

Larsletter

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

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LARS 4th Annual Silent Auction and Dinner

Saturday, June 6th, from 6 to 10 PM
American Legion Post 60, Laurel, MD.

Cost: \$35.00 per person

Caterer: Casey's Crab Co.

Menu: crab soup, pit beef, oysters, steamed shrimp

Come out and enjoy a fun evening.

All proceeds support LARS' work in the community.

For tickets or information, call

301-776-0442.

Stopping homelessness, one client at a time

LARS has received a grant under a HUD-funded Permanent Housing Program after two years of meetings to work out the details. We expect the first client to enter the program around May 1st, with six more to follow within one year of that date. Under the **Samaritan Bonus Project**, HUD will provide funds to lease units for the clients and pay approximately 80 percent of the case manager's salary, plus some administrative and operational expenses. Clients must be chronically homeless individuals without dependents. A typical client will have lived on the street for a minimum of one year and suffer from mental health and/or substance-abuse problems. This grant provides no money for supportive services, such as food, transportation, clothing, and furnishings, so LARS will be looking to you, the "Samaritans" in the Laurel community, to help us support these individuals so that they can succeed in the program.

Marya Diaz has been hired as the LARS Permanent Housing Case Manager. She has a wealth of experience in both the human services and addictions fields, and will complete her coursework this summer as a Certified Addictions Counselor. A native of Puerto Rico, she lived in upstate New York for 15 years before moving to Montgomery County. She is a graduate of Hilbert College. (Marya is not related to Abdis Diaz, the LARS Bilingual Outreach Worker.)

Lucille Young
Oaklands
Presbyterian Church

STAFF

Don Phillips, LSWA
Director of
Emergency and
Homeless Services

Ruth Blake
Case Manager
Emergency Services

Abdis Diaz
Spanish-speaking
Outreach Worker

Mayra Diaz
Permanent Housing
Case Manager

Lynette Greenwood
Interim Office
Manager

Lori Timlin, LSWA
Case Manager
Transitional Housing
and Employment
Services

To be added or
removed from our
mailing list, please
contact
cchase@laureladvocacy.org

Laurel Advocacy &
Referral Services
provides a
continuum of
services to help those
in crisis move from
emergency assistance
to self-sufficiency.

Update on Renovation and Expansion

It's no secret that LARS has outgrown its workspace. All our offices are being used, and sometimes even shared. After exploring various options over the past 18 months, we have decided to focus on renovating and expanding our current facility. Our site plans (available on our website at www.laureladvocacy.org) call for gutting our existing structure, adding a third floor, and reconfiguring the workspace. We have gathered support for our effort from the City of Laurel, including Mayor Craig Moe. Support at the county and state level comes **District 1 Councilman Thomas Dernoga**, **Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnick** and **State Senator Jim Rosapepe**.

On April 15, Ms. Pena-Melnick confirmed that LARS will receive a grant of \$100K for the "planning, design, construction, repair, and renovation" of the building. Thanks to both Senator Rosapepe and Delegate Pena-Melnick, who worked hard to make this happen.

LARS also applied for \$406K in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from Prince George's County to help with the project. The County Council will review CDBG requests and hold public hearings on them beginning in May. Councilman Dernoga has pledged to advocate for our request in the County Council.

EFSP Award Nearly Doubles

Prince George's County notified LARS in early April that its Emergency Food and Shelter (EFSP) grant has been increased to \$50,000. Eighty percent of the award is designated for assistance Laurel residents who are homeless or facing eviction. The remaining \$10,000 will be used to purchase good for the LARS pantry. With this grant, LARS can assist approximately 70 individuals/families facing eviction or who are already homeless and provide approximately 10,000 meals.

Fall 2008 Miniwalks Raise \$56,451

Thanks to all the mini-walkers and community supporters from schools and congregations in the Laurel area, LARS raised \$56,451 from last fall's miniwalks, with \$25,000 of the award a bonus for meeting the 1500-walker challenge. The money raised through the Help the Homeless Miniwalks is, on average, 10 percent of LARS' annual budget. We were therefore happy to learn from the Fannie Mae Foundation, which met with the Help the Homeless partners on April 3, that the program will continue next year. Thank you, Fannie Mae, for standing with us during these hard times.

A Fond Farewell

We would like to thank **Steve Millard** for his four years of service to LARS as Office Manager. An exceptional young man, Steve worked with us while completing his BA in Computer Animation at UMBC. He graduated in December and has found a full-time position that will allow him to use his computer skills as well as the skills he learned at LARS. In addition to his office-management duties, Steve could often be seen taking out the trash, picking up food for the pantry, plunging the toilet, and meeting numerous other challenges arising on workdays, no two of which were ever the same. We wish Steve the best as he begins a new phase in his life. Thanks and good luck, Steve.

Thank you, Patuxent Greens Swim Team!

We received a letter from swim team informing us that the pool was closing and that they wanted LARS to have the \$3,758.62 left over as profits from their concession. This is a wonderful, unexpected contribution. Thanks!

School will soon be out, but . . .

it's not too soon to begin thinking about the 2009-10 school year. Many of our families will need help with school supplies this year. LARS can manage donations more easily if they come to us in **backpacks** labeled for the appropriate age, and are brought to LARS by **August 1st**.

Holiday Blessings

LARS would like to thank everyone who donated food, money, and gifts during the holiday season. With the assistance of the community, LARS provided 128 families with food for Thanksgiving, and 150 families with food and gifts for the December holidays. Special thanks go to the **Laurel Police Department**, which took an active role in assisting LARS with our very labor-intensive holiday program. **A total of 500 individuals** enjoyed happier holidays during the 2008 season thanks to our staff, the police department, individuals, congregations, scout troops, and other groups that adopted families, and many other donors. Thanks also **Ernestine Gibson** for organizing the program and former staffer **Linda Stone**, who volunteered to help.

LARS seeking donations for June 6th Silent Auction

Items that bring in good bids include:

- ✓ theater or sporting events tickets;
- ✓ gift certificates for local restaurants and other goods and services;
- ✓ speciality baskets featuring a certain theme; time shares; vacation rentals.

If you have an item to donate, please contact Tom Bresson at 301-490-4187. Auction items can also be delivered to LARS during our business hours.

DONATING
On
LINE
IS QUICK & EASY!

Visit the LARS
Website

www.laureladvocacy.org

CLICK ON
"GIVE DIRECT"

under

DONATE NOW.

100 percent of your
donation will go to LARS!

Prayers sought for John
and BJ Hitchcock.

This couple has volunteered
faithfully at LARS for more
than 4 years. John was
hospitalized twice recently,
and now, following surgery,
is being cared for at home
by BJ.

Thanks to a generous
response to the Feinstein
challenge, LARS should
come out well. The results of
our appeal for food and cash
donations will be submitted
to the Feinstein Foundation
in May. Grants will be
awarded in August.
Stay tuned!

Documents and information
submitted to the State of Maryland
under the
MD Charitable Solicitations Act are
available from the Office of the
Secretary of State, State House,
Annapolis, MD 21401.

Let No One Go Hungry in Laurel

Laurel Advocacy and
Referral Services, Inc.

311 Laurel Avenue
Laurel MD 20707

PHONE:
301-776-0442

FAX:
301-604-7076

E-MAIL:
ngraham@
laureladvocacy.org

Donate on the web!

Visit us at:
www.laureladvocacy.org

“Intense love does not
measure; it just gives.”

Mother Theresa 1910-1997

During the winter holidays, the demands on our pantry were unprecedented. Since then, we've gone all out to keep food on our shelves for the needy. Not only has LARS been awarded additional funds from grantors but we've also received tremendous help from the community. To name just two outstanding donors, we were the beneficiaries of a Lenten food drive by **Saint Vincent Pallotti High School** and an ongoing food collection by **CURVES**. The community response to the Feinstein challenge was also a beautiful thing to see. That said, please remember that LARS will continue to need non-perishable food donations for our pantry this summer. Useful items include: cereals, oatmeal, pastas and sauce, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter, canned tuna, soups, “Hamburger Helper”-type meal stretchers, canned fruit, canned vegetables, and pancake mix, especially the kind that needs only water. Pop-top items work especially well for homeless people. Donations are accepted during business hours, which are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 9 AM until 2 PM, and Monday evenings from 5 to 7 PM.

If you know of any Laurel resident (zip codes 20707, 20708, 20723k 20724) needing food, please have them contact us at 301-776-0442. We'd like **local educators** to inform community families who are struggling about the LARS food pantry. **No one needs to go hungry during the summer months when school breakfast and lunch are not provided (since school is not in session.)** Call us if you have questions.



LAUREL ADVOCACY AND
REFERRAL SERVICES, INC.
311 LAUREL AVENUE
LAUREL MD 20707

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