

Article published Jan 2, 2008

Program helps women to cope

Volunteers and staff members at Guilford County's Hannah's Haven say it takes a lot of love, patience and a little life experience to keep the nine-month substance abuse program going.

By Tiffany S. Jones
Staff Writer

Volunteers and staff members at Guilford County's Hannah's Haven say it takes a lot of love, patience and a little life experience to keep the nine-month substance abuse program going.

A bit of divine intervention doesn't hurt either.

"I tell these girls that if you have faith that God will provide, he will put everybody in your path that you need to get you to the other side," said Bonnie Harris, the program's founder and director.

Harris, a former crack addict, has become one of those people for the 18 women who have come through the Christian-based program since August 2006.

"I know God has called me to do this," she said.

"I'm here to let them know that they're going to have those days and that they don't have to give into them," Harris said.

Hannah's Haven is a six-bed residential program operated by Teen Challenge International.

It is designed to help alcohol- and drug-addicted women 18 and older get "clean."

"I want to help them redirect their energies," Harris said.

"They used to get up every morning, and the goal was to get high, no matter what it took. Now, the goal is to stay clean no matter what it takes."

The women attend parenting, computer and Bible classes.

They also participate in foundation-building exercises as well as volunteer work.

"We've developed a personal contract with each of the students," Harris said.

"A lot of times, we don't know how to work and be responsible so we want to show them how to get grounded in those kinds of things," she added.

One tool that has been useful to the women and the volunteers at Hannah's Haven is the one-on-one mentoring sessions.

"I came out here with an idea of what I can do for Hannah's Haven. As it turns out, they've been blessing me," said Sylvia Haley, volunteer coordinator for the program at Oak Ridge United Methodist Church.

"This has been one of the most positive experiences of my life," she said.

Haley, a one-on-one counselor, said volunteer work with the women is easier than she thought it would be.

"The ladies here are so loving, and they are so easy to love, and that's what people don't see," she said.

Hannah's Haven, like many other nonprofit organizations, operates mainly through donations and is always in need.

"There's a need for volunteers, prayers for the students and the continued success for the program," Haley said.

The program always accepts monetary donations and needs household items such as cleaning supplies, paper goods and toiletry items.

Contact Tiffany S. Jones at 449-4731, or tiffany.jones@news-record.com

Copyright © 2008
The News & Record
and Landmark Communications, Inc.

This is a printer-friendly version of an article from <http://news-record.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080102/NRSTAFF/801020305/-1/news1801>