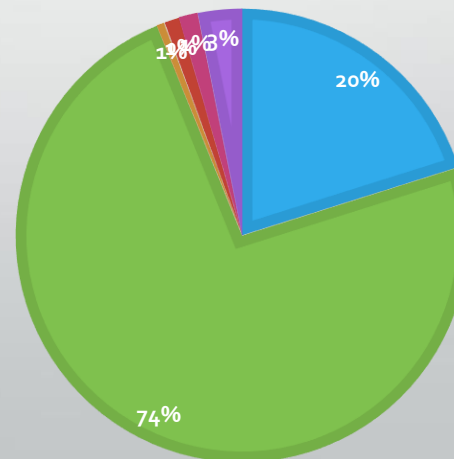


# Guest Demographics

## Race

- Of the 739 guests who received services at the PORT Winter Shelter up until March 17th, the majority identified as Black/African American, with 546 individuals. There were also 148 guests who identified as White, 8 as American Indian, 10 as Native Hawaiian, and 4 as Asian. Additionally, 23 guests identified as belonging to multiple races.
- The racial demographics highlight the disproportionate impact of homelessness on Black Americans and the importance of providing equitable access to resources and support to address systemic disparities. It is important to recognize and address the unique challenges faced by individuals of different races and backgrounds to ensure that services and support are accessible and effective for all.

■ White ■ Black ■ Asian ■ American Indian ■ Native Hawaiian ■ Multiple Race



# Guest Demographics

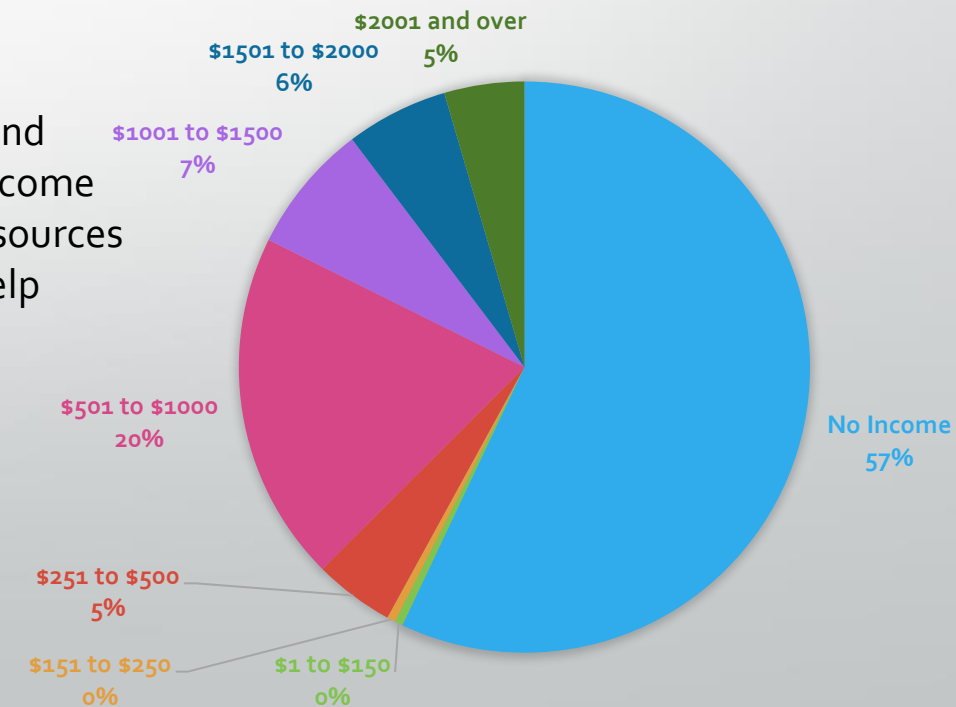
## Mental / Physical Health

- Many guests at the PORT Winter Shelter report having various health conditions.
- Among the self-declared conditions were mental health disorders, with 307 individuals reporting such conditions.
- Alcohol or drug use disorders were reported by 111 individuals, while 240 individuals reported chronic health conditions.
- 13 individuals reported being HIV/AIDS positive, while 99 guests reported having a developmental disability.
- Additionally, 194 guests reported having a physical disability.
- These self-declared health conditions highlight the need for holistic and integrated support services that address the unique and complex needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. By providing targeted services that address health conditions, service providers can help guests achieve improved health outcomes and enhance their overall quality of life. There is a continued need/gap for a peninsula medical respite program for the many disabled.

# Guest Demographics

## Income

- The PORT Winter Shelter serves individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness, many of whom may be facing significant financial challenges.
- The shelter served 365 guests who reported having no income, highlighting the difficulty of meeting basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare without adequate financial resources.
- Among those who reported having some form of income, the majority earned between \$501 and \$1000 per month, with 127 individuals in this income bracket.
- The next largest group was those earning between \$1001 and \$1500 per month, with 47 individuals in this category. Additionally, 29 individuals reported earning over \$2001 per month, while only 3 individuals reported earning between \$1 and \$250 per month.
- These income statistics demonstrate the complex and varied financial situations of guests at the shelter, highlighting the need for targeted and effective peninsula services that can help individuals and families overcome financial challenges and achieve stability. By providing support and resources that address the root causes of homelessness, service providers can help guests regain their independence and work toward a brighter future.
- It's worth noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a lasting and significant impact on families and individuals who rely on earned income to make ends meet, with many experiencing job loss, reduced hours, or other financial setbacks that can make it difficult to maintain stable housing.



# Guest Demographics

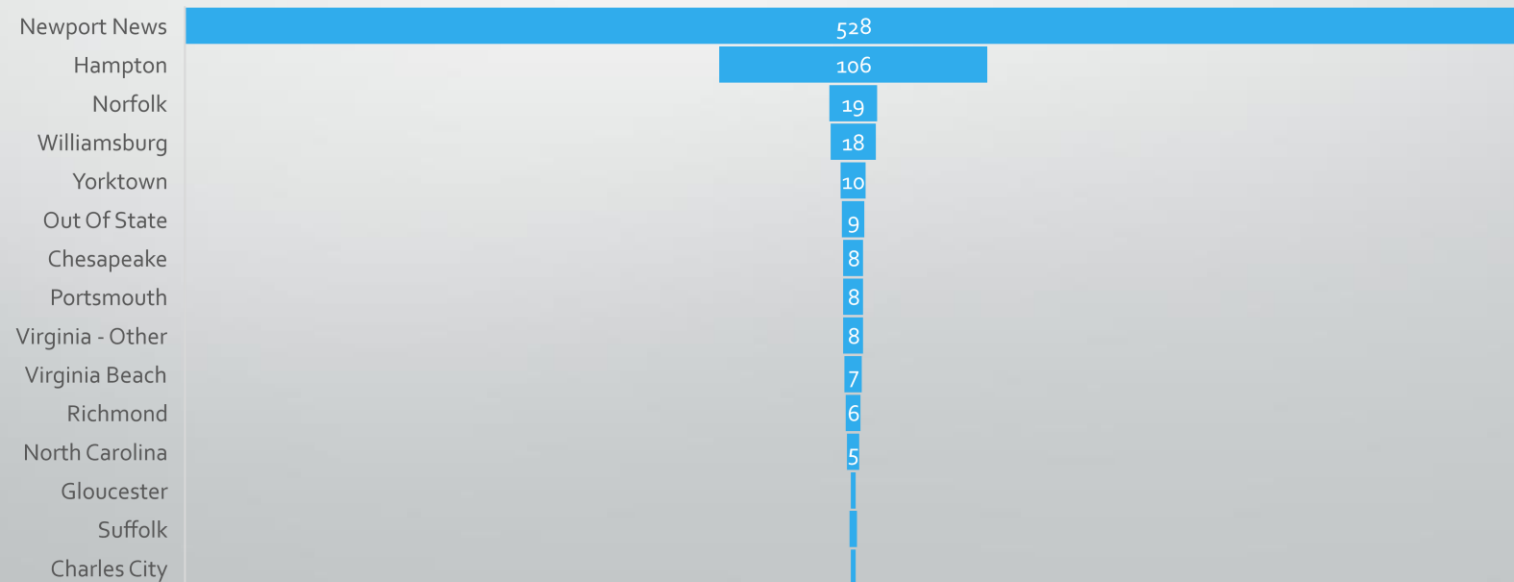
## Domestic Violence

- The prevalence of domestic violence is a significant issue affecting individuals and families in the United States and around the world. At the PORT Winter Shelter, 90 individuals reported experiencing domestic violence, highlighting the serious and ongoing nature of this issue.
- Of those individuals, 28 were actively fleeing from domestic violence situations, emphasizing the need for safe and supportive services that can help individuals escape dangerous situations and begin to rebuild their lives.
- Domestic violence can have severe and lasting impacts on individuals and their families, ranging from physical harm to psychological trauma, and it is crucial that support services are available to help survivors heal and recover from the effects of abuse.
- LINK's PORT Winter Shelter and other service providers across the peninsula, play a critical role in providing a safe and supportive environment for individuals experiencing domestic violence and helping them access the resources they need to escape abusive situations and move forward in their lives.

# Guest Demographics

## Locality

- The guests at LINK's PORT Winter Shelter come from a variety of locations, both within and outside of Virginia.
- Of the 739 guests served up until March 17th, the majority came from Newport News, with 528 individuals reporting this as their place of origin.
- Other significant sources of guests included Hampton, with 106 individuals, and Norfolk, with 19 individuals.
- Additionally, 18 guests reported coming from Williamsburg, while 10 reported coming from Yorktown.
- A small number of guests reported coming from out of state, with 9 individuals in this category. The numbers reported herein are consistent with prior year % of guests who come from areas other than Newport News.



# Guest Demographics Families

- LINK's PORT Winter Shelter has also made a significant impact on families experiencing homelessness. Over the winter season, the shelter served a total of 41 families, providing them with temporary shelter, meals, and other resources to help them get back on their feet. An additional family arrived on the last night of the shelter.
- Of these families, 24 were able to self-resolve their housing situation, while 11 were either awaiting housing or had already secured permanent housing.
- The remaining six families were redirected to family focused shelter facilities, such as Menchville House.
- One of the families served was the largest, consisting of two adults and eight children, for a total of ten individuals.
- By supporting families in crisis, the shelter has played an important role in helping to bring some relief to not only unhoused persons but unhoused families during the winter months. There remains a high unmet need for the unhoused who returned to the streets on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and who remain unhoused.



# Guest Demographics Veterans

- The PORT Winter Shelter played an important role in serving homeless veterans, with a total of 73 veterans receiving services.
- Of the veterans served, 68 were male and 5 were female.
- The shelter also served 19 chronically homeless veterans, providing them with access to safe and stable housing options via the Veterans Administration.
- The commitment to serving homeless veterans at the PORT Winter Shelter highlights the importance of providing specialized services for this population, who often face unique challenges and barriers to obtaining housing and support services.

# Length of Stay

- The length of stay for guests at LINK's PORT Winter Shelter varied widely, with some guests staying for just a few days while others remained for much longer periods of time.
- The average length of stay for all guests up until March 17th was approximately 7 days, reflecting the fact that many individuals relied on the shelter as a temporary option to address immediate housing needs. It's worth noting that some guests may have alternated between the shelter and other options, such as staying with friends or family, which could contribute to their shorter stays.
- Nonetheless, the shelter was an important resource for guests seeking short-term support, highlighting the importance of offering flexible and accessible options for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- At the other end of the spectrum, some guests stayed for much longer periods of time, with the longest consecutive recorded stay being 109 days. These statistics highlight the varied needs and circumstances of guests at the shelter, and the importance of providing a range of community supportive services, with housing needs etc., addressed at Four Oaks Day Center.

# Volunteer Hours

- Volunteers and interfaith congregations play a crucial role in supporting the operations of LINK's PORT Winter Shelter, and we are incredibly grateful for their unerring contributions of time, clothing and other items needed by our guests.
- In total, we had 17,891 volunteer hours donated during the time period up until March 17th.
- The dedication of our volunteers has enabled us to provide a safe and supportive environment for our guests, and we are immensely thankful for their commitment to serving the unhoused community. We recognize that the success of the shelter would not be possible without the generosity and compassion of our congregations and volunteers, and we extend our deepest appreciation to all those who have contributed their time and resources.

# Conclusion

- As we wrap up our year end report on LINK of Hampton Roads' PORT Winter Shelter, we are reminded of the incredible impact that our community of support has provided to the shelter program. Through LINK's committed army of support, we were able to provide safe and stable shelter for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Referrals are also provided nightly to guests to meet with multiple partner agencies who in turn assist in housing resources, rapid rehousing and housing placement.
- Our volunteers, staff and support staff have witnessed the important role that the shelter plays in serving the unhoused, many who need year-round shelter, plus specialized services to remove barriers to housing.
- We have much work to do on the peninsula to reduce the increasing number of unhoused individuals and families. The solution is truly affordable housing options to include increased voucher and subsidized housing for those living at 100-200% below poverty level.

# Grateful Thanks

- Community interfaith congregations, schools, colleges, universities and civic groups of volunteers
- Members of the public for increased donations of clothing, furniture and household items.
- Newport News Sheriff's and Police Departments
- Mary Immaculate and Riverside Hospitals
- Peninsula wide collaborative partner agencies
- Shelter staff, drivers, nurses and security personnel