



# The Advocate Current

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

## Challenges Facing Frederick County Families

**T**he *Frederick County Gazette* published an article on May 12, 2011, that stated some alarming facts concerning the high cost of housing in Frederick County. According to a study, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Frederick County is estimated at \$1,461 a month.

This information validates what agencies like Advocates, the Religious Coalition, Hope Alive and others have known for quite some time. Most working participants in these homeless prevention

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**... the Housing Coalition reports that a worker should earn \$58,440 annually, a 61% increase since 2000. To rent a two-bedroom unit in Frederick County, a worker has to earn \$28.10 an hour, according to the report. —**

*The Frederick County Gazette*

programs earn minimum wage, which is \$7.25/hour. At that rate, a worker's take home pay is about \$1,000 per month. Single parents living on this wage with one or more children face extraordinary challenges when trying to support their families.

An income of \$1,000 a month will not pay the average rent in Frederick County, much less pay for transportation to get back and forth to work. Nor will it cover the costs associated with child care while parents are at work. There's also the need to meet basic expenses for food, utilities, clothing, and health-care. Saving for retirement and emergencies is a challenge far beyond the reach of the working poor and the homeless. One unexpected emergency can cost these folks their jobs, sending them into a downward spiral that is seemingly impossible to avert.

Agencies like Advocates are here to assist these families in crisis. Without us, where will they go? What options do they have to overcome current circumstances? Funding from the faith community and local government combined cannot meet all the needs of this vulnerable population.

Your support for Advocates allows us to continue to provide housing and support to homeless families in Frederick County, as they continue towards their goal of self-sufficiency.

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## BECAUSE OF YOU . . .

Since January 2010, Advocates has provided 86 previously homeless individuals (29 adults and 57 children) with **18,802 bed nights** in safe, well-maintained, separate housing units in our Transitional Housing program. We currently have **143 families** on our waiting list for services.

*In the past year Advocates' participants have achieved the following. . .*

- One participant was hired, given a raise, then promoted, then made an exempt employee – she's obviously making quite an impression!
- One participant graduated from FCC with a certificate in Culinary Arts.
- One student is graduating from high school this year, and another just got her driver's license.
- Four participants obtained career-oriented jobs in their chosen field.
- One student was nominated and accepted into the FCPS Gifted and Talented program.
- One participant celebrated an entire year of being sober.
- Four participants opened new checking accounts.
- One student received her babysitting certification from the American Red Cross.

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Advocates is able to accomplish more effective outcomes with less financial resources because of Community Partnerships. In the current economy, community partnerships are more important than ever. To address this need, Advocates has developed partnerships with local organizations, businesses and faith groups. We recognize the following partners for their valuable assistance:

**Hands on Frederick** has organized energy audits of Advocates transitional housing units. The audits will lead to increased energy efficiency and result in lower utility expenses.

**Petersen's Carpet** has donated carpeting and generously discounted flooring to Advocates transitional housing units.

Travis, the manager of Frederick's **Just Cabinets** store, has discounted and donated furniture and mattresses to outfit Advocates' transitional housing units for families that arrive without these necessities.

Members of **All Saints' Episcopal Church** and **The Church of the Redeemer** have sponsored volunteer events to assist with maintenance projects.

**Christ Reformed Church of Christ** provides an in-kind donation of rent for one of our transitional housing units.

**Mental Health Association of Frederick County** conducts group therapy sessions at Advocates' group meetings.

On behalf of Advocates Board of Directors, staff, and program participants, we thank you for your willingness to work with Advocates as we help families to move toward self-sufficiency.



## Advocates' 2011 Gala Plans Underway

Planning for Advocates 2011 Gala is well on its way. This year's theme is "A Journey Begins with Friends." The Gala will showcase an extensive culinary journey featuring:

**Main course:** lamb chops with tarragon pesto and goat cheese crema; pulled pork on fried polenta with award-winning BBQ sauce and pureed slaw; duck brochette with fried confetti corn

**Desserts:** chocolate mousse with chocolate tower and whipped cream; lemon pound cake with lemon curd, fresh blueberries, and lemon candied peels; chocolate cake with chocolate custard and strawberry sauce; angel food cake with raspberry impastata filling topped with Chambord-infused cream; mini apple dumplings with caramel pecan & Bourbon sauce (served warm); fresh strawberries & sabayon fortified with Grand Marnier ...and much more.

In addition, there will be beer and wine pairings for those of you who wish to partake! The event chair, Melissa Phillips, remarked that, "This event is sure to please your appetite AND your heart". We hope to see you at our Annual Gala, taking place at All Saints' Church, on Friday, September 23 from 6-10 p.m. Invitations will be mailed in August, but reservations can be made in advance by calling 301-662-2003. Tickets are \$60 each.

**Advocates for Homeless Families has begun to accept sponsors for our newsletter. If you would like to be honored in an upcoming addition by sponsoring, please contact Joe Case at [jcase@afh.org](mailto:jcase@afh.org) or 301-662-2003 ext. 23.**

# Teens Visit Shepherd University

Just to show how motivated some of the teens in our program are, four of them gave up part of their spring break in order to take a tour of Shepherd University. By working in partnership with Project Alive and the City of Frederick Housing Authority, Advocates was able to take four of our high school students for a day-long tour of Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. We met an honors student at the Admissions Office, and she gave us a campus-wide tour



which included a typical dorm room, the cafeteria, a few of the various classroom buildings, the athletic fields and gymnasium, the library, and the student center. Afterwards, the group of teens met with an Admissions Counselor who shared information about choosing a college, financial aid, and paying state tuition at cooperating colleges and universities.

The teens were surprised and motivated by all that they learned and saw. **It was clear to them that attending a four year college was within their reach.** Our group even provided us with a list of other colleges across the state of Maryland and beyond they would like to visit. On the drive home, we reviewed the financial aid process and the SAT timelines. We are now actively planning our next tour. Overall, it was a very successful day and Advocates hopes this effort can become a regular part of the program we offer. Advocates believes every teen has a bright future and can achieve anything, especially with the right support.

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## California Guitar Trio Concert a Success

The world-renowned California Guitar Trio (CGT) returned to All Saints' Episcopal Church on March 11th to play their tenth concert in Frederick. The concert, which benefited Advocates for Homeless Families, was one of the best attended to date.

The CGT dazzled the audience as joyous music filled the sanctuary to the delight of the 208 people in attendance. The Trio is comprised of Paul Richards of Salt Lake City, Utah; Bert Lams of Affligem, Belgium; and Hideyo Moriya of Chiba, Japan. More information about the Trio can be found by visiting their website at [www.cgtrio.com](http://www.cgtrio.com)

Advocates wishes to thank Harry and Jeanne Lawrence for their major contribution toward making the show a success. We also extend our appreciation to Rev. Kay and Wil Rice, Barbara Ashbury, June Miller and Cathy Gazauskas, Nick and Chris Wright, Sharon O'Rear, Donna Seniff, Tim Morgan, Paul Kigenza, Mark and Sara Gibson, Tracy Boyd, Wil Rice, Rev. Kay RICE and John Aulls.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO . . .

**Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)** for donated computers.

**Aashima Gupta, Marissa Yaple, and Jackie Zaybekian** for child care during weekly group.

**Karl Helmold** for working closely with Advocates to ensure kid's successes in school.

**Dan Lewjeski** for a volunteer painting project.

**St. Margaret's Church** for a grant to cover utility costs.

**Women's Giving Circle** for a grant to assist with child care and transportation expenses.

**Carroll Creek Rotary** for a grant to be used towards children's activities.

**Alyce Luck and Frederick High School** for hosting the Empty Bowls Banquet fundraiser.

**Xander Queiroz** for donating the proceeds of his 12th birthday party to Advocates.

**Thurmont Middle School** for collecting coupons for program families.

**Honarmand Restaurants** for providing McDonald's gift cards for Good Grades winners.

**Janet Fogle** for her presentation on credit ratings.

**Gwendolyn Mays** for talking to our participants about taxes.

**Jane Helm** for teaching a class on the psychology of money.

**Laurie Richmond** for her presentation on emotional triggers.

**Mick O'Leary**, who faithfully handles yard maintenance for Advocates Transitional Housing projects.

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**“Maryland businesses and individuals that donate to Advocates can earn tax credits equal to 50% of a monetary donation.”**

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ADVOCATES FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES, INC. is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization.

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#### MISSION STATEMENT

Advocates for Homeless Families' mission is to empower motivated families to overcome homelessness. Families achieve success through a structured two-year program of education, housing, and support services

## Good Grades Awards Produces Positive Outcomes



The picture (left) is of a child whose family participates in Advocates' programs. The **proud grin** on his face is because he was one of the award winners in Advocates "Good Grades" program. The "Good Grades" program is the result of a partnership between Advocates and the Frederick County Public School system. Awards for Advocates' high and middle school students are given in recognition of honor roll status and/or achieving perfect attendance. Children in Advocates

programs are awarded certificates and prizes at a ceremony held in their honor. Since its inception, Advocates has noticed an increase in educational achievement of the children in the program. One mother stated, "my son was encouraged to keep himself on the honor roll."

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## Tax Credits for Donors

Businesses and individuals that donate to Advocates can earn tax credits equal to 50% of the value of a monetary donation worth \$500 or more. For a minimum donation of \$500 (maximum \$250,000) in support of our Transitional Housing and Families Forward programs, you will receive a tax credit for \$250 that you can use to offset your Maryland tax liability at the end of this year. That's \$250 off the top of your state tax total! These tax credits are in addition to the full charitable deductions on both Federal and State taxes. Based on the income and tax structure of the individual tax payer or business, the net cost of the donation could be as low as \$0.27 for every \$1 contributed.

If you wish to take advantage of this terrific tax-savings opportunity, enclose a note with your donation to Advocates and/or write "tax credit" on the memo line of your check. We also are authorized to accept credit card donations under this program. If you have questions about the tax credit program, please contact Advocates at 301.662.2003.

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## Afterschool Activities

Thanks to a generous grant from the U. Mehrl, Margaret T., and Sharon Hooper Fund, a component fund of the Community Foundation of Frederick County, 10 children in Advocates' programs were able to participate in fun afterschool activities. The grant paid for karate lessons, soccer equipment, Little League registration, horseback riding lessons, and Frederick City's Parks and Recreation's Spring Adventures. Statistics show that children who participate in afterschool activities perform better scholastically and socially.