

BCM Offers Emergency Assistance

Buckhead Christian Ministry -
a St. Luke partner in social ministry

Last month's Lamp provided an overview of Buckhead Christian Ministry. This month we will focus on the Emergency Assistance programs in a little more detail. Emergency Assistance was the genesis of BCM and continues to be where it touches the greatest number of people. In 2010, there were 10,397 people assisted through this program. BCM helps people of all backgrounds and faiths, treating everyone who comes with dignity and compassion. BCM serves individuals and families who reside in a 15-zip code target area or who are members of a BCM partner church.

Emergency Financial Assistance forestalls eviction and utility shut-offs by paying a portion of a rent, mortgage or utility bill for individuals and families experiencing a crisis such as illness, job loss, death in the family, etc. People may receive financial assistance once in a 12-month period, twice in 5 years. In order to receive rent and utility assistance, clients must make an appointment via the Help Line at 404-230-0038. All assistance checks are written to the leasing/mortgage company and the utility. (See below for other requirements for receiving rent and utility assistance.)

Through the **Food Pantry** BCM provided 22,506 bags of non-perishable food, meat and other household supplies to individuals and families in 2010. Families can receive food up to five weeks per year. The Food Pantry also provides homeless individuals with daily bags and weekly hygiene kits. St. Luke's quarterly donations go to this effort. About half of the required food is donated by partner churches and other organizations and about half is purchased through a partnership with Kroger. Some of the meat supplies are purchased through the Atlanta Community Food Bank.

Clothing vouchers for specific amounts based on family size and need are provided to clients to use at the Buckhead THRIFTique for clothing and household items. These items are also available for purchase by the general public with profits from any sales going to support BCM programs. Clients are restricted to two clothing vouchers per year.

Once unemployed individuals find work, there is often a need for uniforms, tools, or other equipment. The **New Worker Support** program helps with the purchase of such items. The new worker provides BCM with proof of employment and required items as well as a price quote for those items. A check is written to the vendor for the amount of the price quote. BCM will work with the vendor to assure the receipt of a third party check. New workers needing normal work clothes are given a clothing voucher to shop at Buckhead THRIFTique. Many of the new workers have used available BCM computers to prepare resumes and access the Internet for job searches and on-line applications. MARTA cards or gas cards will be supplied until the first paycheck.

In addition to the daily food bags, the BCM **Homeless Ministry** provides staff support to develop and monitor progress on personal case plans. Homeless clients may receive clothing vouchers every few months. Phones and computers are available to them for calls and email/internet access.

Seasonal Programs provide school supplies, coats, Thanksgiving dinners and Easter baskets. **Joyous Toys** is the annual toy store open for a week in early December. St. Luke has helped with donations to the Joyous Toys store for many years working the past few years on items for teenagers. To receive a Joyous Toys voucher for shopping, clients must make appointments via the Help Line beginning the first Monday in October.

CLIENT REQUIREMENTS FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

In order to receive financial assistance for rent/utilities, clients must:

Make an appointment via the Help Line:

Call 404-239-0038 on
Mon., Tues. and Fri.: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Wed. and Thurs.: 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Live in one of these 15 zip codes –

30305, 30309, 30311, 30318, 30319, 30324, 30326,
30327, 30329, 30331, 30340, 30341, 30342, 30345, 30360

Have paid rent or mortgage on their current residence for at least three months.

Have held a job within the past six months, or be unable to work due to age or disability.

Have experienced an emergency within the past six months.

Provide the following:

A copy of the apartment lease or mortgage documents.

A piece of "official" mail, such as a utility bill, with the client's name and address on it.

Picture ID and Social Security card for all adults in the household.

Social Security cards or birth certificates for minor children.

Walk-in Hours for food, clothes, New Worker Support, Homeless Ministry

Mon., Tues., and Fri.: 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Wed.: 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Thurs.: 10 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

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