

# Wesley Housing News

Wesley Housing Development Corporation

The Door to Brighter Futures

Winter 2002

## Where There is a Will, There's a Way to "Help the Homeless"



Young drill sergeant finds a way to "get physical" to help the homeless.

Everyone in Washington knows that autumn signals the start of the Fannie Mae Foundation's **Help the Homeless Walkathon** season. This year, homeless education remained high on Wesley Housing's agenda in spite of the fact that many of the actual "walking" events had to be modified in fearful communities around the Capital Beltway. Because of the unfortunate series of cancellations prompted by the sniper case, nonprofit agencies had to get creative in honoring the spirit of "Help the Homeless."

For Wesley Housing, on-site "Mini-Walks" gave way to indoor activities such as discussions, poster-drawing, poetry-writing, and "Calisthenics for Homelessness." Descriptions of the Community Resource Center events are featured on page 4.

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## WHDC Opens First Seniors Community— Dedicates to Founder Virginia Peters



Quarry Station began leasing in June 2002.

Over 140 guests attended Wesley Housing's grand opening of Quarry Station Seniors Apartments in Manassas, the organization's newest affordable housing property serving seniors living on fixed incomes. The September 24th event included a ribbon cutting and a warm welcome by Manassas Mayor Marvin L. Gillum. WHDC

dedicated the *Virginia Peters Gallery* to its founding director. Ms. Peters' vision to build strong and vibrant communities and offer supportive and educational services to low- and moderate-income residents continues to thrive after 28 years.

*Continued on page 7*



# 8989  
United Way & CFC

## Raymond M. Lynch, Developer and Philanthropist, Makes Posthumous Gift to Wesley Housing

Long-time friend and supporter Raymond M. Lynch passed away last year, designating Wesley Housing as a beneficiary in his will. Mr. Lynch and other Lynch family members enjoyed great success in Northern Virginia real estate development for many years. In death, as in life, Raymond shared his good fortune by remembering the needs of marginalized Northern Virginians.

A Methodist who attended Annandale UMC, Mr. Lynch helped to give WHDC its start in the mid-1970s by selling Wesley Housing a prime piece of wooded real estate, near Landmark, for one dollar. There, in Lincolnia, WHDC built its first rental community consisting of 128 units of townhouses and apartments. According to Mr. Lynch's wishes, Fairfax County designated a portion of the property as a community park.

Mr. Lynch, Wesley Housing's former landlord at its corporate offices on Cherokee Avenue, honored Wesley Housing's work by making a generous personal donation each holiday season. Raymond and family members started the West\*Lynch Foundation to support affordable housing, training, and education for Northern Virginia's low-income residents. When the Foundation liquidated its assets in 1999, the proceeds were donated to Wesley Housing.

Mr. Lynch's legacy will allow Wesley Housing to continue to offer service-enriched housing to hundreds of at-risk Northern Virginia families and individuals.

*Read more about Planned Giving options on page 3.*



Strawbridge Square Apartments sits on the former Lynch property.

## No Place (on the Housing Continuum) to Lay Their Heads

Nearly 36 million U.S. households—one-third—are renter-occupied. In spite of the focus on homeownership, rental housing still accounts for a significant portion of American “homes”. The figure for the Commonwealth of Virginia mirrors the national average—about 32%. The data for Northern Virginia, however, speak volumes about the region's complex housing landscape.

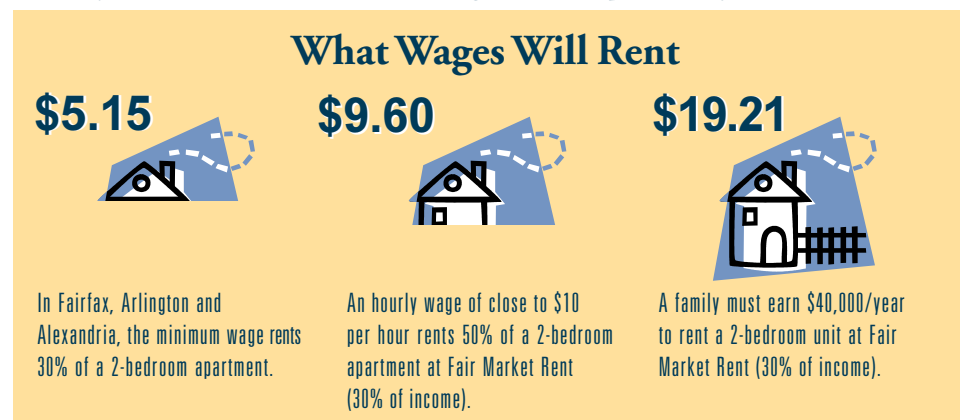
Compare the national average to our local statistics: in Arlington County, **57%** of total households are renter-occupied; in the City of Alexandria, **60%**; and in the City of Falls Church, the figure is **39%**. While Fairfax County has a lower percentage of renter households, **29%**, this number does not necessarily indicate that adequate rental housing exists.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), “Renters are forced to pay unbearably high percentages of their income to afford housing, a situation which, at best, prevents their saving and planning for home ownership, and, at worst, compels them to choose among purchases of basic necessities. For too many Americans for whom decent and affordable rental housing is out of reach, homelessness is the inevitable result.”

The graphic below illustrates the housing challenge facing low-wage earners in our region. The NLIHC's comparison of wages and rents across U.S. counties shows that heads of households earning the minimum wage (\$5.15 per hour) in Arlington and Fairfax counties and the City of Alexandria must work **149** hours per week to rent a two-bedroom unit at *Fair Market Rent* (defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as not more than 30% of income). Working an average, 40-hour workweek, a person must earn a minimum of **\$19.21** per hour to rent a two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent. This calculation—what the NLIHC calls the *Housing Wage*—equates to an annual salary of approximately \$40,000, or **373%** of the minimum wage!

For over 28 years, WHDC has strived to bridge this housing chasm by providing low- and moderate-income Northern Virginians with the security and dignity of a place to call home. As the area's housing crisis accelerates at an alarming pace, gentrification continues, and the economic downturn persists, our mission to maintain a place on the housing continuum for wage-earners to lay their heads grows more challenging with each year. 🏠

*Statistics from the National Low Income Housing Coalition's report, **Out of Reach** (2002).*





# If Wesley Housing Doesn't, Who Will?

Access to *affordable* rental housing bridges the housing gap for those who are temporarily homeless, yet not ready for homeownership. Self-sufficiency and independence are not possible without this critical stepping stone along the housing continuum path. Not a band-aid, Wesley Housing helps to *end* homelessness or shelter living for individuals and families who are in need of a permanent roof over their heads.

Wesley Housing occupies a unique and critical space on the housing continuum...*the space between homelessness and homeownership*. It is a critical space because there is a tremendous gulf between the two scenarios. It is a unique place because there are few organizations with the longevity, capacity, and commitment to produce and manage large multi-family communities. To finance new projects, investors must have confidence in Wesley Housing's abilities as a developer and the value of its assets. A portfolio of 18 communities keeps Wesley Housing competitive. It is important that Wesley Housing *continue to expand* its operations so that the *affordable rental option* remains a step on the housing continuum for low- and moderate-income Northern Virginians.

## Ways You Can Help Wesley Housing Mind Its Mission

**Host a "Friend-raiser"**—Introduce our work to 5 or 10 new people. Meet with a WHDC representative at one of our Community Resource Centers to learn more. We provide the donuts and coffee—you provide the friends!

**Send WHDC's biannual newsletter** to your mailing list.



**Write an article** in your company's newsletter.

**Tell your colleagues** about WHDC during **United Way/CFC** season. (# 8989)

**Your Company as Community-builder**—Tell your company about volunteer opportunities, employee matching funds, and event sponsorship.

**Volunteer**—Help with after-school tutoring, computer instruction, board service, and more.

**Annual Giving**—Validate and support our work with annual gift(s).

**Planned Giving**—Make provisions to help Wesley Housing in the future.

### Charitable Remainder Trusts (CRTs) can:

Eliminate Capital Gains Taxes • Reduce Estate Taxes • Provide a Tax Deduction • Increase Asset Income • Benefit WHDC's housing and social services.

### Types of Gifts:

Appreciated assets, cash, real estate, stocks, and retirement accounts are some gift options. *Please consult your legal and financial advisors about which charitable giving options are right for you.*

To discuss these mission-minding opportunities, call Al Smuzynski WHDC President/CEO at (703) 642-3830, ext. 217.

E-mail: [asmuzynski@whdc.org](mailto:asmuzynski@whdc.org)



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my gift of \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Credit Card Donation

I would like to charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my gift to: Visa MasterCard

Print name as it appears on card: \_\_\_\_\_

**Wesley Housing Development Corporation**

5515 Cherokee Avenue, Suite 204 • Alexandria, VA 22312 • Tel: (703) 642-3830 • Fax: (703) 941-1724

# Help Ease the Housing Crisis!



# Childrens' Reflections on Homelessness

## CAN YOU HELP?

*When you see a man on the street,  
Do you think about where he lives  
or what he eats?  
He has no place to keep warm  
and no where to sleep.  
Do you ever stop to help?  
Or keep going and thinking about  
yourself.  
Comparing his poor life to your  
wealth.  
You should stop to show you care,  
Because it could be YOU instead  
of HIM there.*

Kera  
15 years old



## I WISH I HAD A BOARD

*I wish I had a board  
If I had a board I'll gave  
It to some one  
And the person would  
Build a house.*

Ruqia  
6 years old

## SUPERHERO

*I wish there was a super guy  
to help the homeless.  
He would be able to pick  
up houses and find a place  
to put them down in town.  
The town would have a pool  
and ramps to skate. It  
would have a game room.  
No parking lots, people would  
be friendly.*



Peter Luis  
8 years

## Where There's a Will, There's a Way...continued from page 1

Open Houses at WHDC Centers helped raise money and awareness for homelessness, and publicize the myriad services we offer residents and the surrounding communities. Adults and children at Whitefield Commons/Knightsbridge, Strawbridge Square, and Wexford Manor Apartments joined WHDC volunteers and staff to support the "Help the Homeless" (HTH) efforts.

Despite the overcast sky, the October 20<sup>th</sup> event at Whitefield Commons brought out 55 residents and



St. Matthew's UMC's Help the Homeless day: Associate Minister Russell Urban (L), WHDC Board Chair Nancy Minter (C), and Gayle Urban draw posters with children.

volunteers for HTH activities and a barbecue feast. The kids had ample opportunity to reflect on homelessness while participating in poster and poetry contests. Emelia Corea, a Knightsbridge resident, said it was important to care about the homeless "because they do not have a warm place to live in winter." Young Edgar Rivero, bent over his poster and crayons, said that he was helping the homeless "because they need food and clothes."

The activities provided excellent opportunities for volunteers to get to know residents of our communities. Lindsay Gundrum, a George Mason University student, said it was "eye-opening to see what the kids think about homelessness." Allison Kellum, another volunteer at the Lincolnia Community Resource Center, joined about 80 walkers for an afternoon of face-painting, poetry-reading, and a festive luncheon.

The Wexford Manor Open House on November 2nd drew 45 residents. Fatamata Jarr, a member of the Wexford Manor Center's *Girl Power* group, said, "We need to show the homeless that we care about them." The boys had observations, too. "It is important to help the homeless so that they can get a place to live," said Tyrek Fuller. "Not a shelter!" added Reggie Price. 📄



Justin  
7 years old

### DEAR DIARY

Dear Diary,

*Walking down the street one night,  
I was startled by a terrible fright.  
I saw a man lying on the street.  
He looked hungry, depressed and  
beat, by a system.*

*I think about him often, though I  
do not miss him.*

*I wonder where he came from.  
And wonder where he's been.  
I stay up at night and think  
about what his life could have  
been.*

*Now I'm 3 years older and the  
stranger has come and gone.  
And still to this day I can't help  
but think, where his life went  
wrong.*

*I wonder if God is punishing him  
and what he did to deserve it,  
and what I should do to change  
my life so I don't end up in the  
same situation.*

*Though I'm only 15 years old  
I live my life. I live it bold.  
And every winter when it gets  
cold,  
I think about that homeless man  
and do everything I can  
to help a person who's in need.  
Like the lonely, misunderstood  
homeless man.  
Lying on the street.*

Yamulle  
15 years old

### A WISH

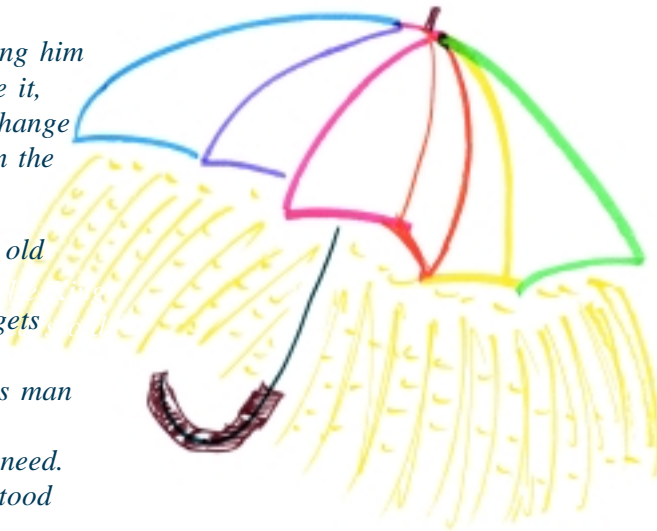
*I wish I can give  
houses to the homeless so they  
can sleep and help their  
self. I feel sorry about  
them that they don't have  
anything their self. When  
I saw them, I feel emonsh-  
anly that I think I am with  
them—and helping. But I  
think I can't do anything  
now. But I hope I can  
one day.*

Hoday  
16 years old

### UNKNOWN

*Having life  
without anything else  
more or less  
empty handed  
living in horror  
everyone staring  
shy and afraid.  
Should they be?*

Alex  
12 years old



St. Matthew's UMC Associate Minister Russell  
Urban draws his wish for ending homelessness:  
an umbrella of love that shelters everyone.

## Michael Davies: 2002 Walkathon Poetry Volunteer

Michael Davies, author of *Upon Awakening: A Collection of Poems*, is a poet, a musician, and by day...copy editor. He also derives a lot of satisfaction from working with children and sharing his skills.

Michael's volunteer work started through Arlington County's *Pick-A-Poet* program funded in part by the Humanities Project. The project allowed Michael to take a sabbatical and work for several months as a visiting poet to two Arlington schools. He worked mostly with 2nd to 5th graders.

Michael is active in the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington. He visited WHDC's Lincolnia CRC during the *Help the Homeless* open house on October 26th as part of Unitarian Church Service Days. Michael assisted eager children in writing and reciting their own thoughts about homelessness. Other Unitarian volunteers helped with poster-drawing, activities, and goodies.



Michael Davies,  
volunteer poet.



Lincolnia's budding poets, authors of poetry  
featured on pages 4 & 5.

## Fall Board Retreat

The charming Hilltop House Hotel in historic Harpers Ferry was the site of Wesley Housing's long-range planning retreat in September. On a crisp fall weekend, members of WHDC's Board of Directors met to get better acquainted as they tackled the responsibility of mapping plans for the next few years.

The serene West Virginia location, with its spectacular views of the Potomac River and the Harpers Ferry Gap, promoted creative thinking and fostered teambuilding. The board identified objectives and challenges to be considered in a long-range plan. Key issues were *rate of growth* and *financial sustainability*. An organizational plan is scheduled for submission at April's Annual Meeting.

Wesley Housing thanks the **Freddie Mac Foundation** for generously funding the cost of an outside consultant to facilitate the weekend's proceedings.



Diana Tracey, Vic Bouril, and Will Basil discuss planning questions.



Retreat participants discuss the morning session while strolling in historic Harpers Ferry.



## Wesley Housing Key Player in NCANN, A Regional Community Technology Center Consortium


The National Capital Area Neighborhood Networks Consortium (NCANN) is a 10-member collaborative whose mission is to provide support for the development and sustainability of community technology centers serving low-income individuals and families throughout the Washington, D.C. region. Formed in summer 2001 under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Networks initiative, NCANN member centers are located in Northern Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Southern Maryland.

Although each NCANN center operates independently, each recognized that collaboration would increase the group's efficacy. To that end, NCANN member centers have dedicated themselves to shaping NCANN into a community of learning, support, and cooperation. This approach allows the Consortium to:

- Enhance center programs and implement best practices;
- Maintain a high-quality infrastructure of technology resources to support center programs;
- Partner with other organizations to meet a variety of center needs;
- Empower center clients and community volunteers to play active and leading roles in center governance, management, and program delivery;
- Improve centers' financial sustainability; and
- Raise awareness about the vital economic and social function of community technology centers.

NCANN's membership roster includes three of Wesley Housing Development Corporation's Neighborhood Networks centers in Alexandria, Arlington, and Falls Church. WHDC staff played a key role in NCANN's formation, helping to define NCANN's mission, develop its organizational capacity, and identify collaborative opportunities that benefit centers both individually and jointly. NCANN is currently located at Wesley Housing, NCANN's fiscal and administrative sponsor.

NCANN's first major success came in the form of a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Community Technology Centers program. This grant provided WHDC centers more than \$31,000 in support for center programs and enabled provision of technical support to maintain and upgrade center technology. Other NCANN initiatives (implemented and in progress) include a technology donation program to help centers obtain donated or low-cost technology resources, a volunteer corps to obtain support for a variety of activities, workshops about effective program delivery and center management, additional fund-raising assistance, an online best practices library, and monthly Center Directors' Roundtable meetings, during which center staff can network and exchange ideas.

For more information about NCANN, contact Fritz Hirsch, NCANN Project Director, at (703) 642-3830, ext. 236 or at [fhirsch@whdc.org](mailto:fhirsch@whdc.org). NCANN's website will soon be posted at <http://www.ncannconsortium.org>. 

Seniors Community...continued from page 1

Contributors to the project, Quarry residents, volunteers, WHDC Board Chair Nancy Minter, WHDC President/CEO Al Smuzynski, and representatives from area businesses and human service organizations joined the early afternoon celebration. Guests enjoyed a light lunch as WHDC paid tribute to the collaborative effort of the development partners. (See “Quarry Station Partners” at right.)



Virginia Peters (seated) speaks to the crowd when presented with a gallery dedication plaque.

Quarry Station is Wesley Housing’s first community in Prince William County. The property offers a 79-unit complex designed to meet the physical and social health needs of Northern Virginia seniors. Site-based services include exercise programs, social activities, and a state-of-the-art computer lab which allows residents to keep in touch with family and friends via e-mail. Quarry Station resident Margaret Welsh, 73, likened her new home to “a five-star hotel without room service.”

That is precisely WHDC’s goal. “We want to offer a range of services to our residents to contribute to their well-being and quality of life,” explains Quarry Station Site Manager Stacy Stephens.

The region’s affordable housing crisis is accelerating at an alarming pace. Seniors living on fixed incomes – local residents and those who relocate to be near family – have few housing options. Quarry Station offers a well-timed solution. Prince William County’s senior population is expected to reach 16,000 by 2004, a 25% increase in the next few years (Delta Associates/CACI). “We’re delighted to offer a safe, stimulating, and affordable living space for area seniors,” said Wesley Housing President/CEO Alvin Smuzynski. “Wesley Housing is proud to offer this option to one of the region’s most vulnerable populations.”

Rental rates are \$650, plus utilities, for a one-bedroom unit and \$850, plus utilities, for a two-bedroom unit. For more information about Quarry Station, please call Site Manager Stacy Stephens at (703) 393-7788. 📞



WHDC President Al Smuzynski (L) and Board Chair Nancy Minter (R) present gifts to partners: Stephen Smith of The Richman Group, Margaret Sacks of Freddie Mac, Scott Charnock of VHDA/DHCD, Manassas Mayor Marvin L. Gillum, and Weller Meyer of Acacia FSB.

## Quarry Station Partners

### Finance Partners

Quarry Station was financed by equity generated from the sale of Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits. The tax credits were syndicated by **The Richman Group Capital Corporation**, which successfully bid on the tax credits, sold them to corporate investors, and will provide ongoing asset management and monitoring of the development over the next 15 years. Purchasers of the tax credits and partners in the development are **SunTrust Bank**, **Freddie Mac**, **MBNA**, **Citicorp**, and **Merrill Lynch**. All of these companies invested in affordable housing, and in our communities.

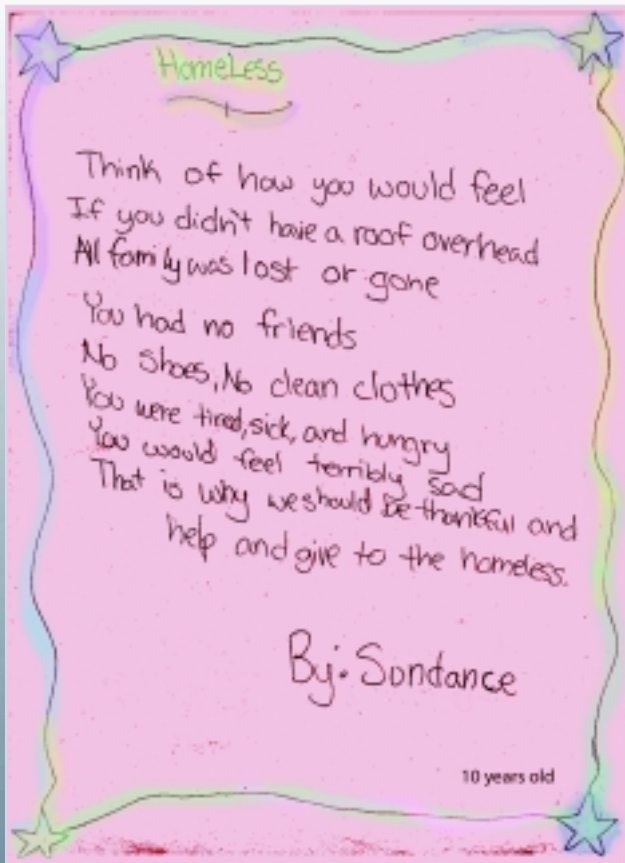
Permanent loans and interim financing were provided by the **Virginia Housing Development Authority** and the **Virginia Housing Fund**, the **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development**, and **Acacia Federal Savings Bank**.

### Building Partners

Development partners were **Zemaitis & Associates Architects**, and **Ross, France & Ratliff, Ltd.**, civil engineers. The General Contractor was **Hamel Builders**, with Bob “The Builder” Barrett as the Construction Superintendent. **Virginia Capital Advisors, LLC** provided financing consultation and **Williams Mullen** provided legal services. **The City of Manassas** welcomed Wesley Housing and Quarry Station and approved the land use applications.

## \$75,000 “Loan” from Virginia Housing Preservation Fund

WHDC will use the VHPF loan to rehabilitate **Lynhaven Apartments**, our 28-unit purchase in Alexandria in partnership with Carpenter’s Shelter. Half of the loan is a grant— one of only eleven awarded this year. Half will be repaid over 25 years at zero interest. The makeover will be completed in January.



Sundance is a participant in Wesley Housing's Homework Help Program.

*Read more about  
Help the Homeless 2002  
children's activities on  
pages 1 & 4 . . .*

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**WESLEY HOUSING**  DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
5515 Cherokee Avenue • Suite 204  
Alexandria, Virginia 22312-2309  
Phone: (703) 642-3830  
FAX: (703) 941-1724  
[www.wesleyhousing.org](http://www.wesleyhousing.org)