



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

An Update from Community Lodgings: March, April & early May 2011

## COMMUNITY LODGINGS BENEFIT RAISES \$33,000 FOR VULNERABLE FAMILIES, HONORS VOLUNTEERS

Nearly 180 guests turned out March 27 for the 6th annual "Spring Forward to Union Street," a fundraiser to benefit Community Lodgings and honor the service of long-time board members Doug Henry and Ed Harris. The event included dinner, live and silent auctions, entertainment, and an award ceremony.

For the second consecutive year, Union Street Public House donated the venue and food for the event, which raised more than \$33,000 for programs that serve homeless and low-income families. Sponsors for the evening were Nixon Peabody, Maggie and Rob Johnston, McMurray Dispute Resolution, Harried Hairshirt Harriers, Donna Cramer of McEneaney Associates, Mortimer and Associates, Systems Engineering Group, Speck-Caudron Investment Group, and BB&T.

## THREE FAMILIES COMPLETE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM AND MOVE ON TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

In March and April, we had three families complete their stay in our Transitional Housing Program: one single father and two single mothers. Over the course of two years, single father T.S. increased his monthly earnings by over \$2000. With the help of a case manager, budget mentor and child services coordinator, T.S. improved his parenting skills and learned to manage money responsibly to provide for two daughters.

We also worked closely with two mothers to prepare them for independent lives. D.H. praised our program for helping learn to manage and save money, and providing a safe place to live for her daughter. M.R. echoed this in stating that Community Lodgings helped her when she needed it most; she was pregnant and had no secure place for her children to sleep!



ON MAY 3 AND 5, VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS RASHMI PAPPU & MALINA STANCZAK TOOK FAMILY PORTRAITS FOR OUR FAMILIES. READ MORE ABOUT THIS ON PAGE TWO!

## TWO LEARNING CENTER ALUMNI GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL, PLAN TO ATTEND COLLEGE

This spring, two of our Family Learning Center afterschool program alumni will graduate from TC Williams High School. We are proud to say that both students plan to attend college in the fall! The boys, David and Javier, have attended our afterschool program since grade school. David, who has always been a model participant in our afterschool program, plans to attend NOVA Community College in the fall. We couldn't be more excited for him.

Javier, the other graduate, has matured exponentially over the years. As a child, he had significant struggles. But in the past few years, he redirected his priorities, taking advantage of our afterschool program and all that our staff has offered him. For example, Ms. Yasmin worked closely with him, referring Javier to TC William High School's rugby coach and signing him up for YMCA swim lessons. Through hard work and dedication, Javier is now on TC's rugby and swim teams. This summer, he plans to work as a lifeguard at the YMCA, play rugby and spend time with his girlfriend, before attending college in the fall!

**NEW NONPROFIT TO SELL DELICIOUS TEA, GIVE PROCEEDS TO COMMUNITY LODGINGS**



CommuniTea Calling is a new nonprofit selling private label teas in the City of Alexandria and South Arlington for the benefit of Arlandria's Community Lodgings. Now, you can answer the call and support your community by purchasing teas from CommuniTea Calling and the majority of proceeds benefit the homeless, the hungry and the marginalized members of our local communities. For more information, contact Mary Hellem at 703-851-1992 or by email at [TEA@CommuniTeaCalling.org](mailto:TEA@CommuniTeaCalling.org).

**SPRING2ACTION NETS \$4,000 FOR PROGRAMS**

Thanks to a Alexandria Community Trust's new initiative Spring2Action, we were able to collect \$4,000 during the first full weekend of May with the help of community supporters and the Mason Hirst Foundation Fund, who matched donations. Spring2Action is an innovative online community-wide fundraising event, which was designed to inspire unprecedented levels of charitable giving in our City—and it did! Through Saturday, May 7, we asked Alexandrians to display their generosity during the first Spring2Action. Thanks, ACT!!

**PHOTOGRAPHERS DONATE FAMILY PORTRAITS FOR ALL FAMILIES IN TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM**



On May 3rd and May 5th, photographers Rashmi Pappu and Malina Stanczak took time to shoot family portraits for all formerly homeless families in our Transitional Housing Program. Even for higher-income households, it is hard to find the time and money to arrange professional family portraits. That is why the efforts put forth by Rashmi and Malina are even more exceptional. We appreciate all your help, ladies!



**PLEASE JOIN US FOR A VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION HAPPY HOUR!!!!**

On Tuesday June 7th, Community Lodgings invites you to Crystal City's Jaleo for a Volunteer Appreciation event. Jaleo, owned by award-winning chef Jose Andres, will allow us to use a banquet room and has agreed to donate food for the event! There will also be happy hour specials on all drinks but don't worry, the first one's on us. See you there!

**CLAREMONT ELEMENTARY'S CHARITY CONCERT FOR COMMUNITY LODGINGS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 20**

On Friday May 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm, Claremont Elementary School's Service Club will host their annual concert for charity at Arlington's Gunston Middle School. We are their selected local charity for 2011. The school chorus and music groups will perform a concert. This year, George Mason Elementary School, a school that most of our Family Learning Center children attend, will bring their chorus along to sing during the concert as well. Money will be raised for charity through a small admission fee and a bake sale.