

Family Matters

Agency Helps Central Marylanders Thrive in Tough Times

It should come as no surprise that an organization that has helped people in need through the Civil War, the Great Depression and the violent civil rights struggles of the 20th century continues to guide families and strengthen communities during ongoing economic weakness and terrorist threats. In fact, many of our clients are thriving against great odds. We are pleased to introduce you to a few of the families and individuals who benefit from and grow through agency programs.*

Rho Xi Omega mentors, who, along with the Annie Roberts Foundation, contributed the balance of tuition fees to make this dream come true.

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Academically and artistically, Janice was ready for the challenge. After School AKAdemy participants are exposed to the arts by attending and even performing with professional groups. She had studied dance with nationally-acclaimed Stephanie Powell and performed with several dance companies. When this determined freshman auditioned for the dance company at her new school, she won a coveted place in the troop.

Other AKAdemy participants, buoyed by Janice's success, are planning to apply to the school next year.

Foster Grandparents Program

Seventy senior citizens were honored last month during a gala event celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Baltimore Foster Grandparent Program. Volunteers work with children in schools, hospitals and day care centers, giving children personal attention and filling needs that would otherwise go unmet by overwhelmed

After School AKAdemy

Janice Green, a Baltimore City middle school graduate, is now attending a highly selective college prep school, thanks to the persistence of a dedicated group of Rho Xi Omega sorority sisters. These can-do women mentor participants in our arts-based program for promising middle school girls, designed to help them meet their full potential. Scholarship money didn't come close to meeting the needs of the Green family, but that didn't stop the



* Throughout this newsletter, the stories are true, however, some names and details have been changed to protect client privacy.

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From the President

Generations of Baltimoreans have turned to Family and Children's Services of Central Maryland for help with family problems during changing times. We have provided sustaining services to families since 1849, when the Mayor of Baltimore, Elijah Stansberry, convened a group of businessmen to discuss solutions to help families make a successful transition from an agrarian to an industrial society. From those ground breaking days, this organization has been an important component of the social welfare framework in Maryland.

Each of our predecessor agencies has made its mark on our community. Mary Richmond, our executive director in the 1880's wrote extensively about helping families. She began the modern tradition of social work. The work of the Henry Watson Children's Aid Society led to the establishment of the first child welfare laws in the state. Our Board of Managers actively lobbied the city of Baltimore to increase the amount of money available for relief of families during the depression and before the establishment of a public welfare system. Members of the Board of Directors of Family and Children's Society promoted the

transition of the agency to a family casework organization providing counseling to families. As society has changed, so have we changed to meet the needs of the times. Family and Children's Services was one of the first organizations to provide child sexual abuse treatment services, beginning in 1985.

Today, despite the serious problems in the economy and cutbacks from the United Way, we are still providing groundbreaking services that support families. We now have five child sexual abuse treatment programs. We now help reunify families temporarily separated due to substance abuse issues; help HIV-affected families continue to function; and help caregiver

families sustain their elderly loved ones in the community.

None of this would be possible without the consistent dedication of our staff, the leadership of our Board, and the support of those who value the work we do. We thank all of you for helping make this agency's contribution to families and individuals so strong, in good times and bad.



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Family Matters is published by Family and Children's Services of Central Maryland, 4623 Falls Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21209-4914. Phone 410-366-1980; fax 410-366-8530; tdd 410-669-0770; e-mail info@fcsmd.org; website www.fcsmd.org.

Family and Children's Services is a private nonprofit agency serving Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard Counties. We address the needs of families as they relate to single parenting, parent-child relationships, teen pregnancy prevention and parenting, adult relationship problems, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, and issues of aging. FCS is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc., and is a member of the Child Welfare League of America, the National Association for Home Care, and United Way of Central Maryland.

For a copy of the agency's financial statements, call 410-366-1980, or mail your request to Margy Ryan at the address listed above.

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Executive Director

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Senior Citizens Enjoy an Enchanted Day

A special event took place in Westminster over the summer. The staff, volunteers, and participants of West End Place Adult Day Care Center* threw a wedding for sixty-something year-olds Rachel Harrington and Alfred Sawyer. It wasn't your everyday wedding.

Both Harrington and Sawyer attend the Adult Day Care Center, where they enjoy companionship, stimulating activities, meals and nursing supervision while their caregivers enjoy respite from their elderly loved ones.

Like many weddings, a minister performed the ceremony. The bride and groom were traditionally attired in bridal gown and tuxedo. The father of the bride walked his daughter up the aisle. Over fifty guests attended, including the Mayor of Westminster and a Carroll County Commissioner.

But this was not an ordinary wedding; it was a "fairy tale" wedding. The

minister was a fake. The parents of the bride and groom were, like their "children," day care center participants. Rather than joining two people in holy matrimony, the goal was to involve all clients in the planning and attendance of a day to remember.


Everyone got into the act. West End Place participants served as bridesmaids and best man. Others created floral arrangements. Ruth Colson, Activities Coordinator for West End Place, altered the bride's consignment-shop gown. Even local merchants got into the act. The tuxedo, wedding cake topper, and wedding favors were donated by Benn's Tuxedo Rental. Avenue Cleaners cleaned the bridal dress for half-price.

"There was excitement at the center for weeks in advance while we all prepared. What a wonderful event to keep our clients stimulated and engaged!" exclaimed Ruth Martin, a Certified

Nursing Assistant at West End Place.

A few key players in this staged wedding were actually what they claimed to be, including members of the bride and groom's real families. And yes, the real Mayor and Commissioner attended.

The West End Place Adult Day Care center, serving 25 to 35 clients per day, is one of several programs provided by Family and Children's Services for senior citizens and disabled adults. Last year, our Elder Services division provided 951 individuals throughout Central Maryland with services including in-home care, job training and placement, and wheelchair-accessible housing.

For information about our Adult Day Care Centers, In-Home Aide, and other programs for the elderly and adult disabled, please call Sallie Hedenstad at 410-366-1980, ext. 272, or email her at shedenstad@fcsmd.org. 


Thriving in Tough Times* continued

teachers, social workers and health care personnel. It's a win-win situation. Children get the one-on-one attention they need, while volunteers enjoy the love, snuggling, and sense of being needed.

Among the 70 honorees were senior citizens from 60 years of age to well into their 90's. These volunteers, contributing to their communities after retirement, include former teachers, nurses, domestic and construction workers and Peace Corps volunteers. Two sisters with 54 combined years of service as Foster Grandparents were among the honorees.

Park Heights Family Support Center

The pathway to success is rarely straight, as Alexa White well knows. Alexa, a high school drop-out, attended the Park Heights Family Support Center (PHFSC) in fits and starts for several years. During that time, she and her husband, James, lost custody of the last of their three children. After a rocky start at PHFSC, however, Alexa entered the center one day and announced that she was ready to get her GED and go to college. The PHFSC staff, having heard that story many times over the years, took Alexa's enthusiasm with a grain of salt. But she really did buckle down and make changes in her life. With determination, the support of her husband, and the guidance of PHFSC, she took GED preparation classes and learned parenting, job and life skills. Alexa became the first person in her extended family to earn her GED. She got a job as a nurses' aide and, by supplementing her husband's income as a delivery driver at a local furniture store, Alexa and James purchased their own home in Northwest Baltimore. Best of all, they have regained custody of their children!

Alexa, now taking college courses at Baltimore City Community College, is proud to be setting a positive example for her children. 

*These stories are true, however, some names and details have been changed to protect client privacy.

Our Clients Need Us. We Need You.

The weak economy has affected individuals and organizations alike. Reductions in United Way and government funding have forced us to cut staff and reduce critically needed programs. Unfortunately, while our operating budget shrinks, the need for our programs continues to grow.

We are determined to maintain the high level of professional services we offer to families and individuals of all income levels, but we need your help.

Please give generously to Family and Children's Services, so that we can continue to serve communities throughout Central Maryland.

IF YOU GIVE THROUGH UNITED WAY,
please designate Family and Children's Services
by selecting the FCS agency number appropriate
for your workplace campaign

City, State and
Federal Employees

Individuals and Employees
of Private Companies

8049

049



**Family and
Children's Services**
of Central Maryland

Guiding Families. Strengthening Communities.

4623 Falls Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21209-4914

*A nonprofit, nonsectarian human services agency
serving families and individuals in all stages of life*

Nonprofit
Organization
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Permit No. 7544

Upcoming Events

Coming up on October 18

The Chrysanthemum Ball

The Grand Lodge at Bonnie Blink in Hunt Valley

Honorary Chairs

Monica and Mike Bordick • Nicole and Gary Gait • Polly and B.J. Surhoff

It's not too late to get tickets for the Chrysanthemum Ball Gala! The black-tie-optional evening will feature a classic black and white theme. Guests will enjoy a cocktail dinner buffet prepared by Innovative Gourmet and dancing with Bobby and The Believers. Silent and live auctions feature fabulous and eclectic items, including a tennis racquet signed by Jennifer Capriati, a pair of Louis XVI chairs, a tea party for 12 and a fanciful crab chair. Sports camp, a rocking horse, and a tour of Goetze's Candy factory will make great gifts for children young and old. A vasectomy would make a unique gift for the man who has everything. Who knows what treasure you might unearth? Come make history with us at the Ball this fall!

Tickets

\$125 per person (\$45/tax deductible)
\$1,500 per table of 10 (\$700/tax deductible)

Save These Dates

Annual Meeting

December 4, 2003

keynote : "Critical Times, Critical Needs"

The Hon. John Carroll Byrnes

Sheraton Baltimore North in Towson, MD

Hunt Valley Antiques Show

Preview Party February 26, 2004

Guest Lecturer February 27

Dan Carithers, with an introduction by

Colleen Scully, Ed. at Large, *House Beautiful*

Antiques Show February 27 - 29

Please note new location!

Holiday Inn Select in Timonium, MD

Golf Tournament

May 17, 2004

Chestnut Ridge Country Club in Lutherville, MD

To order tickets to any event, please call Kathleen Jensen at ext. 232. Night owls and early birds can get updated details of all agency events 24-7 by visiting www.fcsm.org.