

# LARS Letter

Fall 2011 • Volume 24, Issue 1 • Serving the community since 1987

## Executive Director

Nancy Graham, LCSW-C

## Board of Directors

Don Ausherman, President  
*Holy Trinity Lutheran Church*

Kerrie Allen, Vice President  
*St. Philip's Episcopal Church*

Helen Harrington, Secretary  
*St. Nicholas RC Church*

Barrie Hansen, Treasurer  
*Laurel Presbyterian Church*

Jean Bielefeldt  
*Bethany Community Church*

Tom Bresson  
*St. Mary of the Mills RC Church*

Bob Conley  
*First Baptist Church*

Helen Harrington  
*Our Savior Lutheran Church*

Larry Krieger  
*Resurrection of our Lord RC Church*

Susan Ratzlaff  
*Community of Christ*

Linda Stone  
*St. Nicholas RC Church*

Larry Taub  
*Oseh Shalom Synagogue*

Lucille Young  
*Oakland's Presbyterian Church*

## LARS Recognized by State Farm

On Sunday, September 18th LARS was recognized by State Farm and the Baltimore Orioles as a 2011 "Go to Bat Award" recipient. LARS, along with five other local non-profits, was commended for our work and service to the community. Nancy Graham, LARS' Executive Director, was at the game to accept the award during a pre-game ceremony that took place on the field. LARS would like to thank State Farm, the Baltimore Orioles, and all of the local businesses and corporations who support our work to end homelessness, one person at a time.



## Silent Auction/Bull & Oyster Roast

A big THANK YOU to everyone who came out to support LARS at our Silent Auction/Bull & Oyster Roast back in June. It was a great night, and we raised \$8,500 to help us continue our work in the community.

A special thank you to all those who donated items for our silent auction:

All About You Salon  
American Legion Post 60  
Amway  
Bowie Comm. Theater  
Burgundy Press  
C.J. Ferrari  
Café de Paris  
Cakes Plus, Inc.  
Carrol's Creek Café  
Casey's Crab Co.

Cheesecake Factory  
Chick-Fil-A  
Corridor Fine Wine  
Einstein Bros. Bagels  
Floral Fantasia  
Gold's Gym  
Hey Red! Inc.  
His Way Christian Bookstore  
J&P Kake Korner  
Jiffy Lube  
La Palapa Too  
Laurel Art Center  
Looney's Pub  
Macaroni Grill  
Modern Nails & Spa  
New York J&P Pizza  
Newseum  
Noodles & Company  
Panera Bread  
Pasta Nostra  
Rainbow Florist  
Red Hot & Blue  
Sapphire Restaurant  
Shear Bliss

Tampico Grill  
Terrapin Adventures  
TGI Friday's  
The City of Laurel  
Toby's Dinner Theatre  
Tresses & Shears  
UNO Chicago Grill  
Victoria's Gastro Pub

Arlene Leis  
Barbara Scott  
Cal Kirby  
Carol Plotnick  
Carol Spangler  
Christian Gueritot  
Clare Mumane  
Dawn Budd  
Don Ausherman  
Dori & Dave Ranaghan  
Eddie Ricks  
Gail Reinhardt  
Gailyn Gwin  
Janice McCullagh  
Jean Bielefeldt

Jei Witt  
Kathie Peterson  
Kirsten Anderson  
Larry Krieger  
Linda & Gary Stone  
Margaret Bechtold  
Mary Lloyd  
Michelle Arsenault  
Norton Mock  
Pam Lloyd  
Peg Stainer  
Phil & Cynthia Chase  
Ray Mock  
Sally Shiomichi  
Scott Spaulding  
Senator Jim Rosapepe  
Shirley Messer  
Sue Boyd  
Tom & Marge Bresson  
Tommy Rowe  
Windy Kumar

**THANK YOU!!!**

## The Need for Help is Urgent

Jane, a single mother of three, recently came to LARS for assistance. She had been working, consistently, and just making it with each paycheck that she received from a full-time job at a local retailer. When a relatively minor injury sidelined her for a few weeks, Jane fell behind in her rent, and was facing eviction the next day. Often people will ask why Jane waited so long to get help, but Jane began trying to locate assistance the moment she learned that she was facing eviction. When she finally found someone who advised her to go to LARS, she was well prepared with the information she needed to provide to LARS (eviction notice, a copy of the lease, recent pay stubs, documentation of her injury, identification and social security cards for all members residing in the household...) LARS could help. Jane had a small sum of money in her savings account, and LARS was able to pay her landlord the remaining \$500 to prevent her eviction. Jane was able to return to work, and only needed a hand-up to get her through a hard time.

Each year brings new challenges to any non-profit, but this year brought them with a bang that has not been seen in years, certainly not the life time of LARS. Some speculate that these time parallel the Great Depression, and LARS would not be in any position to debate that point. More people are living in poverty, the unemployment rate continues to soar, and many resources are drying up. In the next few weeks, a grant provided by the American Recovery Act that was a collaborative effort of four homeless service providers in Prince George's County, including LARS, will conclude. Last year that grant provided nearly \$105K in additional eviction prevention funds to the Laurel community. Additionally, as all municipalities are suffering, a federal grant administered by the county that LARS receives for eviction and food was recently cut 30%. The resources LARS is able to offer the community will be considerably less, more than 50% less than what was available last year for eviction prevention.

The challenge to keep food on the LARS food pantry shelves has been an ongoing issue for more than 18 months. LARS has been using agency funds to purchase food when in prior years food drives and grants were, generally, sufficiently keeping the pantry stocked. The need is real.

## LARS' Open House & Ribbon Cutting

On Saturday, June 11th LARS was joined by many community members and supporters as we dedicated our newly renovated building located at 311 Laurel Avenue. Offering the blessings of our new building were: Rev. Stephanie Vader, Emmanuel United Methodist Church; Rev. Sheila McJilton, St. Philip's Episcopal Church; and, Rev. Amy Schacht, Laurel Presbyterian Church. Members of the City of Laurel Council and LARS staff joined Nancy Graham, LARS' Executive Director; Laurel Mayor, Craig Moe; District 1 Councilwoman, Mary Lehman; Senator Jim Rosapepe; and former District One Councilman, Tom Dernoga for the ribbon cutting ceremony. The countdown to the cutting was offered by Grahams oldest son, Jackson. The City of Laurel loaned their "Big Bertha" RV that responds to may disasters around the State of Maryland to LARS for the festivities. Local Community member, Eddie Ricks, prepared hot dogs and snow cones for the attendees with the help of volunteer, Genny Doodoo. Many thanks to everyone for making our dream of a modern facility to better serve the community a reality.

### Staff

Lori Proietti, LSWA  
*Deputy Director*

Lauren Cohen, LSWA  
*Permanent Housing  
Case Manager*

Ernestine Gibson  
*Float Pool*

Lynette Greenwood  
*Office Manager*

Shelly Kessler  
*Coordinator of Triage  
and Programs*

Emily Kleeman, MSW  
*Transitional Housing  
Case Manager*

Leah Paley, MSW  
*Director of Emergency Services*

Taryn Gauthier &  
Kim Guidara  
*MSW Interns*

*If you would like to have your name  
added or removed from our mailing  
list, please contact :*  
**[lgreenwood@laureladvocacy.org](mailto:lgreenwood@laureladvocacy.org)**



# Local Organizations Walk for Homelessness Awareness

Every year, LARS takes part in the Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Mini-Walk Program, which is a youth-centered program designed to raise awareness about homelessness. Individual mini-walks are hosted by local organizations on our behalf and typically include a 30-minute educational component followed by a 15-minute walk or other physical activity.

By reaching out to over 100 local schools, churches, and other organizations, we are hoping to register at least 3,000 walkers. **If we are able to reach this goal, the Fannie Mae Foundation will match our effort with a \$50,000 bonus.** The registration fee is \$20 for youth (under 25) and \$30 for all others.

LARS is also looking for individuals and businesses to sponsor walkers who cannot afford the registration fee.

If you know of an organization that might be interested in hosting a mini-walk or sponsoring children for a walk, please let us know! Mini-walks can take place any time before November 6th, so there is still time to sign up!

**For more information, please contact Shelly Kessler at (301) 776 - 0442, ext. 34 or [skessler@laureladvocacy.org](mailto:skessler@laureladvocacy.org).**

**LARS Mini-Walk (at LARS)  
Sunday, Nov. 6th @ 12:30**

**South Columbia Baptist Church – 10/14/2011 at 6:45 pm**

**Laurel Presbyterian Church – 10/23/2011 – time TBD**

**Oseh Shalom – 10/30/2011 at 9:30 am**

**Community of Christ Reorganized – 10/15/2011 at 3:30 pm**

**Emmanuel United Methodist Church – 10/2/2011 at 10:00 am; 11:30 am**

**St. Mark's – 10/8/2011 at 9:00 am**

**Bethany Community Church – 10/29/2011 from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church – 10/9/2011 at 10:00 am**

**St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church – 10/22/2011 at 10:30 am and 10/23/2011 at 1:30 pm**

**St. Philip's Episcopal Church – 10/30/11**

## 7th Annual Turkey Trot & Fun Walk to Benefit LARS

We're hoping for better weather this year as we gear up for the 7th Annual 5K Turkey Trot & 1 Mile Fun Walk to Benefit LARS! The race will take place on Thanksgiving Morning at the First United Methodist Church of Laurel.

We are still looking for sponsors as well as participants! **Online registration and USATF certified course map is now available on our website [www.laureladvocacy.org](http://www.laureladvocacy.org).** Also, be sure to join our Facebook page 7th Annual Thanksgiving Morning 5K Turkey Trot to Benefit LARS for race updates, pictures, and more!



Please contact us at (301) 776 - 2330 if you would like to sponsor the event and have your company name included in the promotional materials!

### Schedule of Events

#### **Wednesday, 11/23 (3-7pm)**

Pre-Registration & Packet pick-up at First United Methodist Church: 424 Main Street, Laurel MD 20707. First 500 to pick-up packets will receive a commemorative technical t-shirt (new in 2011)!

#### **Thursday, 11/24**

7:00am Late Registration  
7:40am Warm-Up  
8:00am 5K Run begins  
8:05am 1 Mile Fun Walk begins

**RAIN OR SHINE!**

## Holiday Donations/Help Needed!

The holidays are fast approaching! LARS will begin interviewing clients for the Holiday Program beginning September 26th. This is always the busiest time of year for LARS, and we rely greatly on your donations to be able to provide food and gifts to families during the holidays.

There are several ways that you can help as an individual, family, business, organization, school, or congregation:

- "Adopt a family" by providing holi-

day gifts and food for a local family in need

- Purchase gifts to be distributed to those who are not adopted
- Purchase gift cards/certificates for families
- Donate stamps for mailings
- Make a donation to LARS

**If you are interested in helping us this holiday season, please contact our Holiday Program Coordinator, Shelly Kessler, at (301) 776 - 0442, ext. 34 or [skessler@laureladvocacy.org](mailto:skessler@laureladvocacy.org).**

**Donor and client applications are also available**

**on our website. Donor applications may be mailed in at any time. Clients wishing to receive food/gifts through the program must appear in person to apply.**

**Visit [www.laureladvocacy.org](http://www.laureladvocacy.org) and click on "Give Direct" to make a contribution to LARS online. Donations can be one time gifts, or made in installments as determined by the donor. LARS receives 100% of all online contributions.**

**LAUREL ADVOCACY & REFERRAL SERVICES, INC.**  
311 LAUREL AVENUE  
LAUREL, MD 20707

### **Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services, Inc.**

311 Laurel Avenue  
Laurel, MD 20707

**Phone:** (301) 776 - 0442

**Fax:** (301) 604 - 7076

**E-mail:** ngraham@laureladvocacy.org

**Website:** www.laureladvocacy.org

#### **“Like” us on Facebook!**

(Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services, Inc.)



#### **OUR MISSION:**

LARS is a non-proselytizing ecumenical ministry serving the Greater Laurel area by assisting homeless and low-income individuals and families who are experiencing crisis, by providing both emergency and long-term services designed to promote self-sufficiency.

### **LARS Food Pantry**

#### **The LARS food pantry is in dire need of replenishing!**

Food donations tend to be less frequent during the summer months, and this year was no exception. We are grateful to all who donated this summer and encourage community members and organizations to consider donating food or sponsoring food drives for us as we prepare for the holiday season. Donations can be dropped off at LARS during business hours (Mon, Wed, Fri 9am-2pm & Mon 5-7pm).

Suggested items that are a great help to our pantry include: **canned soup, canned fruit and vegetables, pastas and sauces, peanut butter and jelly, cereal, oatmeal, “just-add-water” pancake mix, tuna, Tuna Helper, macaroni and cheese, and other staples.** **Plastic grocery bags are also needed to deliver food to clients.**

*Please check the expiration dates before donating food!*