

# THE RAW HOUSE

ROANOKE AREA MINISTRIES

# Post

Summer 2008

## ANNUAL FUNDRAISING ISSUE

We see it on the news every day; record home foreclosures, rising fuel costs, increasing consumer prices driven up by rising fuel costs. On April 17, a wire service report in *The Roanoke Times* stated, "The country's economic health deteriorated further in early spring as shoppers buckled under the strains of the housing and credit debacles and a weaker employment climate. Manufacturers and other businesses, meanwhile, were walloped by zooming prices for energy and other raw materials...Economic conditions have weakened, the Fed report stated."

Most of us live it everyday. Have you filled your tank up lately? As we pull away from the gas pumps with our mouths hanging open or walk out of the grocery store with a much lighter wallet, we wonder when will we see the light at the end of the tunnel.

The past year has been a busy one at Roanoke Area Ministries. We provided emergency financial aid to 5,141 people and served 41,346 nutritious midday meals. Unfortunately, when it's a productive year at RAM that means it's not so good for the thousands of people who come to us for help. As hard as the current economic situation has been on us, you can imagine that it's been a whole lot more difficult for those consistently struggling to make ends meet. The demand on RAM's services

has increased significantly. In 2007 our Emergency Financial Aid program assisted 17 less people than in 2006, but we actually provided \$33,155 more in assistance. This means we're providing more money per approved applicant due to increased costs of energy and other consumer goods and services.



As tough as the economy has been, our friends have continued to support us in our mission and we sincerely appreciate your generosity. We typically receive the majority of our donations during the holiday season. However, people who come to us for help suffer and have needs all year long. As the cost of providing assistance continues to skyrocket, it becomes increasingly more challenging to make the holiday donations last the entire year.

We need your help! Please consider a gift to RAM today, so that we can continue to spread the holiday spirit during the warm weather months when our reserves and pantries are at their lowest. Thank you, in advance, for your generosity.

Have a Joyous Summer,

Stu Israel  
Resource Development Coordinator

How we  
**help**

**42,346** hot lunches served

**\$274,812** in emergency financial aid  
for 5,141 people

# The soup man stays in the Star City!

Words by: P. Allison Martin



Wilson Hoffman has been a staple in the RAM kitchen on Tuesdays for nearly seven years. He's known for his singing, the cheerful way he greets each guest, volunteer and staff member and most notably for his famous soups and stews.

Every Tuesday morning, RAM House kitchen manager, Linda Cannon graciously gives Wilson free reign to concoct one of his soups. She'll list what's on the menu and Wilson creates something that will compliment the rest of the food being served. The first thing he does is check the available leftovers to see if anything sparks his creativity. When he finds something he starts creating the soup before the spoon hits the pot and in a couple of hours, Wilson has three giant pots of bubbling soup on the stove ready to be served for lunch. He always gives the soups and stews a worldly flair by naming them. Recently, he created "Hungarian Goulash with a Hint of Czech Republic." He also creates soups in honor of holidays and special occasions.

Soups and stews aren't the only things Wilson can cook up. As the youngest of eleven children, Wilson learned to cook when his mother kept him in the kitchen to help her while her husband and the older children worked on

the family's 200 acre farm in rural Pennsylvania.

Wilson says, "We didn't have a lot of money and we grew our own vegetables and meats, cured hams, canned beef, milked cows. The work began before sun up and didn't end until after sundown, seven days a week. It was a hard life, especially for my mother."

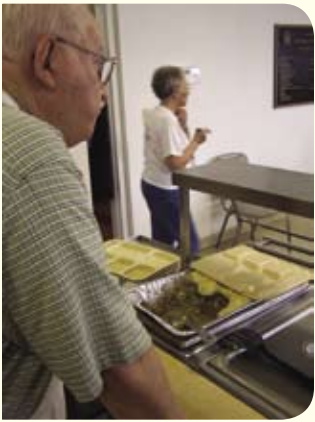
Wilson graduated from high school, joined the Air Force and then attended college. He was the first member of his family to attend college. While attending his niece and nephew's high school graduation he spotted the woman that would become his future wife. "She was in her cheerleading outfit and she was dancing and jumping around as part of the assembly and I told my nephew I had to meet that girl!" The two met that May and were married the following January.

His job in the clothing industry brought the couple to Roanoke thirty-five years ago and he's loved it ever since. The pair had four daughters and now has ten grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. When he retired he decided to come to RAM to work in the kitchen.

He says, "I loved to cook and I wanted to help the less fortunate. A lot of that comes from my upbringing."

Now, if Wilson takes a Tuesday off, the guests will ask, "Where's the soup man?"

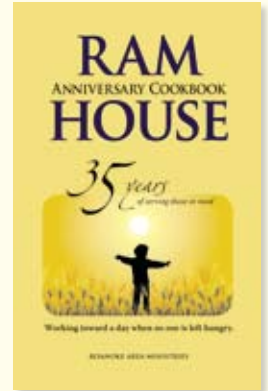
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Wilson prepares to serve the day's lunch at RAM House

Recently, Wilson announced that he and Donna would be buying a second home in Florida. The Tuesday crew of Marie Austin, Phyllis Crawford, Linda LeFever, Debbie Adams and Brad Gibbs wondered how they'd get along without Wilson. Everyone was happy when he came back to Roanoke and announced he would be staying put. When asked what changed their minds, Wilson said, "Well, we decided we weren't beach people and we loved Roanoke too much to leave."

Check out Wilson's recipes in The RAM House Anniversary Cookbook! Cookbooks are \$20 each and contain nearly 400 recipes in a hardback binder. Local photographer contributed photography throughout the region. To purchase a cookbook, contact Allison Martin at 540.345.9786.



# When life gives you scraps... Make quilts!

Words by: P. Allison Martin



Velma stands by the Snappy Scappy Star quilt she pieced together for RAM. The quilt measures 72" x 103".

**For Velma Meador, 83, giving back comes naturally to her. A native of Rocky Mount, Virginia, Velma learned to quilt when she was barely tall enough to reach the quilting frame.**

"We were so small we'd stuff our thumbs with cloth to get them to stay on our little fingers," she remembers. Quilting was something everyone did

she says. Velma made her first quilt when she and her sisters and brother all had the measles. Her mother had each child start working on a quilt. Velma was about ten years old and remembers it was a nine-patch quilt. Velma has a habit of taking her art and using it to help others. She has

completed a second quilt for RAM called Snappy Scappy Star quilt.

To purchase a ticket for the RAM Quilt Drawing, send a self-addressed stamped envelope along with \$1 per ticket or 6 tickets for \$5 to our address. We'll mail your tickets to you! Drawing will be held on December 5, 2008. *(Need not be present to win)*