

Spring 2008
Volume 21, Issue 1

Larsletter

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LAUREL ADVOCACY AND REFERRAL SERVICES, INC.
Serving the community since 1987

Third Annual
Silent Auction
And
Dinner

Saturday, April 26th
6 to 10 PM

American Legion
2 Main Street
Laurel, Maryland
Catering: Casey's Crab Co.

Tickets: \$35.00 in advance, \$40.00 at the
door

Reserve your "table-for-ten" now!

Call or e-mail us for tickets
or to donate an item.

Visit our website for complete information.
<http://www.laureladvocacy.org>

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To be added or
removed from our
mailing list,
please contact
smillard@laureladvo
cacy.org

Help from the Community

- Assistance from District 1 Prince George's County Councilman **Thomas Dernoga** in helping LARS get two non-departmental county grants totaling **\$30,000** for fiscal 2007-08. Mr. Dernoga presented one of the grants for **\$20,000** at the Turkey Trot held Thanksgiving morning to benefit LARS.
- **The Washington Area Women's Foundation** awarded LARS a **\$4,000** grant to purchase computers and work stations for the LARS community computer lab.
- Laurel Mayor, **Craig Moe**, and the **Laurel City Council** gave LARS a grant of **\$1800** in September 2007. The City also waived all permit fees and the cost of five police officers to staff the 5K Turkey Trot, resulting in a savings of \$1000 for LARS.
- **Wal-Mart** at Russet Green gave LARS a **\$1000** community service grant in January 2008.

Turkey Trot an Enormous Success

The Third Annual Laurel "Casey's Crab Co." 5K Turkey Trot brought out 329 runners/walkers—100 more than last year--and raised **\$12,300** for LARS. The Thanksgiving-morning event was hosted by Laurel's First United Methodist Church. In addition to **Casey's Crab Co.**, sponsors included: Emmanuel United Methodist Church; Laurel Presbyterian Church; New Hope 7th Day Adventist Church; Oaklands Presbyterian Church; Bon Voyage Vacations International; Schembari Family Dentistry; Shattuck & Associates; Edward Shavtiz, DDS, P.A.; Shipley & Horne, P.A.; Water Doctor; Councilman Thomas Dernoga; and the 21st District Delegation comprising Senator Jim Rosapepe and Delegates Ben Barnes, Barbara Frush, and Joseline Pena-Melnyk. **Kudos to Kelly Miller**, race director and the visionary for this fundraising effort for LARS. She and her team worked very hard to make the 2007 Trot a great success.

Sometimes You Need Politics...

Last year, LARS began having trouble collecting essential "matching funds" that had been in place for more than 10 years for our Transitional Housing Program (THP). THP provides shelter, case management, and support services for 10 homeless families for up to 24 months. Since the government still funds the THP program at the 1990's fair-market rates, the cost to LARS of leasing 10 apartments for the THP has gone "through the roof." The unexpected loss of the matching funds spelled disaster. Through the joint efforts of Sen. Jim Rosapepe, Del. Joseline Pena-Melnyk, and Councilman Tom Dernoga, LARS received \$16,000 in back payments in January (3% of our total budget.) LARS extends our sincere thanks to the trio for their support.

Results of 2007 Homeless Mini-Walks

A special thank-you to all of our community supporters and schools who hosted Help the Homeless Mini-Walks in throughout Laurel last fall. A total of 1,602 people walked on behalf of LARS, raising \$61,253 through the Fannie Mae Foundation. These funds are used to support the work of LARS, including the Transitional Housing Program. We could not do it without you! See the box on the right for a list of the 2007 mini-walk hosts.

A note from Nancy

Dear Friends,

I would like to extend a heart-felt thank-you to the many people who supported our work this past holiday season. For the first time in LARS' 20-year history, we partnered with the **Laurel Police Department**, to distribute food at Thanksgiving and food and gifts in December. With their help and the assistance of long-time LARS volunteer, **Ernestine Gibson**, we served 115 families at Thanksgiving and an additional 140 families during the December holidays. LARS could not afford to "purchase" the "people power" of the police department or the expert coordination provided by Mrs. Gibson. We thank them both for performing this important community service.

We also thank those who were the "heart and soul" of the holiday program—the generous congregations, clubs, business associates, families and individuals who "adopted" families for the holidays. The result was nothing short of spectacular! Families that we knew were suffering received the joys and blessings of a happy holiday because of you. If you helped in any way, whether by adopting a family, sponsoring a food drive, or donating gifts or gift cards, thank you so much.

From the day I stepped into the beautiful community of Laurel, I just knew that something special was happening here. In my position, I see not only individuals and families in need but I also bear witness to the many kind acts of so many people, gestures unknown to the community. Thank you for allowing LARS to be the ambassador of your good will.

With Sincere Gratitude,

Nancy Graham, LSCW-C
Executive Director

CONGREGATIONS

Bethany Community Church
Community of Christ Emmanuel United Methodist Church
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Laurel Presbyterian Church
New Hope 7th Day Adventist Church
Oaklands Presbyterian Church
Oseh Shalom
Our Savior Lutheran Church
South Columbia Baptist Church
St. Philip's Episcopal Church
St. Nicholas Catholic Church

SCHOOLS

Burtonsville Elementary
Deerfield Elementary
Scotchtown Hills Elementary
First Baptist School
Montpelier Elementary
St. Mary of the Mills
St. Vincent Pallotti High
Laurel High

KUDOS for KELLY!

Congratulations to Kelly Miller for being named Citizen of the Month in November 2007 by the Mayor and City Council of Laurel for her outstanding work in coordinating the three annual Turkey Trots between 2005 and 2007 that raised \$20,000 for LARS.

Laurel Advocacy and
Referral Services, Inc.

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laureladvocacy.org

Donate on the web!

Visit us at:
www.laureladvocacy.org

LARS has vision...

LARS is looking for a larger operating space in order to expand our services to the Laurel community. Our current building, located at 311 Laurel Avenue, will be appraised and put on the market in the near future. We are housed in a former doctor's office (you can still find a working sink in most of the offices!), and it is commercially zoned. Please contact Executive Director Nancy Graham for more information.

LARS needs your help...

Are you good at writing? Do you have computer skills and/or human resources experience? LARS needs volunteers to assist job seekers in the LARS computer lab on Mondays from 9 AM to 2 PM or on Monday evenings from 5 PM to 7:30 PM. The lab will be equipped with new computers and work stations, compliments of a grant provided by the Washington Area Women's Foundation. Contact Ernestine at egibson@laureladvocacy.org or 301-776-0442 for more information or to volunteer.



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