



Dear Friends of LARS:

This past year has been interesting, to say the least. During this time, the media has widely, and accurately, publicized that many non-profits have been struggling. While LARS braced itself for the worst-case scenario, I am happy to report that we are holding steady. One key factor that helped LARS to maintain stability was the ***Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation Grant*** that pays the full salary of a full-time staff person, resulting in a substantial savings to LARS in payroll expenses. Additionally, LARS was awarded a new HUD grant to provide **Permanent Housing**. At full capacity, this grant will serve seven chronically homeless individuals who are also disabled. This particular HUD grant added another full-time person to our staff, covering approximately 80% of the case manager's salary. We balanced the blessings of these two new programs by staying within budget in our other expenditures. These factors, coupled with the **extremely generous giving** by the community, have left us shaking the dust off and looking "okay" at the moment.

As we "hold our breath" for another fiscal year (July 1, 2009 –June 30, 2010) that promises to be equally uncertain, we remain hopeful. LARS has already raised \$225K to renovate and expand our facility in order to better serve the Laurel community. While \$225K is a lot of money, the renovation-and-expansion project expenses are estimated in the range of \$500K. This figure does not include the debt we will incur to relocate during construction. We have approached a private foundation for funds to supplement a large portion of the remainder of the construction expenses, as well as to cover relocation costs for LARS during construction. We can only cross our fingers, hold our breath, and pray that the money comes through.

While our finances are stable, at the moment, the overwhelming demand from the community for assistance from LARS is alarming. In August 2008, LARS saw 45 service seekers and distributed 40-50 bags of food on a busy day. We now see as many as 80 service seekers, and have distributed as many as 200 bags of food in a single day. The stories of the people we serve can be heart-wrenching, and the need is **very real**. We are doing the best we can, and working hard to find resources for people. The LARS staff has been amazing during these trying times, finding resources, and offering assistance with great compassion and efficiency. I commend them for their service.

On behalf of LARS, I also thank you for your care, compassion and continued support. Whether you've donated school supplies or food, adopted a family for the holiday program, participated in a Fannie Mae Foundation Help the Homeless Mini-Walk, Turkey Trot or Silent Auction, or made a financial contribution, LARS is grateful. I ask that you continue to remember LARS in any way you can. The need for all of the above is still a reality for our continued success.

With hope,

Nancy Graham, LCSW-C

Mini-Walk Season Is Here Again

LARS needs **3,000 Walkers** in this fall's Help-the-Homeless Mini-walks to qualify for The Fannie Mae Foundations **\$50,000 BONUS!** Registration is \$15.00 for youth (anyone under 25 years of age) and \$25.00 for adults. Registration "scholarships" are needed for school-age children whose parents cannot afford the fee. If your school or congregation has not already scheduled a mini-walk, or if you are interested in sponsoring youth walkers, call Don Phillips at LARS at 301-776-0442.

Over the years, The Fannie Mae Foundation has provided crucial financial support to LARS, providing us with \$56,000 last year alone, an amount that totaled nearly 10% of the annual operating budget. We are extremely thankful to The Fannie Mae Foundation for the opportunity, and to the community who make the mini-walks work for us. ***We hope to see you out there!***

Several Clients Are Singing "There's No Place Like Home"

We wish to express our thanks to **Bethany Community Church** and **Emmanuel Methodist Church** for beautifully furnishing **three** apartments for the first clients to be accepted in LARS' new HUD funded Permanent Housing Program. They obviously put lots of thought, love and care in creating cozy, comfy quarters for the clients.

How Did LARS Do on the Feinstein Foundation Challenge?

The response of the Laurel community to the 2009 **Feinstein Foundation Challenge** was nothing short of **fantastic!** LARS raised \$15,888 and received \$11,149 worth of food donation that helped us meet the unusually high demand on our services during the summer months. The Feinstein Foundation matched the contributions of the community with a check to LARS for \$325. While the award was smaller than we anticipated, The Feinstein Foundation has many more requests for support than when they started 10 years ago. Twenty-one agencies from Maryland alone applied. The financial support and food came when LARS had a great need, and we are appreciative of the efforts of the community and The Feinstein Foundation for motivating us with their "challenge."***Thank you, everyone!***

A Fond Farewell

LARS would like to thank Abdis Diaz for her service to LARS this past year. Abdis will be relocating to Georgia with her family in October. She has been a wonderful asset to the LARS team and will be missed by all.

Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker

LARS is seeking a full-time Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker (Spanish/English) to provide case management, support and outreach services to the LARS service seekers who speak Spanish as their first language. Qualified applicants must be fluent in Spanish and English. MSW with Maryland licensure preferred. BSW's or degrees in human service fields with experience in crisis work, homeless services and case management may be considered. Qualified applicants should forward a cover letter and resume to: Nancy Graham, 311 Laurel Avenue, Laurel, Maryland 20707 or fax (301) 604-7076.