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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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BURKE COUNTY, NC – Dozens of volunteers will be fanning out across Burke County on January 29th to locate and survey people who are homeless – those living in emergency shelters as well as those living out on the streets.

The “point in time” survey is a coordinated effort involving the network of non-profit organizations that provide services to homeless individuals and families in Burke County. Combined, these agencies are known as the Burke Homeless Continuum of Care. These agencies use the survey results as part of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD’s) Continuum of Care grant application. The point in time survey is the only survey that attempts to reach all the people who are homeless to gather demographic and other information.

HUD Continuum of Care grants are awarded competitively to provide funding for permanent and transitional housing for individuals and families who are homeless. The grants also can be used to fund important services such as job training, health care, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment and child care services.

“The point in time survey is important in order to secure these critical homeless funds for Burke County, but it is even more important to provide us an accurate count of how many people are homeless, who they are, and what their needs are,” said Rev. David Collins, the Director of House of Refuge Ministries. Rev. Collins is coordinating the effort for the agencies which make up Burke Homeless Continuum of Care. “The information from the survey allows us to identify what gaps we have in our housing and services for people who are homeless, and helps develop new, improved programs to address unmet needs.”

In 2007, the point in time survey identified 96 people or households who were homeless. The survey found that 12.2% were chronically homeless, 6.25% were veterans and that there were 19 children among the families who were homeless. “This count does not include those who are “sofa surfing,” said Collins referring to those who are bedless and move between friends and acquaintances often sleeping on their sofas.

Collins said he expects to have some preliminary information from this year’s survey available in February.