

SAVE THE DATE!!

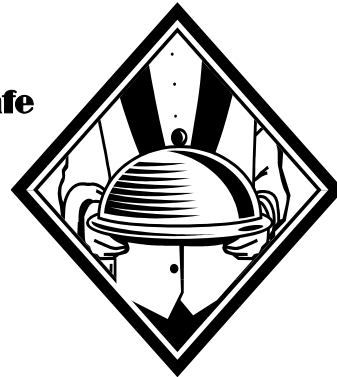
Planning For This year's GALA is



WHEN: Friday, October 15, 2010
WHERE: All Saints Episcopal Church
106 West Church Street
Frederick, MD
TIME: Doors Open at 6PM
TICKETS: \$35

Highlights Include:

- *Catering By ML Carroll of Canapés Catering and Mimi's Cafe
- *50/50 Raffle
- *Cash Bar
- *Live Entertainment
- *Special Focus on Participants Achievements



Frederick, MD 21701
 216 Abrecht Place



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THE ADVOCATE CURRENT

Spring, 2010 216 Abrecht Place, Frederick, MD (301) 662-2003 www.afhf.org

From Our Executive Director



Welcome to Advocates Spring 2010 Newsletter. This is an update on progress and projects underway to help struggling but motivated families right here in Frederick County. We're especially proud of this edition's

Participant Profile, and hope you'll take a few minutes to read about the exciting changes for Melissa P. and her family through our Families Forward program.

The current economic downturn has affected everyone. There is increased demand for services, and more families are living on the fringe of homelessness. Donations and support are harder to come by as businesses and supporters also struggle. So, we've made some important changes to address the impact of the current economic climate. For example, we've cut the cost from \$85 per person to just \$35 for this year's Participant Achievement Gala. We hope this approach makes it possible for more supporters like you to share in the gala festivities and to continue support for our mission.

Due to recent drastic cuts in the Maryland State budget, the Service-Linked Housing Program was cut entirely. Twenty-two organizations, including Advocates, lost this funding. The \$35,000 we received annually under this grant helped to support the Families Forward Program. Advocates has addressed the loss and is seeking alternative sources of funding. Our mission and services will remain intact as we continue this much needed service to families like Melissa's who are at-risk of homelessness.

Advocates is currently serving 55 individuals: 18 families comprised of 19 adults, and 36 children (and one on the way!). With your continued support and good will, they will receive the tools to stand on their own as thriving, contributing, independent members of society!

Sincerely,

Joe

Community Foundation Supports Summer Fun

The Community Foundation of Frederick County recently awarded two grants made possible by the U. Mehrl, Margaret T and Sharon Hooper Fund and the Sharon I. Hooper Fund for Children to Advocates to pay for summer activities of the children of our participants. The grant was given so "children can be children," regardless of their circumstances and will pay



for supervised activities, language instruction, fitness classes, day camps and more.

New Business – And New Partner In The Fight Against Homelessness

The new Mimi's Café, off Buckeystown Pike in Frederick, has proven to be a win-win for Advocates: A great new restaurant in town, and a partner in serving homeless families in Frederick County.

Just as the restaurant opened in November, Mimi's sponsored a fundraiser for Advocates for Homeless Families, donating a portion of the proceeds from November 2009 sales to Advocates. All told, Mimi's Café (which is owned by the Bob Evan's Corporation) donated \$25,538 to Advocates to assist with its programs and operating costs to serve homeless families in Frederick County.

"I am thrilled with the partnership we've formed with Mimi's Café," said Joe Case, Executive Director of Advocates. "Not only has the partnership been successful in raising funds, but Mimi's Café has helped to raise public awareness of our mission to serve homeless families in the community."

Participant Profile:

Single Mom Builds a Brighter Future

When Melissa P's old van was hit in the Post Office Parking lot, requiring a tow truck she didn't have the money for, she panicked. A single mother of three, including a much-loved but severely disabled young boy, Melissa was overwhelmed by the accident. She was unemployed, living with her children in a crowded homeless shelter and now without transportation. Despite her circumstances, the van was a priority -- her only means of transport for her son's medical appointments in Baltimore. Melissa knew she had to take action and move forward.

Melissa turned to Advocates, after being turned away by other organizations, and was accepted into the Families Forward Program. "I'm not sure what else I would have done, if I hadn't had someone to call," Melissa says. "Advocates arranged for a place that would do the repairs on the van at a lower rate, and made a call for the tow truck that they paid for."

Articulate, attractive, and intelligent, Melissa never expected to need the services of an agency like Advocates. But as a mother with three children, she was desperate to escape a marriage that included domestic violence. She and her three children wound up in area shelters that were safe, but crowded and uncomfortable. Finally, they moved into a small, subsidized apartment she could afford.

"I needed some way to make a plan that would help me get a job and stand on my own in the future," she says. "But, I didn't have any idea how to do that on my own."



Melissa is a full-time student. Two of her classes are offered online, which helps with caring for Samari.

Advocates helped Melissa to identify her long-term goals and assisted her with applications for educational grants and funding. She is now a full-time Frederick Community College student, studying to become a medical administrative specialist.

"Melissa's situation is compounded by the needs nine-year-old Samari, who has a heart condition, asthma, cerebral palsy, and mental retardation. Unable to speak or feed himself, Samari has had multiple surgeries.

Her two older children help out and babysit, but they also have activities of their own. Terence is a 14-year-old freshman at Frederick High and plays on the baseball team. He also plays football. Sixteen-year-old Savonna also is in high school and volunteers to work with disabled children and adults. . .but she really likes just hanging with her friends.

"It's impossible to get a babysitter for someone like Samari for just an hour a day," says Melissa, so her older kids help out while she's in class. Like other teens with household chores, they're not always thrilled, but they understand the bigger picture.

"It makes it hard to do stuff, sometimes," admits Savonna. "So, right now, we're struggling, but it'll be a lot better when she gets a job and things aren't so tight."

"It's not always easy, but right now I'd have to say there's more good than bad," says Terrence, who adds he's looking forward to the day when his mom gets a job.

Melissa is looking forward to that day, too. She'll be certified next month, and hopes to get her Associate's Degree in the next 18 months.



Dear Santa!

Thirty-two children and their parents got to meet Santa Claus at Advocates' annual Christmas Party, held December 10, 2009 at All Saints' Episcopal Church. Each child got a photo-op with Santa, affably played by Joe Volz, and a Christmas gift.

Gifts were donated by the students and staff at The Banner School for which we are all most grateful. The Banner School has long been a strong supporter of Advocates' mission.

Children, parents, staff and Board Members enjoyed a buffet, holiday music, games, and arts and crafts. We're looking forward to the next time Santa comes to visit!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

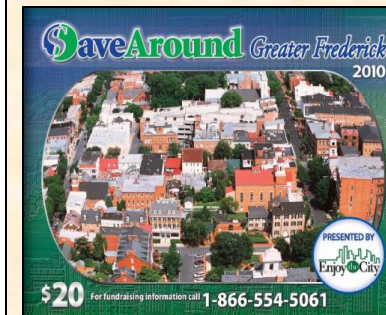
- Bunny O'Dell
- Dan Cunningham
- Francina Baldi
- Rev. Kay Rice
- Jan Samet-O'Leary
- Ann Hedges
- Ted Luck
- Andrew DiPasquale
- Kathleen Jefferson
- Maria Young
- Kendyl Wiggins

CONGRATULATIONS... to Mr. Dan Schiffman for being awarded a Community Service Award from the Northwestern Mutual Foundation on behalf of his work with Advocates for Homeless Families.

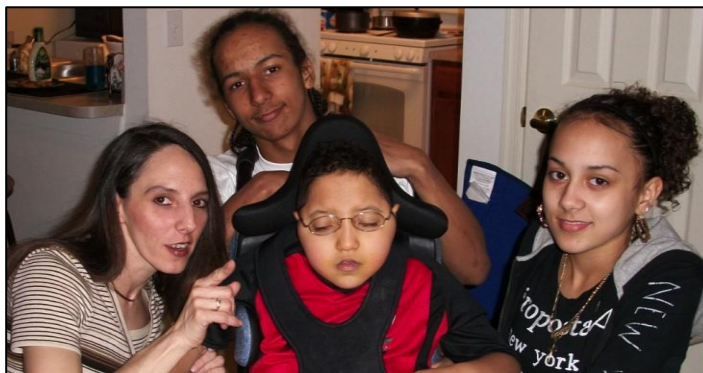
WIN-WIN: Enjoy The City – And Help Those In Danger Of Becoming Homeless

"Enjoy the City" coupon books are on sale at Advocates. For the low cost of \$20, you can enjoy savings (over \$2,500 in savings) at many local area businesses. Popular coupons in this year's 2010 edition include: Quiznos, Arby's, Houlihan's, Il Forno, Ledo Pizza, Roy Rogers, Applebee's, Denny's, Subway, Maryland Zoo, Catoctin Zoo, Weinberg Center, and many, many more. The book could pay for itself with just one use. To preview the coupon book, visit www.EnjoytheCity.com. A large portion of the purchase price will go directly to Advocates for Homeless Families which has been "Moving Families Forward Since 1988."

Coupon books can be purchased by contacting: **Advocates at (301) 662-2003** to arrange a pick-up during office hours, or you can have a coupon book mailed to you. **If you prefer mail, please send a check for \$22.50 (includes postage) to: Advocates for Homeless Families, 216 Abrecht Place, Frederick, MD 21701. (Make sure to note: ENJOY THE CITY FUNDRAISER on the memo line of your check and/or attach a note to your payment.)**



If you or your community/youth group would like to help us reach our goal by selling books on our behalf, please contact anyone at Advocates for information. Individuals that sell five books can gate a book FREE! Coupon books are valid for the entire year.



Both of Melissa's older children help out with feeding and caring for younger brother Samari. Finding a sitter for someone with his disabilities is a challenge.

Advocates Partners With Mental Health Association of Frederick County

Last October, Advocates partnered with the Mental Health Association (MHA) to offer group therapy sessions to participants twice a month. Two interns from the MHA conducted the sessions offering Advocates participants a chance to work on common issues that potentially could hinder achievement to self-sufficiency. The result has been overwhelmingly positive. Advocates and MHA will resume the group therapy sessions this fall.