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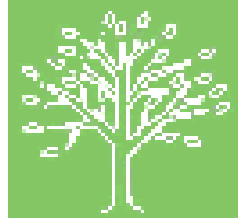
**United Way of the National Capital Area**

# **Community Impact Fund Grants 2008 Agency Success Stories**

*Mobilizing community resources to create lasting changes in community conditions and  
providing supportive services to families and children to improve lives is how we **LIVE UNITED.***

**ALEXANDRIA**

**ALIVE!**  
**(ALEXANDRIANS INVOLVED ECUMENICALLY)**



**2723 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22302**



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**ALIVE!** (ALEXANDRIANS INVOLVED ECUMENICALLY) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization of volunteers from over 40 religious congregations and the community working together to help those in need in Alexandria, Virginia. Founded in 1969, ALIVE! is the largest private safety net for the needy in the city of Alexandria, addressing short-term to long-term needs for those less fortunate in the community.

### **United Way Working Here**

~Single mom Faith\* was working, raising her two children and proudly making ends meet on her own. But after learning of a relative's drug addiction and a Court decision to place the relative's four very young children in foster care, Faith came forward and asked that the children be placed in her care. She left her job to care for the youngsters and, with a referral from the Office of Community Services, ALIVE! Has stepped in to help Faith with her utility bills, emergency food deliveries to her home, and much-needed bedroom furniture for her expanded family. It's a day-to-day struggle for Faith, but ALIVE!'s programs and volunteers are continuing to support her and the children whenever the need arises.

~In a West-end Alexandria apartment, two elderly sisters lived together, existing on the barest of retirement incomes. One of the sisters was tragically killed in a traffic accident, leaving the remaining sister, Margaret\*, unable to meet the modest rent and still have enough money each month on which to live. To exacerbate the problem, Margaret has a severe chronic illness and is unable to return to work. Since the death of her sister, ALIVE!'s Family Emergency Program has provided rental assistance, enabling Margaret to remain in her apartment, living simply, but independently.

\*name changed to protect client's privacy

**ALIVE! Serves over 12,000 Alexandrians annually with shelter, low-cost early childhood education and childcare, financial help for rent, utilities, medical care and other critical needs, emergency food, and deliveries of donated furniture and house wares.**

## ARLINGTON



2708-B South Nelson Street  
Arlington, VA 22206

**A-SPAN** provides meals, emergency shelter, counseling and access to affordable housing to adults living on the streets while striving to end homelessness in Arlington County.

### United Way Working Here

~The outreach workers had been aware of the 52 year old homeless woman living on the streets in Arlington for at least a year. They learned that she had been in and out of hospitals because of mental health issues and received SSI benefits. They continued to greet her and offer her food and personal hygiene items, but she was very distrustful and did not respond to their efforts at first. One day, an outreach worker tried again to engage her and this time he was able to gain her trust by offering her clothing and a shower voucher. After this initial breakthrough, he continued to reach out to her and eventually convinced her to come to Opportunity Place, run by A-SPAN. She finally agreed and met with a case worker about her housing options. What was different for her this time was that A-SPAN provided her with on-going case management support that included negotiating with prospective landlords. The case management plan that they created with her included budget planning assistance, and help with daily living skills. A relatively short time later this woman moved into her own apartment with supportive case management services from A-SPAN.

~The Outreach Workers were familiar with a young homeless woman of Asian decent because they often saw her on the streets of Arlington. She accepted clothes and food but spoke just enough English to give them an idea of what she wanted. For instance, she would point to a pair of blue jeans to indicate her desire without having to say much. One day she said the word "doctor," and began to make gestures across her arms and legs of itching. As she tried to explain her problem to the outreach worker they were very concerned because her face was distorted in agony. She was highly agitated and seemed to be irritated all over her body. The outreach worker took her to a local hospital, stayed with her and helped the medical team use a translation telephone service so they could better understand the problem. Several hours later she emerged from the examination area with 2 prescriptions and several pieces of paper. The papers stated that the doctors had determined that she had Scabies and described how she should go about treating them. Again, the outreach worker assisted in helping her understand what she needed to do and also got her prescriptions filled so she would have the medicine she so desperately needed. This event was the catalyst that changed the relationship between the outreach workers and this homeless woman. She began to communicate more and more with them and actually comes to Opportunity Place on a regular basis now to receive services. Her demeanor is much more open and trusting. It is not uncommon now to see her smiling and even her English skills are improving.

*A-SPAN is dedicated to helping every homeless individual leave the streets and live a life of dignity.*

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**ESM** Episcopal Senior Ministries ❖ *fostering independence, improving lives*



900 Second Street, NE; Suite 206  
Washington, DC 20002

**Episcopal Senior Ministries** is a nonprofit organization which began in 1924 as a small group home. Over the years their services have grown substantially but their commitment to individualized attention remains the same. The quality of their programs and their strength comes from generous donors and foundations, more than 2,000 committed volunteers of all ages, partnerships with the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, congregations and community groups, the leadership of their Board, and a dedicated and caring staff.

### United Way Working Here

75 year old Mrs. B. lives in a low- to moderate-income residential facility in northwest DC. Building staff originally contacted ESM Cares to ask for help with pre-planning paperwork for Mrs. B's burial. After a few visits, it was evident to the ESM care manager that Mrs. B. was beginning to suffer from dementia, as well as depression. Mrs. B. has no family other than two adult children, both of whom are severely mentally retarded and living in group homes. She had no one to advocate for her, and no one to make sure she was receiving the proper care and attention she needed.

Over time, the ESM care manager has established a trusting relationship with Mrs. B., and maintains contact with her to monitor her health and well being, visiting on a regular basis. She serves as a resource for Mrs. B. for a variety of things, including health care and all of the issues associated with her dementia. She has begun discussions with Mrs. B. about her future living situation and care. Mrs. B. has faith in and depends on her care manager to help her make decisions that serve her best interest, to help her live as safely and independently as possible, and to monitor her condition to ensure she continues to be in the best home environment possible.

**ESM Guiding Principles:** Empower seniors to take care of themselves and others; increase awareness of aging issues and ageism; create opportunities for personal and spiritual growth and volunteer involvement; and recognize the contributions of seniors to church and community.

# FAIRFAX FALLS CHURCH



*Empowering Families to Rebuild Lives*

**370 South Washington Street  
Falls Church, Virginia 22046**



Homestretch was founded in 1990 to empower homeless families with children under age 18 in northern Virginia to return to stable housing and self-sufficiency by giving them the skills, knowledge and hope they need to become productive participants in the community. The idea is to get homeless families off the street and into safe homes as quickly as possible, where they could then receive further help.

## United Way Working Here



Before coming to Homestretch, Lisa\* was homeless due to an addiction to alcohol and drugs. Living in the streets left her feeling miserable and suicidal. When things didn't get better, she turned custody of her son over to a family member and decided to get help for her alcohol and drug problem. She went into a treatment program and an after care program, all the while praying that she and her son would be together again with a roof over their heads. Upon leaving the after care program, the staff there told Lisa about Homestretch - a transitional housing program accepting women and their children. Lisa reunited with her son and they moved into a two-bedroom condo care of Homestretch. She entered the program in July 2004. Her self-esteem was still low; she had bad credit; she was making \$9.00 per hour at her job; and she had few parental skills. Homestretch helped with those things and helped Lisa change her life. They furnished Lisa's entire apartment. She attended life skills training and learned a wide variety of things from parental skills to safety measures – things she never thought about before. At Homestretch, Lisa learned how to "live." She had a lovely Thanksgiving and Christmas without financial stress. It the first time that she could remember seeing her son smile on Christmas. Lisa also received a car to ease her daily commute. She got ongoing encouragement, support and different ideas from the staff. She didn't even have to worry about school registration or supplies because Homestretch provided those items in addition to staff taking time out of their day to tutor her son so that he could go to summer camp. They helped Lisa's son get dental work and eyeglasses and sent him to camp for a week. They also sent him to Pocono Trails. Because they cared about his health and well-being and gave him outlets to be more active, he lost twenty-one pounds. When Lisa first entered the program, she felt alone and scared; by the time she left, she felt joy and confidence.

\*Name changed to protect client's privacy.

**"Every morning when I wake up I think of you all. I wouldn't be the person I am today if it weren't for you. I did not own much or think about much when I entered Homestretch but I left the program with life goals. I left knowing that I could do things to ensure my future." - - Homestretch Client**

## LOUDOUN



2A Loudoun Street, SW  
Suite 215  
Leesburg, VA 20175



**Loudoun Volunteer Caregivers (LVC)**, a Faith in Action program, is a non-profit coalition of more than 200 volunteers from Loudoun County who help frail elderly and disabled adults maintain independent living. LVC provides a wide range of support services including transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, meal preparation, household chores, special outings and help with managing personal financial affairs through the AARP Foundation's Money Management Program.

### United Way Working Here

Mr. T, an elderly dialysis patient, was receiving medical transportation through the Red Cross. He called LVC when he learned that the local Red Cross would no longer be able to provide the service. For his dialysis, Mr. T must go to the dialysis center three times a week for four-hour treatments. Each visit requires the coordination of two volunteers: one to drop him off and one to pick him up. This means that **each week up to six LVC volunteers** provide Mr. T with transportation to his life-sustaining treatments. This is one example of how dedicated the LVC volunteers are to helping frail elderly meet their medical needs. Dialysis treatments are a life and death issue. Volunteers accepting these kinds of assignments do so with the realization that they are committing to long-term transportation services and must make every effort not to miss an assignment.

*In 2007, LVC volunteers served close to 7,800 hours of volunteer time.*

# MONTGOMERY



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Your Leading Mental Health Resource

*TANYA (22) earned her GED and learned parenting skills through a variety of classes. Now she is gainfully employed and able to support her two young children financially and emotionally.*



1000 Twinbrook Parkway  
Rockville, MD 20851

*Since JOHNNIE (10) has started spending time with his mentor, his self-esteem has greatly improved. Now he dreams of becoming a teacher.*



MHA has served Montgomery County residents for over 50 years. MHA currently manages 11 major direct service programs for children, teens, families, senior adults and individuals with long-term mental illness. Over 1,000 volunteers implement programs under the direction of MHA's professional staff. MHA offers affordable, valuable and timely seminars on a variety of topics to many segments of the community. In addition to education, advocacy on the local, state and national levels are also of import.

## United Way Working Here

Jill\* has been with the MOMS Program, run by MHA, since October of 2000. She lost her mentor to breast cancer but continues to attend the monthly meetings and MOMS events on a regular basis. She often calls MOMS staff to discuss challenges and triumphs in her life. She has raised two sons and staff have observed her wonderful skills as a mother. Her eldest son is in the gifted and talented program at his elementary school. She and her husband had been apartment hunting this past year and finally were able to secure an apartment for their family. Jill has a full-time job as a receptionist in a doctor's office and a part-time job on Saturdays in an optician's office. Throughout her tenure with the program she has been attending GED classes on and off. This past January – she passed the exam! Staff presented her with a congratulatory card and a \$50 gift card to Macy's to reward her achievement. Jill was also a featured speaker at the "Celebration of Reading" Gala benefiting the Maryland Initiative of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. She is now looking into college. She has been an incredible role model for the other participants in the program

*\*Name changed to protect client's privacy.*

Mental Health Association of Montgomery County (MHA) promotes mental wellness and supports those with mental illness by sponsoring and implementing advocacy, education and community service programs.

# PRINCE GEORGE'S



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The Arc provides support through a variety of programs and services that match each person or family's individual needs, we ensure that people with developmental disabilities are given the skills, access, and information they need to fully participate as citizens in their communities.

## United Way Working Here



~One of the children enrolled has Down Syndrome, a cardiac condition, and low muscle tone. He uses a wheelchair and, prior to enrollment, did not have much success communicating verbally, holding his head up, or using his hands in a purposeful manner. Since June, the child has increased skills in all of these areas. He is holding his head up much of the time, engaging with other children (tracking activity with his eyes and smiling), bringing his hands to midline, and making pre-word utterances. His ESY teachers are impressed with his progress as is his mother.

~Another child enrolled in the center is being highlighted in our newsletter this month for the progress he is making in the center. Once very shy and easily frustrated, the child now participates in activities with the other children in the center, accepts and works with different textures and materials, and has begun to use sign language for expressive communication to indicate "done" and communicate that he wants (such as "more food"). The parents of the child are amazed with his progress and optimistic that their son will continue to flourish under our care.

THE ARC OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
1401 MCCORMICK DR.  
LARGO, MD 20774  
PHONE: (301) 925-7050  
FAX: (301) 925-4387

The Arc offers a lifetime of support, understanding, and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

# PRINCE WILLIAM



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9384C Forestwood Lane  
Manassas, VA 20110

## CASA of Greater Prince William, Virginia

CASA is a non-profit organization serving abused, neglected and abandoned children through specially trained community volunteers. The CASA program was begun in 1977 by a judge in Seattle Washington who felt that members of the community could help to keep abused children safe and help insure that they not fall through the cracks of the system and receive all the assistance they need to have a safe, nurturing and permanent home.

### United Way Working Here

John\* came into foster care at 16 years old with his two younger brothers, ages 4 and 7. These three boys had suffered years of physical neglect because of their mother's chronic drug abuse. Luckily the children were able to be placed with an Aunt rather than with a stranger. When John entered foster care he had been expelled by the Prince William County Schools for chronic behavioral problems, including violence. His advocate, Nancy McDonald, was determined that John not just sit at home and do nothing. She contacted the local School System and asked what alternatives existed for a 16 year old who had been expelled. She was informed of a 5 month Military Boot Camp program that would also allow John to receive his GED and be eligible to enter the military or attend college. It also provides after care in the form of mentoring to graduates.

Nancy immediately contacted the program and received all information regarding admission. She contacted the social worker and advocated for this program. She sat down with John and his Aunt and discussed the program. John was at first unwilling to consider the program. However, Nancy arranged a phone conversation with a representative from the program. John was able to have all of his questions answered and was willing to attend the program.

Nancy was able to communicate to the Social Worker that this was a program that would meet John's needs and ultimately his best interests. John was enrolled in the program and successfully graduated with his GED. John has returned to the local area and is now living with his grandmother, working full time and planning on attending college or entering the military. Without Nancy, this program would not have been an option for John. John would be still be expelled from school and his future would have been uncertain and at risk. John is now motivated to become an independent and productive adult who is working to overcome the damage done by the years of neglect he suffered.

\*Name changed to protect client's privacy.

**GPW CASA serves nearly 300 abused, neglected and abandoned children each year. Since its inception, CASA has served over 1,600 children.**