

# The Advocate

The Newsletter of Advocates for Homeless Families, Inc.

Spring 2006

Advocates empowers motivated families to overcome homelessness. Our families succeed through a two-year structured program of housing, education and support services.

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## Mother and Student Multiplies Her Success by Degrees

With one child and another on the way, single-mother Brenda found herself in need of assistance and alone in California.

Brenda moved to Frederick County in 1999 to be closer to her mother because she needed help to go to school and work. Shortly after arriving, she learned that the credits she had earned toward a degree as a Medical Assistant in California would not transfer. She had to start all over again.

Brenda started school at Frederick Community College and the State government helped her find subsidized housing. That is when she learned about Advocates for Homeless Families through Project Forward Step, an FCC program and partnering program with Advocates .

As a participant in Advocates' Families Forward program, Brenda recalls that among the most important things to her while in the program were the regular visits with her Family Advocate who gave regular support and encouragement with all aspects of her life, work and education.

She also remembers the little things that meant a lot, such as help getting school supplies for her daughter. "It's the little things that make a difference to someone who is not making much money," Brenda said of her experience with Advocates.

While in the program, Brenda finished her Associate of Arts degree. She went on to earn her Bachelor of Science degree in Legal Studies from the University of Maryland.

Today, Brenda is married with three children and pursuing her

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**"Some [agencies] want you to take a job—any job. But Advocates helped me find a job that would give me and my children a future."**



### Help Support Advocates!

To make a contribution,  
call 301-662-2003,  
or visit [www.afhf.org](http://www.afhf.org).

## Got Treasure?

Wait! Don't hold that yard sale just yet. Advocates can take some of your discards and turn it into treasure for our families.

You might already be aware that Advocates provides fully furnished apartments in our Transitional Housing program. And we mean *fully* furnished, right down to the silverware in the drawer, pictures on the walls and toilet tissue in the bathroom.

But many of you might not know that Advocates allows program graduates to take it all with them when they get their own apartment. Everything.

What this means is that we have a steady need for household goods: furniture, small appliances, linens and more. We love things that serve dual purposes, and that help our families save money and get organized in small apartments. We especially welcome these items:

- Crock pots
- Plastic bins
- Alarm clocks
- Bunk beds
- Shelves
- Love seats
- Working lawn mowers

You might be wondering if we accept clothing. Unfortunately, we do not have space to store clothing, and it is often hard to find clothing that fits the exact needs of our participants. If you have clothing donations, we recommend that you call the Way Station Thrift Shop (301-695-1583) or Select Seconds (301-662-8280), which is where we refer our participants through a voucher program.

If you have gently used items that you would like to donate, please call our property manager Donna Gorgol at 301-662-2003. We appreciate delivery.

### Elizabeth and Greg Galaida

Executive Directors  
Advocates for Homeless Families

## Old House Gets New Life, a "Cause"

Advocates is pleased to announce a partnership with Middletown's Christ Reformed United Church of Christ establishing a new three- to five-bedroom home for our Transitional Housing program.

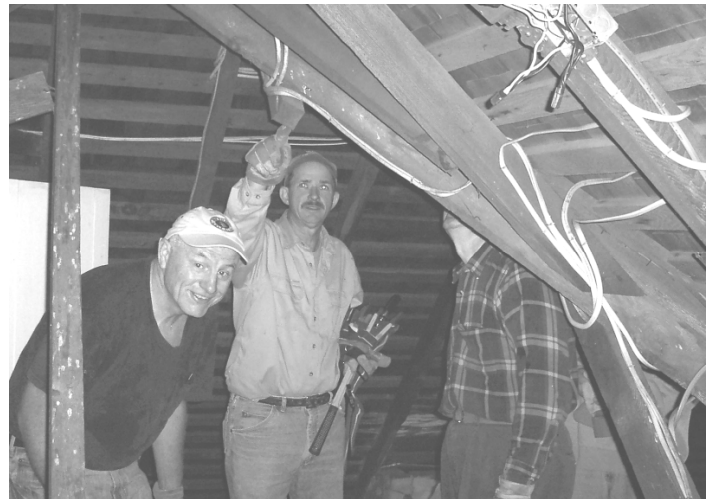
The six-year partnership agreement came about after the church purchased a house bordering the church property. A congregational committee then considered the best use for the building with the goal of giving the house "a cause." In January, the church voted for Advocates to be its partner and the homeless of Frederick County to be the home's cause.

Executive Director Elizabeth Galaida said the partnership is a wonderful new opportunity. "Now we can serve those larger families we've had to turn down in the past, the families too big for shelters or extended families, who really have nowhere else to go," she said.

The 150-year-old one-bathroom house needs a great deal of work, including updating the plumbing, flooring and electrical, and other cosmetic repairs. But church pastor Rev. Mark Wakefield—who is looking forward to the partnership with Advocates—has committed to financing the construction changes and providing volunteers from the church.

"I like that Advocates will have the continual contact with the families," said Rev. Wakefield. "I won't have to worry that the residents are lacking the guidance they need."

The rehab is a true community effort, with several contractors, notably the electrical and plumbing experts, donating their services. Noland Company has agreed to donate an HVAC system. Advocates has also pledged to seek financial support and to provide volunteers.



Volunteers from CRUCC inspect the wiring in the attic and plan for repairs. Electrical contracting is being donated to the project by Crum Electric.

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Masters Degree in Public Administration from the University of Baltimore. She is working as a Services Specialist with Family Partnership, starting her own mediation practice, and volunteering with CALM—The Frederick Mediation Center.

Brenda said she believes Advocates was focused on the future for her and not just the short term. "Some organizations and government agencies want you to take a job—any job. But Advocates helped me find a job that would give me and my children a future," she said.

"It was an awesome experience to have an organization help and support you not just for the short term but the long term," she said. "Advocates was like a second family to me."

# Charitable Giving and You

## Jim Bass Real Estate: Building a Tradition of Charity

Jim and Cheryl Bass are the co-owners of Jim Bass Real Estate Group, a 10-agent joint venture cooperative of Real Estate Teams. They specialize in residential sales, though they are also working on an office/retail complex at 50 Court Street property of the Carroll Creek revitalization area. In December 2005, Jim and Cheryl donated \$10,000 to Advocates through the Community Investment Tax Credit Program.

**Q:** You know the housing business in Frederick inside and out. What's the biggest housing issue in Frederick right now?

**A:** Affordability. Definitely affordability. Frederick is a stable, safe, strong and pleasant community, and it's convenient to several major markets, so it's no surprise that prices are going up. We wouldn't be able to afford our own house, if we had to buy it right now.

**Q:** But housing prices aren't the only thing going up.

**A:** No. Gas prices, electricity, college tuition, they're all going up too. I think more and more, people are coming closer and closer to being two paychecks away from disaster. Anyone could find themselves in a homelessness situation.

**Q:** Is it just about the prices of things, or is it more than that?

**A:** Most people today haven't lived through the Depression. This is a different age, and people are forgetting that you need to have a 3- to 6-month reserve of funds in case of emergencies. We need of culture of savings right now. That's why we like Advocates so much, they help people learn to save.

**Q:** It takes some re-education for today's homeowners and the next generation. What have you taught your kids?

**A:** We've taught them that your home is the sole biggest investment you'll ever make, and the one with the best returns. But we've also tried to teach them about counting their blessings, and reaching out to those in need. When our daughters were younger, we volunteered with Advocates, and made charitable gifts around the holidays. They enjoyed it so much, we came back to do more. We donated shoes once. Later, we co-founded Meals for the Needy, a meal delivery charity that served in the Frederick and DC areas.

**Q:** Sounds like charity, for you, is a family affair.

**A:** Families are important to us. We have structured our business so we and our employees can take care of our families, but we know not  
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**“People are coming closer and closer to being two paychecks away from disaster.”**

## News Briefs

Advocates client Esmeralda closed this month on her first ever home purchase, a townhouse. She plans to do some renovation in the kitchen and bathroom and paint most of the interior. She is also planning on renting out a portion of the house to help earn income towards the mortgage. She saved nearly \$8,000 towards her down payment during her year and a half with Advocates.

Advocates received a \$5,000 grant from **The Safeway Foundation** to support programs and services.

On April 27, Advocates for Homeless Families received donations from the **Tuscarora High School Feeder Pattern 1st Annual Empty Bowls Banquet**. Students raised funds and bought supplies for Advocates and other charities, and hosted a “banquet” of soup and bread to celebrate the accomplishments. The students made bowls for guests as a reminder of local need.

On April 29, Linganore High School Student Chase Hammond hosted a **badminton tournament** to raise funds for Advocates. Executive Director Greg Galaida, with his partner, made it to the finals but lost in the last round. Students contributed over \$250 for Advocates programs.

Mark your calendars! **The gala will be held August 23, 2006** at 6 PM at Ceresville Mansion. Sponsorship packages are available! For more information, or to reserve tables or seats, please call 301-662-2003.

If you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail, please send a message to [ChrisP\\_Advocates@Adelphia.net](mailto:ChrisP_Advocates@Adelphia.net) with “Subscribe” in the subject.

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everyone can do this. Some families are struggling, trying to work, trying to be there for their kids. We love how Advocates is about inspiring people to take control of their lives. They're really "advocates" for homeless people.

**Q:** And you've got more in the works, I hear.

**A:** Yes, we're working with Real Estate Teams to create a Community Outreach Committee, where employees can contribute monthly, and collectively we can make significant donations to local organizations. Our charity in the past has been a bit more "behind the scenes," but we're trying to be more open about it now, to show other businesses in Frederick what is possible.

*For more information on the Community Investment Tax Credit Program, please contact Advocates at 301-662-2003.*

**Thanks to these recent donors:**

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**Mark Your Calendars!**

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August 23, 2006  
At Ceresville Mansion