

and stayed together, so they should try to be that kind of family for their children. Even if they are from broken multiple relationships, the solution is to forsake uncommitted relationships and work toward a single, stable marriage.

### Facilities and Staff

PABC has 12 buildings in varying states of repair. The original airbase steam heating system was removed when the base was sold, and only the following three buildings have been refitted with central heat:

1. The PABC staff, Guest families and single female guests live in the 6000 sq. ft. main building. It is motel-like in design.
2. The dining hall is used for group meals, as well as meetings for daily Bible studies, weekly church, thrice weekly Alcoholics Anonymous and once weekly Narcotics Anonymous.
3. The gym, racquet ball court, library and main church building is now kept only minimally heated and is only occasionally used in order to conserve funds.

In April, 2011, we opened up one of our 6000 sq ft dormitory buildings for a family of eight—then used it as a men’s dormitory until this time. For over a year, it was heated only by electric space heaters, but now it has one wood-burning stove and a rudimentary means of circulating the warm air. A second of our 6000 sq ft dormitory building has been used as a women’s dorm. It also lacks any central heat. **Upgrading the heating and plumbing systems in these buildings is one of our greatest needs.**

Our four-bay garage is a great place to store building and grounds maintenance equipment, but it needs heat and repairs. Six other buildings need greater amounts of repair, including two that are in desperate need of new roofs.

Norman and Marleen Edwards and Bill Buckman have lived and worked on the property

since 2004. Norman serves as the director, but wears too many other hats as well. Bill is the administrative assistant, librarian and historian. (He has a master’s degree in history.)

Several other volunteers have lived on the PABC grounds to help with the ministry—staying from several months to several years. PABC provides living space, food and other basic needs for all who come to volunteer.

### Faith: The Poor Helping the Poor

The entire PABC ministry has been based on trusting God’s provision—and He has faithfully done so, though often in the most minimal of ways. It is reminiscent of the story in 2 Kings 4-6 where Elisha and his group had to rely on miracles and foraging for food. They were so poor they had to borrow an axe to build a new building. Most of the intended financial support did not materialize at the beginning of the PABC ministry. Norman and Bill decided to continue the effort anyway, incurring much personal debt.

The annual budget of PABC is about \$30,000 per year, with most going to utility payments. We obtain a lot of free or inexpensive second hand things. It is good for the homeless people we serve to see our frugal examples of fixing broken things, waiting for the best deal rather than buying what comes easy right now, doing work to avoid expenses, minimizing transportation costs by well-planned shopping trips and ultimately trusting God to do what we cannot do for ourselves..

We welcome fellow believers who would like to work along side of us—either with our physical resources or mentoring the people whom we serve. Please contact us using the information, below. Thank you. 

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PABCBR03 – 1/20/15

## Port Austin Bible Campus

# Ministering to the Homeless

Since July, 2010, the Port Austin Bible Campus has opened its doors to help homeless people in Michigan’s Thumb. Located on part of the former Port Austin Air Force Base, PABC is a Christian community, a ministry of the non-denominational Port Austin Bible Church. By “non-denominational”, we mean that we make no judgments about who is or is not a believer, but we accept the good works of all believers everywhere.

PABC operates much like the church in the New Testament—or like a nondenominational country church in the 1800s. We receive no government grants, assistance or payments. The ministry operates on a very low budget with fru-

*continued inside...*



For more info: [portaustin.net/pabc/homeless](http://portaustin.net/pabc/homeless)

gal members doing as much of their own work as they can. Monetary needs are supplied by voluntary offerings. All workers are volunteers: they either provide for their own support, or live by the gifts personally given to them.

PABC has aided Michigan's Thumb region considerably during the last 4½ years. 507 people have been offered emergency shelter and 316 stayed at least one night at PABC (see table below). No other place in the Huron, Sanilac or Tuscola counties will accept men at all—even men with families. Women have more options, but shelters dedicated to them frequently fill up. After 4½ years of operation, PABC gave housing to 133 men, 103 women and 80 children who had no other good place to live. PABC now houses 31 people; its maximum was 41 in 2012.

Why were 191 people (507 minus 316) ac-

cepted to PABC but then did not come? Because homelessness is a chaotic event. People are usually pursuing multiple housing solutions at the same time, hoping one will work. Knowing that they can stay at PABC immediately gives them ability to concentrate on other long-term options. Fortunately, many find one of those options before they get to PABC. Most of the others come to stay with us for a few days to a few months. Only 6 have stayed over a year.

PABC receives referrals from a variety of government agencies, churches and other concerned individuals. We have attended the Thumb Area Continuum of Care meetings which coordinate the homeless services for Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac and Tuscola counties.

### Different People, Different Needs

Most people coming to PABC have had a series of unfortunate events that caused them to suddenly become homeless. Usually, they lost their permanent home due to job loss or health issues. They have exhausted their savings. Some move to a friend's house where they have no rights as a tenant. Next, their friend's landlord (or sometimes their friend) sends them out. They may have little or no advance notice—that is legal when a person is a guest in a home, not a tenant.

We have had cases where families went on an errand with their chil-

dren from the home where they were a guest and returned to find the doors locked and their belongings stacked up outside. If parents do not have a dwelling for their children to spend the night, it is considered child neglect and law enforcement will normally call Child Protective Services to take their children away. We prevented this expensive and heartrending process by taking in a family at 2 A.M. one morning. They had a place to go the next day.

Not every case of homelessness is caused by unforeseeable difficulties. Indeed, some people have life habits that almost guarantee they will become homeless: poor financial management, lack of work ethic, substance abuse, inability to get along with others, etc. It is the goal of PABC to get to know each person, to help them see what life skills they have and see which ones they need to improve. We also teach them that things that may indeed be impossible for them to do are possible with God (Mark 9:23).

Some homeless people are ashamed to ask for help even in desperate need. They **need to be encouraged to ask and receive more, so they will suffer less.** At the other extreme, some are very good at asking—either very demanding or very charming, lying whenever necessary, and will shamelessly take as much as they can get, even living more lavishly than the people who are helping them. **They need to be compelled to ask and receive less, and to reap the effects of their lifestyle—to motivate them to work.**

PABC applies simple Christian teachings, like the Golden Rule (Lev 19:18; Matt 19:19) to encourage them to treat others like they would want to be treated. For example, people do not want their belongings taken, so they should not take others'. They do not want to clean up someone else's mess, so they should not leave a mess for others. More profoundly, nearly everyone wishes they could have grown up in a family where their natural mother and father loved them

PABC Ministry to the Homeless: Statistics for 4½ Years							
Category	Gender & Age	For years ending July 1				July to Dec 2014	*Total
		2011	2012	2013	2014		
Total people accepted (Knowing we will accept them, many can better concentrate and they find long-term housing before coming to PABC.)	Men	29	60	65	68	45	212
	Women	18	46	56	42	36	168
	Children	17	35	41	21	36	126
	<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>506</b>
Total people who stayed at least one night at PABC (a subset of the above category)	Men	23	40	41	49	30	132
	Women	13	32	35	28	16	103
	Children	16	22	31	13	21	80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>315</b>
Total bed-nights (sum of all nights that each person stayed at PABC—includes nights away if a bed was held for them.)	Men	1,545	3,026	3,439	3,322	1,847	13,179
	Women	743	1,618	2,332	1,223	741	6,657
	Children	671	510	2,568	815	1,590	6,154
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,959</b>	<b>5,154</b>	<b>8,339</b>	<b>5,360</b>	<b>4,178</b>	<b>25,990</b>
* Totals of people do not add across because some people stayed at PABC for parts of two different years. Total's represent unique people.							