



# The Advocate Current

JULY | AUGUST 2014

Advocates for Homeless Families, Inc. | 216 Abrecht Place | Frederick, MD 21701 | 301-662-2003 | www.afhf.org

*Serving Frederick County for 26 Years*



## A GROWING PARTNERSHIP

Last year the Frederick County Master Gardeners from the Maryland Extension Service and family participants from Advocates Transitional Housing Program joined forces to establish urban vegetable and herb gardens at three properties in keeping with our Life Skills nutritional program.

This year, funding from the **Don Doughty and Linda Moran Fund** through the Community Foundation of Frederick County allowed us to expand the urban gardens to include 10 homeless families at 7 properties.

This funding provided the means to purchase lumber for raised beds, seeds and plantings for vegetables and herbs, flower pots, garden tools, and compost and mulch.

The care of the gardens is left to the families but each family has a Master Gardener mentor to provide instruction on the planting and maintenance of the gardens throughout the summer. Harvesting the produce throughout the summer and early fall allows the families to enjoy their homegrown tomatoes, cantaloupes, lettuce,

watermelon, blueberries, and squash. The gardens are a wonderful nexus for family projects. The children in our housing program are as invested in the success of their gardens as the parents. Additional funding from the **United Way of Frederick County** will allow the Master Gardeners and our families to plant additional gardens this fall, prepare indoor herb gardens, and prepare simple meals from their gardens in a 10-part course on *Smart Food Choices on a Budget*, presented by a nutritionist with the Extension Service of the University of Maryland.

## ADVOCATES GOOD GRADES PARTY

On May 29, 2014, Advocates held its 5th Annual Good Grades Party in cooperation with Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) for the homeless children in our program. Statistics show that recognition and rewards are major incentives to academic achievement. Zoe Carson, FCPS Homeless Coordinator and partner in organizing this effort, and Case Managers Connelly Stewart and Charlotte Strine welcomed 17 adults and 28 children with a buffet and a cake provided by FCPS. Children received certificates and gift cards to Rita's Italian Ices for the following categories: perfect attendance; good citizenship; and honor roll. Four

honor roll students also received individual gifts; every child, however, was recognized. Fun activities included face painting and games. A good time was had by all as the pictures of the event show.

Throughout the school year Advocates case managers monitor each child's progress along with the parents and school personnel and coordinate interventions as needed. Academic achievement is a necessary component of a child's future success in life regardless of their current circumstances.



## UNITED WAY SUMMER SERVE PROGRAM

On June 23, 2014, 25 youth volunteers, ages 12 to 17 years, worked at two of Advocates properties housing homeless families in order to beautify and maintain them. They built a deck adjoining an urban garden at one property and painted a garage at another one. They also painted the back of Advocates office building.

We have to recognize the efforts of our property manager, Dan Herbert, in organizing and coordinating the volunteer crews as well as our Board members Dan Lajewski, Stewart Smith, Doug Stone and Melissa Matesa who supervised and assisted. All tasks were accomplished within a four-hour period in a thorough fashion. These kids were on it! Thank you, volunteers! And, thanks to the United Way of Frederick County for making this volunteer effort possible.

*Congratulations, Kids for a job well done!*



# COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS!



▲ Executive Director Ken Allread accepts car donation from Jerry and Mary Lou Blessing

Transportation is one of the major barriers to overcoming homelessness and achieving self sufficiency, especially in Frederick County which has limited public transportation in spite of being the largest county in Maryland. For example, evening classes at Frederick Community College (FCC) conclude at 9:30pm and the last bus from FCC is at 8:30pm and does not come into Frederick City.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Blessing recently donated their second automobile -- a Honda Accord -- to Advocates which will enable one of homeless mothers with two young children to go to school full-time at Frederick Community College and work part-time.

Thanks to the Blessings for their very generous donation!

## WISH LIST ITEMS

The homeless and at-risk families in our programs are always in need of the following:

- Liquid laundry detergent
- Body Wash
- Women's deodorant
- Men's deodorant
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Dish detergent
- All purpose cleaners

Donations can be dropped off at our office between 9:30am and 4:00pm. We ask that you call first, so we can make sure a staff member is available to receive the goods.



## MEET OUR NEW CASE MANAGER

On May 5, 2014, Advocates welcomed Charlotte Strine to our staff. Charlotte previously worked with Bridges to Housing Stability in Howard County, but wanted to work closer to home and serve her local Frederick County community. Charlotte has worked in programs providing direct social services to the homeless and marginalized throughout her 10-year career. Her depth of experience and passion for helping those in need can only enhance our program, and we feel fortunate to have her on board.

In the few months that she's been with us, she has been an asset to the program and the participants. Her previous work experience in Bridges, a transitional housing program with goals similar to Advocates, makes Charlotte a natural fit with our organizational goals and mission. "Participants and staff have been very warm and welcoming, and have made the transition very easy for me" Charlotte says. "It is very rewarding to work for an organization that restores hope in people's lives. I am so grateful to have this opportunity!"





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CHARLOTTE STRINE | *Family Advocate*  
ALLISON CALHOUN | *Accountant*  
DAN HERBERT | *Property Manager*  
KAREN GEOFFREY | *Administrative Assistant*

## MISSION STATEMENT

Advocates achieves permanent solutions to homelessness by providing access to housing, education, and supportive services to Frederick County families motivated to overcome their circumstances. Families achieve success through a two-year structured program of education, job-training, housing, and intensive case management services. We maintain 15 single-unit, scattered-site properties to house one- and two-parent families with custody of one or more children in our Transitional Housing Program. We also provide limited financial assistance for rent and utilities to families at risk of homelessness in our Families Forward Program.

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM

**14,715** sheltered bed nights provided  
**53** adults and children housed  
**10** adults in vocational training programs  
**16** adults working full- or part-time  
**38** monthly housing inquiries and applications  
**98** families on our waiting list

## HOMELESS PREVENTION SERVICES

**42 ADULTS** and children served  
**15 FAMILIES** assisted with rent or utilities, \$5,297  
**11 WOMEN** working full- or part-time  
**7 WOMEN** enrolled in vocational certification classes

## Follow Us On Facebook!

Please take a moment to look us up on Facebook to learn more about the work we accomplish with the families we support, our community partners, and upcoming events. We have a story to tell about folks who live in Frederick and are either striving for a better life or a better community. Newsletters, such as this one, serve a purpose, but cannot begin to cover the scope of the work in which we're engaged.

*Advocates for Homeless Families  
is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization*