

Lars Letter

Fall 2009

Volume 22, Issue 2

Executive Director
Nancy Graham, LCSW-C

Board of Directors

Samantha Freeman,
President
First United Methodist
Church

Larry Krieger, Vice-
President
Resurrection Catholic
Church

Mimi Nostro, Secretary
St. Nicholas Catholic
Church

Barrie Beth Hansen,
Treasurer
Laurel Presbyterian
Church

Kerrie Allen
St. Philip's Episcopal
Church

Jaime Auvil
Community of Christ

Kathy Bartolomeo
Our Savior Lutheran
Church

Jean Bielefeldt
Bethany Community
Church

Thomas Bresson
St. Mary of the Mills
Catholic Church

Ray Mock
First Baptist Church

Michele D. Sadler
Community of Christ

Jean Schnurr
Oseh Shalom

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

Getting Closer to Fulfilling One of Our BIG DREAMS

LARS has been working with city, county, and state officials to secure an estimated \$500K in funds for the renovation and expansion of its current building. With the help of **Prince George's Councilman, Thomas Dernoga, District 1**, LARS was awarded a Community Development Block Grants totaling \$125K for the project. Earlier this year, LARS received a \$100K Bond Bill sponsored by **Senator Jim Rosapepe** and **State Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnick**. While \$225K is not enough to cover projected costs, LARS is hopeful that funds from other sources will materialize, allowing us to take on as little debt as possible.

Planning is underway to temporarily relocate LARS to a nearby work site as early as January 2010. We hope to stay within a few block's radius of our present location, and will certainly provide plenty of advance notice to the community concerning our move. We thank the community for their support of our *vision* for a bigger and better LARS. We hope that when construction is completed, we will be able to engage in more community partnerships, and explore additional services for the benefit of the entire Laurel community.

Request for Proposals

LARS is seeking proposals from qualified, experienced **General Contractors** who are licensed, bonded, insured and in good standing in the community and state to assist with the renovation and expansion of LARS' facility at 311 Laurel Avenue, Laurel, MD 20707. Plans call for the addition of a third story to the building, enclosing the external stairwells, and bumping out the back of the building. Qualified contractors can contact Nancy Graham, Executive Director at (301) 776-0442 ext 26.

A Special Thank You to the Mayor and the City Council of Laurel

This year has been one of great uncertainty for LARS given the poor state of the economy. We are very thankful for the support of our many partners, including the Mayor and City Council of Laurel. In June 2009, they gave LARS an additional \$5,000 contribution, bringing their annual contribution to LARS to \$8,000. Not only do city officials "take our calls," but that they often check in with us sincerely wanting to know the needs we're seeing in the community. LARS works because people in Laurel care. Thank you, Mr. Mayor and members of City Council!

Paul Sutton
Emmanuel United
Methodist Church

Lucille Young
Oakland's
Presbyterian Church

STAFF

Don Phillips, MSW
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, or if you
are receiving
duplicates, please
contact

lgreenwood@laureladvocacy.org

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

Rapid Re-Housing Program

LARS submitted a proposal to Prince George's County, in collaboration with **Jobs Have Priority** (JHP), **United Communities Against Poverty** (UCAP) and **Community Crisis Services, Inc.**, to provide "Rapid Re-Housing" services for Laurel citizens who have been evicted or are facing eviction. The program originates from the American Recovery Act (federal funds distributed through local jurisdictions), and is designed to provide case management and short-term support so that individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis are provided with interventions to "get them back on their feet." LARS and our partners will know the outcome of the proposal sometime during the month of September.

Full-Time Case Manager Needed

LARS is seeking resumes from qualified candidates for a full-time case manager to oversee the start-up, implementation, and follow-through of the **Rapid Re-Housing Program**. Candidates should have a MSW and be licensed (and in good standing) as a social worker in the State of Maryland. Work experience in programs that specialize in housing, crisis work and/or homeless services is preferred. Qualified candidates may forward a resume and cover letter to: LARS, Attn: Nancy Graham, Executive Director; 311 Laurel Avenue; Laurel, Maryland 20707.

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation

It is with sincere gratitude that LARS thanks **The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation** for their second and final installment of a two-year grant that has provided LARS with the funding to hire a full-time Bi-lingual Outreach Worker to assist LARS with providing services to the growing number of Laurel residents who speak Spanish as their first language. In an 11-month period from the initial funding of this project (August 2008), LARS provided an array of services to 134 Spanish-speaking individuals and/or families living in Laurel. This grant has been an exceptional gift for LARS because it fully funds an operating expense that we could not have afforded otherwise. While LARS has been able to secure multiple grants to assist with numerous services in the community during these hard economic times, raising money for operating expenses is always much more difficult.

Additional Emergency Food and Shelter Grants

LARS received additional Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) funds, bringing this year's award to more than \$63,000. EFSP funds allow LARS to assist families and individuals living within the zip codes of 20707 or 20708 with stipends to deter their eviction. Nearly \$52,000 of these funds were used to prevent evictions, while the remainder assisted LARS in our food pantry stocked during what have been our most difficult months in our 22-year history. We are thankful for the quick response of Prince George's County in getting additional funds in the hands of county providers, allowing LARS to assist those in need with few gaps in services.

Now We're Talking Turkey!

This year's platinum sponsorship, which includes naming rights for LARS' Thanksgiving morning charity 5K, was secured by **CarMax Laurel Toyota** who contributed \$20,967 to LARS! We are extremely thankful for the contribution. We would also like to thank our many sponsors, including **Casey's Crab Co.** who have supported the event since we started---can you believe it?---just 5 years ago! This race is becoming a Laurel tradition which has been made possible only because of the many great sponsors and community support, including our gracious hosts for the event, **The First United Methodist Church of Laurel** and **Pastor Chris Owens**.

So . . .Get Ready To TURKEY TROT

SAVE THE DATE! On Thanksgiving morning, Thursday, November 26th, the **5th Annual CarMax Laurel Toyota 5K Turkey Trot to Benefit Laurel Advocacy and Referral Services, Inc.** will be held at the First United Methodist Church of Laurel, located at the corner of 5th and Main Streets in the heart of Old Laurel. The 5K runners take off promptly at 8AM followed by the 1 Mile Fun Walkers at 8:05 AM. You can start your Thanksgiving by raising money for a local charity, and still be home in plenty of time to prepare your Thanksgiving feast. Last year's race registered 388 participants. Our goal for our Fifth Anniversary is to bring out 500 people! Register today at www.laureladvocacy.org. Registration fees are \$20 before November 13th, and \$25 after. T-shirts guaranteed for the first 350 to register.

JOIN FACEBOOK GROUP: *5th Annual CarMax Laurel Toyota 5K Turkey Trot to Benefit LARS* for frequent updates on the event.

Calling All Artists

LARS is seeking original artwork for the **5th Annual CarMax Laurel Toyota 5K Turkey Trot to Benefit Laurel Advocacy and Referral Services, Inc.** Artwork must incorporate a Turkey-Thanksgiving and running race theme. The winner of the contest will receive a \$50 Target gift card and have their artwork featured on the front of the race day T-shirts, and other promotional race materials. All submissions for this contest are due no later than Friday, October 9th. Artwork can be mailed or hand delivered to: LARS, Attn: Turkey Trot Planning Committee, 311 Laurel Avenue, Laurel, MD 20707.

The Holidays Are Just Around the Corner

LARS will begin interviewing clients for the 2009 Holiday Program on **Monday, October 5th**. If you would like to apply to receive food/gifts through the LARS Holiday Program, please call after September 11th to schedule an appointment. To qualify for Holiday Program assistance you must have received services from LARS within the last year.

If you or your organization can contribute Thanksgiving food and/or December holiday food and gifts for families in need, LARS could use your help. To obtain a donor application, please call program coordinator Ernestine Gibson at 301-776-0442, extension 30, M-W-F, 9AM-2PM. Ernestine can be reached by e-mail at egibson@laureladvocacy.org. Every effort will be made to match donors with the requested family profile.

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!

LARS Executive Director, **Nancy Graham**, was honored by being invited to be one of three Grand Marshall's for the Laurel Independence Day parade held on Saturday, July 4th in the heart of Laurel. Graham rode with her children, and fellow Grand Marshalls, **Pastor Sigundo Mir** of the First Baptist Church of Laurel, and **Joe Fisher**, the Founder and Executive Director of First Generation College Bound, in a car furnished by Fred Frederick. It was a beautiful day and a true honor to have been asked.

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.

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-profit Org
U.S Postage
PAID
Laurel, MD
Permit No. 647

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



Washington Area Women's Foundation
LEADERSHIP AWARDEE

SHARE Food

SHARE Food Network is an amazing and unique program that is open to everyone. SHARE distributes high-quality, affordable and nutritious food as a way to build community and strengthen families. Whether you would like to save money on groceries, volunteer in the community, or promote health and wellness, it's worth getting involved with SHARE! Visit the SHARE website at www.sharedc.org for more information. Through a long-standing partnership with the Knights of Columbus, LARS is a SHARE Food distribution site. The program is open to everyone!