

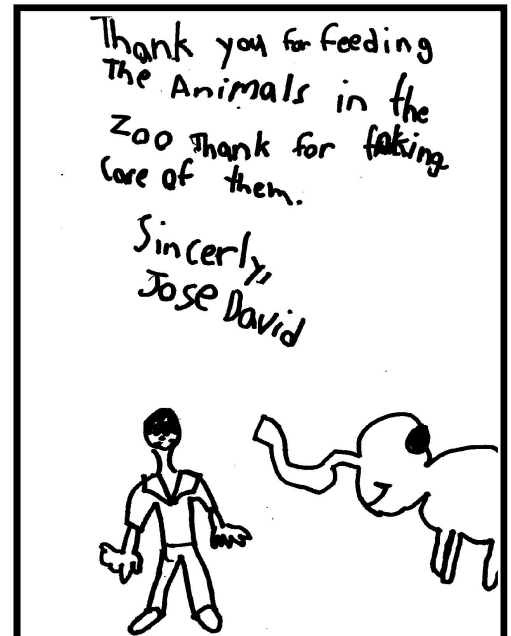


COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A Monthly Update from Community Lodgings: July 2009

SUMMERTIME AT FAMILY LEARNING CENTER MEANS FUN AND EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS FOR KIDS

In July, our Family Learning Center staff kicked off their summer program for elementary, middle and high schoolers. *Community Kids Care* was tailored to reflect the values of President Obama's *United We Serve* initiative. The program emphasizes the importance of our children's relationships with their families, communities and the environment - and the responsibility they have in each of those relationships. All summer activities were developed around the theme *Community Kids Care* and sensitive to the world around them. See next page for details.



This summer, Family Learning Center staff have taken our kids on educational field trips to various locations. Above, elementary school children in our program visit the Washington Animal Rescue League; after a visit to the National Zoo, kids made thank you cards for the Zoo staff.

STRENGTHENING OUR FAMILIES THROUGH SUPPORT GROUPS

"I think it's important to be involved within the community and encourage people to build each other up...I can learn as much from them as they can learn from me."

-William Smith, Volunteer and Republican Counsel for Senate Judiciary Committee

In July, our Transitional Housing staff started a biweekly support group for homeless men in our program. Whether single or in a relationship, all men in our program are fathers. The support group meetings will help them address challenges they are facing, with a focus on parenthood as well as healthy relationships, jobs and responsible budgeting. At the first meeting, our volunteer leader William Smith said he was encouraged by the attitudes of all men in attendance.

PROFILES IN SUCCESS: BERNARD

A father of two and dedicated family man, Bernard L. works tirelessly as a custodian in DC Public Schools to take care of his family. He also puts maximum effort into working with our caseworkers to make sure he utilizes all available resources to reach self-sufficiency through our program. That is why we helped Bernard enroll in a security officer training course with the Alliance Criminal Justice Academy this past spring; he passed the course with flying colors. In July, he completed a private investigator course and earned a license from the Department of Criminal Justice Services to practice in the state of Virginia. Way to go, Bernard!

Want to participate in the 2009 Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Walkathon? From corporate partnerships to school/church Miniwalks, there are many ways to get involved this year! Please feel free to contact Jim Dempsey at 703.549.4407 for more information about various Walkathon opportunities.



"It is a critical time for our families and our organization. When parents living in our Transitional Housing lose their jobs and our organization loses crucial funding due to the economic climate, it puts tremendous pressure on everyone. Our staff knows that regardless of diminished resources, we must continue to provide for the homeless in our program. This is a challenge we will meet head on."—Bonnie Baxley, Executive Director

THE ROAD TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

A 37 year-old single mother of 7 enrolled in our Transitional Housing Program graduated from a 15-month Family Drug Court Program during the last week of July. Her successful rehabilitation through the Drug Court program—and her continued success with Community Lodgings—allows her to retain custody of her 3 youngest daughters. Throughout her time with us, she has worked full-time at a local retail store and put effort into overcoming her problems. Our caseworkers Mark and Charlyne were in attendance at the graduation ceremony, along with her family.

KNOCKIN' AROUND THE ZOO

The kids at the Family Learning Center spent the week of July 20th focused on learning about and caring for animals. One day we took our elementary school kids to the National Zoo, where they were treated to a free lunch and a day of learning. In the same week, our staff took the kids to the Washington Animal Rescue League where they learned to read an X-Ray, properly care for animals and watched a cat receive surgery. To say thank you to WARL, our children drew cards for their staff and made treats for dogs in their shelter.