

MOUNT VERNON VOICE

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Volunteers Turn Out to Help Homeless

As the storm approached Friday, Sherry Edelkamp, coordinator of the Volunteers in Community Hypothermia Center at Rising Hope Methodist Mission Church on Russell Rd, put out an urgent call for volunteers and food to help about two dozen of the Rte. 1 corridor's homeless population get through the storm.

The center is completely run by volunteers from area churches and some scheduled volunteers had said they couldn't make it in because of the road conditions.

"It always comes together,"

Edelkamp said Tuesday, "When I got to the center the kitchen was full of food donations.

"Mt Vernon Presbyterian cooked dinner Friday and Aldersgate, the Harvest Assembly, and Friends of Woodlawn sent volunteers to stay overnight. Most of them lived nearby and walked over -- one woman walked from near Mount Vernon High School.

For Saturday, Good Shepherd Catholic Church volunteers came as scheduled -- one had a four-wheel drive."

Both Rising Hope and the Ken-

nedy Shelter on Fort Belvoir had no-turn-away policies during the blizzard; Rising Hope provided shelter for up to 27 and Kennedy had 37 hypothermia residents in addition to its 50 or so regular residents, Edelkamp said.

Edelkamp was at Rising Hope during most of the weekend.

"It was like a family," she said. "We had games and puzzles and movies. The residents helped clean up the rooms and shovel snow and pushed the volunteers' cars when they got stuck in the parking lot."

— Mary Paden