

Signs of the Times

continued from page one

The average monthly rent for a two-bedroom garden apartment in Arlington is \$1,175; in Fairfax the cost is \$1,222. The dilemma is clear. Without a job that pays significantly above the minimum wage or provides housing benefits, low- and moderate-income renters have little chance to save for a down payment to achieve the American Dream—owning a home. These renters are the clerks in our stores, people cleaning our offices and hospitals, workers repairing our roads, and those caring for our frail elderly. The problem is even worse for the disabled, mentally ill, and homeless or recently homeless.

While families try to cover housing expenses, WHDC strives to purchase, preserve, and develop affordable rental units—which are rapidly being purchased for condo conversion. Though a non-profit organization, Wesley Housing must work with the same professionalism and expertise as a for-profit entity to compete in the expensive real estate market. Older multi-family apartment communities, in need of rehab, are selling for \$140,000 per unit and up! Furthermore, our mission to pair housing with educational opportunities to enhance workplace skills requires additional resources.

WHDC could not maintain its affordable rents, grow its portfolio, or deliver holistic services without the support of its corporate, foundation, and faith partners and individual donors. Your continued support will keep the door open to affordable housing.



WESLEY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

5515 Cherokee Avenue • Suite 204
Alexandria, Virginia 22312-2309

Phone: (703) 642-3830
FAX: (703) 941-1724
www.wesleyhousing.org



Wesley Housing News



Wesley Housing Development Corporation

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Signs of the Times

"Providing housing opportunity is key to progress. Opportunity is increasingly elusive, however, for a large and growing segment of our population that lacks access to a decent home and a suitable living environment."

— Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies



One cannot drive in Northern Virginia without seeing the signs: Condominiums from the \$300s, luxury townhomes from the \$800s, and single family homes from the \$900s. The signs

reflect the metro region's economic growth and expanding job market. The signs also tell a story—a less visible one—of an increasingly imbalanced housing landscape. Just a few streets away in the same neighborhoods where high-end homes are being built, low- and moderate-income families struggle to keep a roof overhead, often dedicating 50% of their income to housing costs. Overcrowded apartments and homes have become unsafe "solutions."

Earning the minimum wage of \$5.15 working full-time translates into an annual (pre-tax) salary of \$10,712, or roughly \$893 per month.

continued on page five

Walking a Mile with a Smile:

New Ways to Help the Homeless

Have you ever slept outside in a cardboard box? Have you ever slept in the woods? Or both? Possibly you had an adventure at summer camp. But most of us have never *really* contemplated the life of hardship that awaits when there is no other place to call home.



In October, Wesley Housing gave children and adults a chance to take a closer look at homelessness. In order to expand the educational impact of the Help the Homeless Walkathon (Fannie Mae Foundation's 17th Annual), WHDC joined forces with the Arlington and Alexandria Districts of the United Methodist Church. Coordinators from local churches created two new camp experiences to study homelessness—**Camp Givehope** in Arlington, and **Walk A Mile With A Smile** at Camp Highroad near Middleburg, Virginia.

continued on page two

Did you know that the minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour equals an annual income of just \$10,712?

Look inside to find out how area families live on the minimum wage.

VHDA Underwrites New WHDC Video

Wesley Housing extends heartfelt thanks to the **Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA)** for generously underwriting its new video. Produced by **Lahman/Sollenberger Video** and WHDC's Resource Development team, *Opening Doors to Affordable Housing* highlights Wesley Housing's 30-year track record of preserving and producing affordable housing. It also shows the rental dilemmas facing today's low- and moderate-income working families, individuals, seniors, and the disabled. The video is dedicated to the memory of Wesley Housing's late founder, Virginia S. Peters, who passed away in March. VHS and DVD copies are available for use at civic organization meetings, corporate contributions committee meetings, and church groups. For information, call (703) 642-3830, Ext. 237.



Established in 1972 by the Virginia General Assembly, VHDA's mission is to "help our fellow Virginians obtain safe, sound, and decent housing otherwise unaffordable to them." Visit www.vhda.com for information about loans, products, and programs.



Yes, I want to bring a family home for the holidays!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:

WESLEY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
5515 Cherokee Avenue • Suite 204 • Alexandria, Virginia 22312
Phone: (703) 642-3830 • www.wesleyhousing.org

Visit our website for additional ways to help!



30th Anniversary Celebration
April 27, 2005 • Save the Date!

Situation Stations: New Ways to Teach About Homelessness

"I just wanted to thank you for all the effort you and your committee put into Camp Givehope. My husband and three daughters attended and truly appreciated the experience. We often start a meal together with 'what we are thankful for' and there was no lack of conversation on this topic the evening after sleeping in a box!"

—Liz Brouchman, Vale UMC



continued from page one

Coordinators of **Camp Givehope** and **Walk a Mile With a Smile** planned time for discussions and presentations, and thought-provoking "situation stations." Families at Camp Highroad spent an autumn Saturday walking from station to station—simulations that allowed participants to see subsistence living conditions: "Imagine living in a car"... "Imagine living with your family in this small shelter room"... "Imagine building your home out of cardboard boxes"... "Imagine feeding a family on one weekly bag of food from the food pantry."

At Camp Givehope, an overnight experience at Clarendon UMC for families with children ages 6-12, there was an emphasis on feeding a family with limited means. Families experienced dinner and breakfast at a soup kitchen, prepared by the United Methodist Women of Lincolnia UMC. The families worked on exercises such as filling out an application for food stamps and planning a week's worth of meals from a single bag of groceries. All families participated in a budgeting exercise to manage a household on a monthly income of \$893 (pre-tax minimum wage).

United Methodist Women of Lincolnia UMC prepared a "soup kitchen" supper at **Camp Givehope**.



Situation Station: Darlene Runalduie of Grace UMC (center) prepared a shelter in the woods using cardboard and plastic tarps.



Families get dinner from the soup line—vegetable soup, bread, and jam.

Later the group shared experiences around outdoor fire pits. Some of the small groups were facilitated by formerly homeless persons. After these small group discussions, campers retired to their cardboard boxes scattered across the church lawn and parking lot. The next morning everyone was scheduled to "walk for the homeless"—a trek from Clarendon UMC to Central UMC. While waiting for the soup kitchen to reopen for breakfast, children began to gather at tables in the church social hall. Instead of lamenting the lack of bacon, eggs, and pancakes, the kids went straight to work. They all wrote letters to their representatives in Congress, asking for help in ending homelessness and inadequate housing in our affluent suburbs.



Menu planning with a bag of groceries from the local food pantry.

Recipe for a Grocery Budget

chicken legs (13 pc) = \$10	potatoes (5 lb) = \$.99
turkey wings (20 pc) = \$10	string beans (can) = \$.39
chicken wings (20 pc) = \$10	tomatoes (5) = \$.99
turkey necks (30 pc) = \$10	carrots (can) = \$.39
hamburger (5 lb) = \$10	lettuce = \$.49
catsup = \$.99	beets (can) = \$.39
spaghetti (1 lb) = \$.39	soup (can) = \$.29
salad dressing = \$.99	corn (can) = \$.39
mixed vegetables (can) = \$.39	bread (2) = \$1.38
steak sauce = \$.99	pork & beans = \$.39
onions (5 lb) = \$.79	soup bone = n/c
macaroni & cheese mix (2) = \$1	Total: \$61.63

Shopping basics for one month (family of four)

Submitted by Mary W. Baker

Mary Baker, of Rising Hope Ministries, was a presenter at Camp Givehope, where she shared her secrets of providing for a family on a limited budget. The food is purchased at farmer's markets and discount stores. The savvy shopper uses a budget cookbook to stretch these basic items into many dishes throughout the month.



Situation Station: Food stamp application and grocery budgeting.



Mission project accomplished—Campers collected hats, mittens, gloves, socks, and coats for at-risk children.

Awards Named in Virginia Peters' Honor



Virginia Housing Coalition President Michelle Simmons presents Bill Shelton with the organization's first **Virginia S. Peters Housing Award**.

Two leading housing organizations, the **Virginia Housing Coalition** and the **Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers (HAND)**, paid tribute to Wesley Housing's late founder by naming awards in her honor. At its 2004 annual awards dinner, the Virginia Housing Coalition presented Bill Shelton, Director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, with the first **Virginia S. Peters Housing Award**. Hamel Builders was the first recipient of HAND's **Virginia Peters Nonprofit Friend of the Year Award**. Upon receiving the award at HAND's annual meeting, Phil Gibbs of Hamel Builders presented WHDC's President Al Smuzynski with a \$1,000 check. This generous gift allowed children at Whitefield Commons Community Resource Center (Ballston/Arlington) to enjoy camp last summer. Both awards capture the spirit in which Virginia Peters worked for over a quarter of a century to balance the region's housing landscape and put quality, affordable housing within reach for families who would otherwise face homelessness. Mrs. Peters played a key role in advancing the two organizations.



HAND President John Spencer (L), presents the **Virginia Peters Nonprofit Friend of the Year Award** to Phil Gibbs of Hamel Builders; Al Smuzynski (R) looks on.

30th Anniversary Sponsors Invest in WHDC's Goals

Wesley Housing is grateful for the support of a few select community partners as it celebrates its 30th year of service and looks ahead to its next decade. Birthday gifts from area banking and housing leaders will translate into housing options for families who are unable to pay high market rents without sacrificing other basic needs. Specifically, partner investments will support our current goals to:

- Own and manage a portfolio of 1,000 units
- Develop multi-family/mixed-use/mixed-income communities in response to the needs of Northern Virginia's counties
- Maintain our income-adjusted rents—up to 40% below market value—to help residents build creditworthiness, establish savings, and even become homeowners



30th Birthday Benefactors to date include **Community Bank of Northern Virginia** (also an anniversary dinner underwriter), **Prosperity Bank & Trust**, **Wachovia**, and **Virginia Housing Development Authority**.

WHDC also thanks its 30th Anniversary Ambassadors, partners who helped launch our milestone year early in 2004: **Capital One**, **Virginia Housing Development Authority**, **The Enterprise Social Investment Corporation**, **Reed Smith**, **SunAmerica Affordable Housing Partners**, **Chevy Chase Bank**, **Nancy and Lyle Minter**, and **Al and Pam Smuzynski**.

More information about our 30th Anniversary Sponsors will be coming soon to www.wesleyhousing.org.

THANK YOU

The Washington Post

Wesley Housing recently received a \$1,000 grant from The Washington Post. The grant, the second from the region's leading newspaper, will support WHDC's real estate capacity-building goals.

Citibank Gives Grant at Grand Opening

Citibank representatives presented Wesley Housing with a check for \$10,000 at the November 10th grand opening of its new Financial Center in Centreville. Presented by Citibank Mid-Atlantic Region President Alyson Klug, the Citigroup Foundation's Community Impact Grant will support Wesley Housing's efforts to preserve and acquire affordable housing units in Northern Virginia's competitive real estate market. Specifically, the grant will assist with pre-development and development activities, including completion of **Wesley Housing at Coppermine Place I & II** in Herndon, 88 units of housing for low-income persons with mobility impairments and seniors living on fixed incomes (mid-2005). Thanks to Citibank for being a steadfast friend to Wesley Housing.

You can stop by the Citibank Centreville Financial Center and say hello to Manager Angela Pan at: 14175 St. Germain Drive Centreville, Virginia 20121, or call (703) 266-0608.

TARGET Makes Grant to Community Services

TARGET Wesley Housing's Community Services received a \$1,500 grant from Target Stores in Springfield. The grant will be used to support youth programs at the Whitefield Commons, Lincolnia, and Wexford Manor Community Resource Centers. Target Corporation is committed to giving back to the communities in which it operates. This year, Target will give over \$2 million a week to non-profit organizations nationwide.

In-kind Gifts

Thanks to community partners **Papa John's Pizza** and **Loews Cineplex Entertainment** for their in-kind gifts used during part one of WHDC's resident survey.