



The Cornerstone

Winter 2010

Carpenter's Shelter at the Hoffman Center for Homeless Families
930 N. Henry Street, Alexandria VA 22314 703-548-7500 (Phone) www.carpentersshelter.org

Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell Views Partnerships Ending Homelessness

During a very busy pre-inauguration week, Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell travelled to volunteer at Carpenter's Shelter, the only Northern Virginia nonprofit program he visited. Mr. McDonnell witnessed the incredible care, hope and programs that Carpenter's Shelter offers to families who are experiencing homelessness due to job losses and evictions. He viewed clients receiving free medical care, saw adults participating in a computer literacy class and families receiving mental health assessments through play group activities.

Executive Director Fran Becker told Governor McDonnell that she was delighted to showcase a working, vibrant nonprofit like Carpenter's Shelter that is effectively ending homelessness. She told him that "Carpenter's does through basic good business practices and through partnerships with the City of Alexandria, local businesses and other nonprofits". She added, "We know that we have been successful when a family doesn't return to homelessness."

The Governor asked those gathered to "donate their time, talent and money to help other people because government is not able to do this year."



Long time volunteers and supporters of Carpenter's, Sue Anderson, Joyce Douglass, Mike Geary and Congressman Gerry Connolly help Governor McDonnell prepare grill cheese sandwiches at the shelter.

Carpenter's Board of Directors Announces Retirement of Executive Director

For almost twelve years, Carpenter's Shelter has enjoyed the benefit of the leadership of Fran Becker as its Executive Director. Fran is rare in her ability to bring vision, compassion and high expectations of others together while executing efficient and effective business decisions. Under Fran's command, Carpenter's has grown from an entity that struggled to house individuals and families in leaky warehouses, to a comprehensive homeless program with the incredible success rate of ending the homelessness of over ninety percent of those who go through Carpenter's programs. The quality of Fran's tenure is also reflected in Carpenter's very low rate of staff turnover, with every staff member feeling empowered and in charge of improving the future for each and every client at Carpenter's.

It is with great admiration and appreciation that the Board of Directors accepted Fran's decision to retire as of July 1, 2010. In recognition of the substantial task of finding the best combination of talent and ability to lead Carpenter's into the future, the Board established the Leadership Transition Committee consisting of current Board Chairman Matt Sheldon, Strategic Planning Chairman Jim Coakley, Finance Committee Chairman Tom Clark, past Chairman Peter Lunt, Ritz Grazda and Brenda Dougherty, both professional leadership advisors. This Committee is chaired by immediate past Chairman Lee Fifer and has been joined by Board Vice Chairman and Development Committee Chairman Val Hawkins. This Committee has been working for seven months to research and prepare its approach to its assigned task, getting the experience of similar entities that have successfully completed searches for an Executive Director, and has been meeting regularly. It recently chose The McCormick Group to be a consultant to assist in the search. It is the expectation that a new Executive Director can be on board no later than June, 2010 with at least a two week transition with Fran still in place. The Board is deeply grateful to Fran Becker for her service. Acknowledging the immensity of the task ahead, the Board looks forward to the support and participation by all sectors of the Carpenter's family in selecting the Executive Director to lead Carpenter's into its new future.

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From the Desk of Executive Director Fran Becker

“The breadth of life is the outward concern for the welfare of others... [wo]man has not begun to live until [s]he can rise above the narrow confines of [her]his own individual concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I'm writing this column on the anniversary of the birth of the great American, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. On his anniversary, I usually read from his many writings, looking for renewal and enlightenment, particularly with social justice concerns. Today, however, I am distracted from my home where I continue to watch horrific events unfold from hurricane-stricken Haiti. I hear how many people are sacrificing their time and their money with compassion and concern so those without homes in Haiti can have hope for a better tomorrow. I am reflecting on what one NPR reporter stated, *“[What's happened] in Haiti is not as much about a natural disaster as much as it is about poverty.”* So true!

When asked by Governor McDonnell about the root causes of homelessness, I first listed poverty, then low wages, limited education, and lack of affordable housing. Poverty...here in Alexandria! The Governor challenged all Virginians to more for those who have the least. Because of many of you, Carpenter's Shelter's supporters, we are sheltering families in poverty and often breaking a generational cycle. I am humbled by the thousands of Carpenter's supporters care so much for those without homes in Northern Virginia and who give so much of their time, talents and generous donations to help us end poverty for hundreds of families each year. Thank you!

As Dr. King so forthrightly said: *“Somewhere along the way, we must learn that there is nothing greater than to do something for others,”* whether it is hundreds of miles away in Haiti or a couple miles away in Alexandria.

Carpenter's Shelter's Deputy Director Celebrates 20 Years of Service

After more than two decades serving Alexandria's homeless people, Carpenter's has undergone many changes including building its own shelter after several warehouses and expanding programming that transformed us into a Center of Learning. Through all our changes, Deputy Director, Mary Martin has been the one constant, guiding us with her wisdom, integrity and her big heart for those in need. Mary joined us in January 1990 and holds the distinction of longest-serving staff member. In addition to overseeing the daily operations of all shelter programs, she works closely with Executive Director Fran Becker to develop and implement the shelter's program policies and procedures.



It was Mary's vision and leadership that spearheaded the development of our highly successful Aftercare Betterment Class (ABC) workshops for shelter graduates and the creation of our new Kid's Street Sense program in partnership with Freddie Mac's Rising Leaders.

When recently asked about her greatest accomplishment, she reflected, “I have been fortunate to be a part of the development of a dynamic, comprehensive and effective program in the community where I have lived my entire life. I take pride when I look at the outcomes and accomplishments of those we serve to know I have been a part of making it happen.”

Congratulations, Mary, for your many years of commitment and compassion to Carpenter's Shelter and our clients.

Carpenter's Welcomes New Board Member— Brenda Doherty

Carpenter's Shelter is pleased to welcome new board member Brenda Doherty. Brenda brings extensive health care and management experience, having worked in the healthcare industry for more than twenty years. She is the managing partner for The Charleston Group, an Alexandria-based executive search agency. Brenda joined Carpenter's Development Committee two years ago and has served as chairperson for our signature fundraiser, Urban Country Night . . . on the Runway since 2008. Welcome aboard, Brenda!



Development News from Jasmin Witcher, Director of Development and Strategic Alliances

Carpenter's Shelter wishes to thank all who contributed to the **2009 Annual Appeal**. Through your generosity, the appeal raised nearly \$200,000 in a very challenging fundraising year.

We are thankful for the commitment and support of our new and long-time foundations whose investments are helping to sustain our mission-critical programming. We gratefully acknowledge the following foundations for their recent grant support: **Freddie Mac Foundation; Bank of America Charitable Foundation, The Mason Hirst Foundation; and Kaiser Permanente.**

Carpenter's Shelter is also grateful for the incredible volunteer and pro bono support rendered by our corporate partners. We especially thank **Goodman & Co** for their many years of pro bono assistance exceeding \$50,000 in audit services and the **TAPROOT** professionals whose website design increased our on-line giving by 50%!

Hope Flourishes Through Carpenter's and Our Partners

Carpenter's Shelter since our beginnings has relied on hundreds of partners to end family homelessness. The G family demonstrates how effective our partnerships are in offering hope, housing and care:

Mr. G. arrived in the United States from Sudan, in September of 2008. He immediately found employment, completed all of the paperwork necessary to be able to remain in this country legally and made preparations for his family to follow. Mrs. G's and three young daughters arrived nine months later just when Mr. G had lost his job. Within days, they had to leave their sponsoring home and were homeless. With little hope and much despair, they found themselves at Carpenter's front doors. Through the immediate focus of our Transitional Services team and the Alexandria ESL program, within a week, all three girls were ready to begin school. Mr. G. quickly found one full-time AND a part-time job while his wife was enrolled in an English-as-a-Second-Language program to improve her English skills. As the summer began, the children attended day camp programs sponsored by the City of Alexandria Recreation Department and the Campagna Center. This allowed Mrs. G to continue her studies and Mr. G to continue working and saving their money for future housing. Just 4 ½ months after living at Carpenter's Shelter, the family moved into AACH's transitional housing apartments. The family is active in *Aftercare* program, recently learning financial literacy skills. During a holiday visit, Mr. G shared with us that the children had advanced to the next grade level, mom was continuing her studies, and dad was settling in a full-time position with his part-time employer, earning more than both of his previous jobs combined. This family is not just surviving, but thriving with great hope for a better future because of Carpenter's and our partners.

Financial Literacy Funded by the Freddie Mac Foundation

Better credit scores will help Carpenter's clients obtain and maintain stable housing. This January, Carpenter's Shelter launched its 2010 *Aftercare* ABC workshops for shelter graduates focusing on financial literacy. The workshops include nine two-hour sessions designed to help clients develop the skills to better manage their money, build savings and make sound financial decisions. Increasing client credit ratings by 50 points is one of the goals of the workshops. The topics covered by the workshops include: Budgeting, Savings, Banking Services, Establishing Credit, Record Keeping and Home Ownership.

"In these challenging economic times, we have seen some Aftercare families who seem to be doing well in the community and accomplishing their financial goals but later come to us for assistance because they have fallen behind in their rent or utilities," said Mary Parker Lamm, Director of Transitional Services. *"We then learn for the first time that they have no safety net and aren't prepared financially. This just underscores the importance of educating clients on financial literacy from A to Z. We want to ensure that they receive comprehensive financial education which will allow them to make sound financial decisions allowing them to withstand the next rainy day."*

Facilitated by our Transitional Services Director, Mary-Parker Lamm and other program staff, workshops will be taught by Carpenter's Board Members Kerry Donley and David Speck. Other presenting community partners include The Motley Fool, Our Daily Bread, Freddie Mac's ARISE and Habitat for Humanity.

In addition to monthly sessions, clients will be paired with financial literacy mentors to identify personal and financial goals and to provide monthly encouragement and assistance in achieving financial independence.

Financial literacy is a theme that will be threaded throughout all of our education programs this year including weekly life-skills classes taught to adults living in our residential shelter and members of our David's Place day shelter.

Holiday Photos!



Carpenter's Shelter is going green! Please help us in our efforts by opting to receive future issues of Cornerstone electronically. Please email us at information@carpentersshelter.org to make the switch.



United Way #8228/CFC #87293



COMING SOON: Carpenter's Cook-off!

Mark your calendar!

What: Carpenter's 8th Annual Cook-off

When: Sunday, April 25th, 2010
from 12:00-3:00 p.m.

Where: The Birchmere
3701 Mount Vernon Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22305

Ticket Price: \$40 adults/\$5 per child (ages 6-17) /children under 5 get in free!

Join us for an afternoon filled with live music from the Melonheads, a fun interactive children's corner and delectable treats from Alexandria's finest eateries!

For more information, please visit our website at www.carpentersshelter.org

Carpenter's Shelter's Board of Directors

Chair: Matt Sheldon
Vice Chair: Val Hawkins
Treasurer: Tom Clark
Secretary: Anthony Lowe

Board Members: Jim Cookley, Brenda Doherty, Kerry Donley, Carson Lee Fifer, Jr., Jeremy Flachs, Rita Grazda, Kim Jackson, Peter Lunt, David Speck, Phil Sunderland, Carlton Willis, Dr. Robert Wineland

Carpenter's Shelter's Staff

Executive Director: Fran Becker
Deputy Director: Mary Martin
Transitional Services Director: Mary-Parker Lamm
David's Place Director: Vacant
Hypothermia Director: Larry Roberts
Director of Development & Alliances: Jasmin Witcher
Volunteer Coordinator: Allison Clausen
Finance Officer: Christina Perkins
Operations Manager: Kim Myers
Night Supervisor/Case Manager: Calvin Thompson
Case Managers: James Beckwith and Monte Jones
David's Place Case Manager: Michael Shields
Aftercare Child Services Coordinator: Katrina Tabb
Child & Family Services Coordinator: Senai Beyen
Midnight Monitor: Michael Turner
Monitors: Terri DeRae, Keith Long, Wesley Miller, Teresa Starr, Carroll Shumpert