



State Del. Scott Surovell (D-44th), center, presented a proclamation from the Virginia General Assembly commending the Ventures in Community Hypothermia Outreach Program, New Hope Housing and Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church for their work in providing shelter during the blizzards of Feb. 2010. With Surovell, from left, are Sherry Edelkamp, who oversees getting overnight chaperones, Rising Hope Pastor Rev. Keary Kincannon, and VIC co-chairs Christina Schoendorf, executive director of Progreso Hispano, and the Rev. Tuck Bowerfind of St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

Hypothermia Program Opens; Program Receives Commendation

The Ventures in Community Hypothermia Outreach Program at Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church didn't open a minute too soon for the homeless living along the Richmond Highway corridor with this past week's unseasonably cold weather. The VIC-HOP program opened Dec. 1 at the church located at 8220 Russell Road with a service in the church sanctuary and the lighting of the first candle of the Advent.

State Del. Scott Surovell (D-44th) was also on hand to present a proclamation from the Virginia General Assembly commending VIC, Rising Hope and New Hope Housing for establishing the hypothermia program and providing shelter to dozens of homeless men and women during last year's record snowfall. "VIC-HOP provided lifesaving protection to guests who otherwise would have been exposed to treacherous

snow and ice and lifethreatening freezing temperatures," the resolution states. Kincannon said during the service that "God is with us" even in the trying times of 2010 which included the tragic earthquake in Haiti, the devastating oil spill in the gulf, a bomb attempt in New York City, and even when a Christian church threatened to burn a Koran. He commented on the fact that while pundits have declared

the recession over, “it doesn’t seem to look like that to a lot of people we serve” and noted that Rising Hope is seeing more requests for assistance than ever before. Kincannon also found it ironic that Congress is planning on extended tax cuts for millionaires while at the same time cutting off unemployment benefits for the most needy. “Folks at Rising Hope scream out ‘Why!’”, he said. The Rev. Tuck Bowerfind of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and a co-chair of VIC, said members of other churches who volunteer as chaperones in the hypothermia program benefit by having the opportunity to meet with others of different economic and racial boundaries and enriching their own lives in service to those in need.



Tom StarKing participated in the lighting of the First Candle of the Advent.

“VIC-HOP is one of those places,” Bowerfind said. Sherry Edelkamp, who is responsible for ensuring there are enough volunteers to chaperone the hypothermia program each night, thanked VIC members for their continued support and noted that on the first night of the shelter she was expecting more than a dozen guests. The shelter has a capacity of 25 people and she said thanks to the community have they have plenty of brand new sleeping bags and mats. “You guys have always come through for me,” she said. “Thank you for being here for us.” Freddy Lyons is one of those beneficiaries who has stayed at the hypothermia shelter as well as the Kennedy Shelter operated by New Hope Housing. “You gave me the opportunity



to have a place to live,” said Lyons who now has a job at the hospital at Fort Belvoir and is a member at Rising Hope. “God continues to work in my favor.” Surovell said most of his colleagues in the House of Delegates have no concept of the need in “wealthy” Fairfax County and he often has to remind them that his district has a large population of students who are on the free and reduced lunch program. “We have real needs,” Surovell said, adding that organizations like VIC, Rising Hope and New Hope Housing are helping to meet those needs. Kincannon said the proclamation is “wonderful recognition of what the community is doing.”
-- Steve Hunt

Freddy Lyons spoke of how Rising Hope helped him turn his life around.

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