

Hospitality House Cuts Overflow Beds

Written by Steve Frank
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Funding woes, including being left out of the Watauga County budget for three years in a row, along with a still struggling economy are causing more difficulty for Hospitality House, where, despite a continuously increasing demand for shelter services, the use of all emergency shelter overflow beds are being discontinued, effective immediately. Their release said that from the time that the new facility opened in March 2011, the demand for emergency shelter beds exceeded the planned twenty-four beds. They explained that in an attempt to meet the need for emergency shelter housing, ten overflow beds were added. But this past month, for the first time, individuals were turned away as all regular and overflow beds were full. The release said that the new Hospitality House included twenty-four emergency shelter beds, an increase of seven beds from the old W. King St. house, twenty-nine family and transitional housing beds and nine long term housing beds – an overall increase of 68 percent. Hospitality House executive director Lynne Mason said “It’s not a decision that we wanted to make or came to lightly,” and “While we are experiencing record demand, we have also been faced with a reduction in resources and due to that reduction we had no choice but to make this difficult decision.” The release goes on to say that those that become homeless will only be able to stay at the shelter if there is a regular bed available, and that Hospitality House will no longer be able to take in emergency situations from the hospital or law enforcement if all regular beds are occupied. The release says that Hospitality House will continue to serve unsheltered homeless citizens with day services including three daily meals, showers and laundry services. Mason said, “We really regret having to take this action,” and says, “however, we just do not have adequate staffing to provide effective case management and to safely serve more than was originally planned for this facility. We look forward to continuing our work helping individuals and families rebuild their lives and returning them to housing stability with great success.”