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For More Information:

William Mangum, bill@williammangum.com or 336-379-9200

Mike Aiken, Greensboro Urban Ministry, aiken@guministry.org or 336-271-5959 x302

The Honor Card by William Mangum Celebrates 20 Years & Raising \$2.3 Million to Help the Homeless

November 12, 2008 (Greensboro, NC) Inspired by a chance meeting between an artist and a homeless man, the Honor Card program has raised more than \$2.3 million for homelessness since William Mangum's participation began 20 years ago. The 2008 Holiday Honor Card features the painting "First Light" by Mangum, depicting a tranquil scene of a homeless person entering to worship in solitude at St. John's Chapel in the North Carolina mountain village of Valle Crucis. Honor Cards are available for a minimum donation of \$5 per card each holiday season at Greensboro Urban Ministry, with 100% of the proceeds going to provide services for the homeless.



Each year, the Honor Card features a contemplative painting by Mangum, one of the most respected and collected artists in North Carolina. Starting with a 59-cent tray of watercolors, he has produced more than 3,000 originals. Mangum's introduction to the plight of homelessness came through an appeal from a hungry man one morning in a Greensboro fast food restaurant. Mangum bought the gentleman breakfast and took him to Greensboro Urban Ministry for shelter, clothes and food—and ultimately became his caretaker for three years.

"The Honor Card has been a blessing in my life and has inspired some amazing paintings that share a subtle message about homelessness and the need to support those who have stumbled along life's journey," says Mangum. "The Honor Card is a marvelous way to recognize a friend or family member and at the same time give a meaningful gift to someone in need."

With a donation of \$5 or more, a person receives an Honor Card that he or she inscribes to someone they wish to "honor." During the past 20 years, 450,000 cards that have been given. Mangum and the Greensboro Urban Ministry hope to raise \$200,000 this holiday season to provide assistance and support for the needy and homeless of our community. The 2007 Honor Card raised a record \$190,000.

"Many businesses purchase large quantities of Honor Cards to send with their special holiday greeting imprinted inside," says Rev. Mike Aiken, Executive Director at Greensboro Urban Ministry. "It's a way to give business associates or employees something different this holiday season."

Founded in 1967, Greensboro Urban Ministry is an ecumenical outreach agency supported by more than 200 congregations representing Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faith traditions. Not only does Greensboro Urban Ministry provide crisis intervention and emergency services through the basics of food, shelter, and clothing, but they also help many individuals and families break the cycles of poverty, hunger, addiction, and homelessness.

In 2003, Mangum expanded the Honor Card from Greensboro to eight other communities across North Carolina with financial help from the Wachovia Foundation: Burlington, Durham, Fayetteville, Greenville, Hickory, Raleigh, Asheville and Winston Salem. The donations from Mangum and Wachovia cover production costs, so 100% of the proceeds go to the agencies to help the homeless in each community.

This year's Honor Card will be available first at the 17th Annual Feast of Caring on Thursday, November 20, 5-7 PM, at the First Baptist Church in Greensboro. This meal, in the soup kitchen tradition, kicks off the Greensboro Urban Ministry's annual operating fund campaign. The event is free and no reservations are necessary. Individuals making a pledge or donation (\$20 minimum) at the event will receive a handcrafted pottery bowl, donated by local potters.

Beginning November 21, the Honor Cards are available throughout the holiday season at Greensboro Urban Ministry, Wachovia Bank Branches in Greensboro, William Mangum Fine Art, Barnes and Nobles, Leon's Hair Salons and various churches throughout the community.

To commemorate the 20th anniversary, Mangum will have a special art display at his gallery at 2166 Lawndale Avenue in Greensboro to showcase the annual paintings that have been used for the Honor Card during the 20 years, complete with stories behind the cards. The event is open to the public at no charge on November 20-December 31. The Gallery is open Monday-Friday, 10 AM-5:30 PM and Saturday 10 AM-4:30 PM.

For more information about the Honor Card, call the William Mangum Fine Art Gallery at 336-379-9200 or Greensboro Urban Ministry at 336-271-5959.

An Average Day at Greensboro Urban Ministry:

- 350+ People receive a meal at Potter's House Community Kitchen
- 100 People receive dinner and breakfast at Weaver House
- 20 Non-profits receive hundreds of pounds of food from the Food Bank
- 100 Homeless men and women are provided safe emergency housing and supportive services at Weaver House
- 16 Homeless families are provided safe emergency housing and supportive services at Pathways Center
- 68 Transitional apartments with supportive services are provided to formerly homeless individuals and families at Partnership Village
- 160 Children are provided child care at Madeline B. McElveen Child Development Center
- 152 People are assisted with rent, mortgage, utility bills, clothing and food through the Emergency Assistance Fund
- 30 Volunteers, staff, and guests receive pastoral care through the Chaplaincy Program
- 105 Volunteers are actively involved