

### BASILICA PLACE PENNY DRIVE PROVES THE POWER OF CENTS

*Residents of Baltimore City senior housing facility and M&T Bank raise over \$1,300 for the Fuel Fund, one cent at a time*

Last Spring, the seniors at Catholic Charities' Basilica Place residence, hearing of a BGE program called Penny Round-up, began their own penny drive for the Fuel Fund of Maryland. Slowly, residents began to fill one jug after another with coins. One gentleman scoured the streets from his wheelchair to pick up pennies as he went about his daily business.

As the jugs became increasingly heavy with contributions, it was clear that a large coin counting machine would be required to accommodate the volume of coins accumulated by the end of the drive. M&T Bank, touched by the altruism of the Basilica Place residents, arranged a press conference at its branch in Catonsville on December 18<sup>th</sup>, at which the final tally of pennies collected would be revealed.

Several residents involved in the penny collection joined the Fuel Fund and M&T for the counting. The octogenarians and nonagenarians told of their desire to give back to the community in appreciation for what they had at Basilica Place. Some were grateful that they had never needed the Fuel Fund. Others had been beneficiaries, and this effort was a small token of gratitude for the help they had received.

Donnet Lawrence, Basilica Place Resident



*Craig Eichler, M&T Bank Retail Regional Manager, Fuel Fund Executive Director Mary Ellen Vanni, Basilica Place residents Elmer Rudis, Alice Dates, Herbert Johnson and Jimmy Day, Basilica Place Resident Service Coordinator Donnet Lawrence and Mike Riley, M&T Bank Vice President of Community Relations.*

Service Coordinator, explained that as good community partners, the residents want to help where they can to alleviate suffering. Though aging may come with limitations, gathering pennies was something in which many could, and did, participate.

The coin counting machine, left empty for the day in anticipation of being filled with pennies, began counting. As the coins tumbled in, receipts read \$78.67; \$93.17; \$111.94. Finally, the grand total of \$342 was revealed - a contribution of 34,200 pennies!

In appreciation and recognition of the work of our friends at Basilica Place, M&T Bank presented the Fuel Fund with a check for \$1,000.

### FUEL FUND INVESTIGATES NEW METHOD FOR DONORS TO MAKE RECURRING GIFTS

The Fuel Fund is investigating the option for donors to make recurring donations through EFT (electronic funds transfer). Donors would simply need to provide account and bank information and the donation amount, and the Fuel Fund would automatically deduct that amount according to the schedule specified by the donor. Because of costs associated with this process, the option will be available only after a number of donors have expressed interest in enrolling.

The process is safe and secure, and saves money and resources by conserving paper, postage and other costs associated with mailings. Many already use this method to pay household bills, or to have paychecks direct deposited from an employer - making charitable donations is just another use of this method. This is merely one initiative that would contribute to the Fuel Fund's ability to keep operating costs low - maximizing the amount of resources available to assist clients.

For additional information about recurring donations using EFT, please contact Patryc Barnes at 410-821-3022, x4 or pbarnes@fuelfundmaryland.org.

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## LIGHT STROKES

### From the President



Thank you for your generous support over the past few months. Naturally, the donation amounts have decreased as a result of the current economic climate. Yet, some individuals have been able to increase the amount of their gifts despite the difficult times.

Twenty-eight years ago, the Fuel Fund was incorporated to supplement the resources of those experiencing difficulty with home energy bills. The impetus behind this mission was the oil embargo at the time, which made energy prices spike.

Once again, energy price hikes have caused essential home energy to be unaffordable for more than 300,000 families in Maryland. Still, after all these years, the Fuel Fund is committed to its original mission.

Ironically, such tenuous times make all of us want to be prepared for any possibility that the future may bring. In good times, we often forget to prepare for the worst. Even corporations not currently affected drastically by the economic situation are carefully weighing "needs" against "nice things to have."

So, too, is the Fuel Fund preparing for the future - estimating the number of families in need; calculating the amount of financial aid they will require; and evaluating the best practices for a cost-effective service delivery system.

With your continued support, we will be ready.

Sincerely,

Richard B. Phelps III  
President

## RAYS OF HOPE

### Watt Watchers of Maryland™ graduate saves hundreds on utility bills

Danielle Scott attended Watt Watchers of Maryland™ classes at Caroline Center in Baltimore City in November 2008 in an effort to learn easy, manageable ways to reduce her utility bills. After attending the five-session energy conservation and financial education classes, sponsored by Citi and taught by the Fuel Fund, and implementing some of the simple energy saving tactics at home, she has already realized a savings of several hundred dollars on her utility bill.

Some of the ways in which Ms. Scott has been able to conserve energy in her family's townhouse include doing laundry in the evenings (when rates are lower), and having family members "decide what to eat before going in the fridge," Ms. Scott explains, so as not to stand with the door open for long periods of time. She has involved all of her family members in the energy saving efforts, and the savings on her bill have been a big help. She and her family now unplug appliances when not in use - even when turned off, appliances still use small amounts of energy if they remain plugged in. Replacing old light bulbs with energy efficient CFL bulbs was another tip that Ms. Scott learned in Watt Watchers of Maryland™ classes. These bulbs use 75% less energy and last 10 times longer than their old-fashioned counterparts.

Many energy saving tips require little or no cost to implement in one's home - and as Ms. Scott and her family illustrate, the payoff for a small amount of effort can be significant.

### SPRING INTO ENERGY CONSERVATION!

- Install a programmable thermostat so the temperature will automatically turn down heating or cooling systems at night or when no one is home.
- In warm weather, close shades during the day; open windows opposite one another at night for cross-ventilation. Use ceiling fans.
- Set the thermostat at 78° or higher when using AC. Each degree you raise the thermostat saves 3-5% on your bill.
- Check furnace and air filters monthly or as recommended by the manufacturer. Clean or replace as needed.
- Buy an ENERGY STAR® air conditioner - they use about 10% less energy than other models.
- Install a water saving showerhead - they use one-third to one-half the amount of water as a traditional showerhead.
- Wash laundry in cold water unless heavily soiled. Dry clothes outside in warm weather.
- Turn water heater thermostat down to 120° unless you have a dishwasher without a booster heater.

For more energy saving tips and resources, visit [www.fuefundmaryland.org/watt-watchers.shtml](http://www.fuefundmaryland.org/watt-watchers.shtml)

## ENVELOPE CAMPAIGN RAISES MORE THAN \$245K

More than 5,600 donors have contributed \$246,548.38 through the Fuel Fund and BGE's 2008 Winter Envelope Campaign to date.

Thank you for your generosity!

## HOW TO DONATE

- Mail your donation to:  
Fuel Fund of Maryland  
P.O. Box 62266  
Baltimore, MD 21264-2266
- Call 410-821-3022, ext. 4
- Visit [www.fuefundmaryland.org](http://www.fuefundmaryland.org) to make an online donation
- Remember the Fuel Fund in your will
- Contribute through workplace giving opportunities
- Combined Federal Campaign Number - 99844



## SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

### MARY JO GREEN

Mary Jo has become an invaluable asset to the Fuel Fund, tackling a variety of administrative tasks efficiently and effectively when volunteering in our central office. She helps with maintenance of our fundraising database, and with acknowledgement of donors. Mary Jo also assists in office organization. She has been volunteering regularly since November 2008.



### HERB CLARK

Herb has been a volunteer at Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation (GEDCO), a Fuel Fund agency, for the past 11 years, and has recently added Watt Watchers of Maryland™ educator to his Fuel Fund résumé. Herb has also been participating in the annual *Fuel Fund Fairways* golf tournament since 2003! Fuel Fund clients are lucky to have such a dedicated volunteer to assist them.

### KELLY R.

Kelly is a new volunteer with the Fuel Fund, assisting over the past two months with various administrative tasks. Kelly is involved in the donor acknowledgement process, as well as with other organizational tasks. She is also interested in becoming involved in the Watt Watchers of Maryland™ program in the future.

### BYKOTA

Thank you to our friends at Bykota Senior Center in Towson for their countless hours of assistance with stuffing, sealing, and stamping envelopes!

### TO VOLUNTEER

If you are interested in volunteering with the Fuel Fund, please contact Danielle Phelps at 410-821-3022, ext. 106. Opportunities include office support, event support, school liaison & Watt Watchers of Maryland™ educator. All volunteers will receive training & support.

## FUEL FUND NEWS

### *St. Rose of Lima Raises \$4,471 for the Fuel Fund of Maryland*

St. Rose of Lima parish in Brooklyn, MD recently raised over \$4,000 through their first annual Christmas Fuel Fund Drive. Instead of the usual Advent Angel Tree for families needing help with holiday gifts, the tree was covered in Fuel Fund envelopes along with the quote "Awaiting the Coming of the Light."

Parishioners were happy to donate after learning that Fuel Fund contributions are worth three times the initial gift, leveraged by BGE's matching credits and client contributions. The money collected by the Roman Catholic parish of 264 families was directed to aid those in their 21225 zip code. Knowing that many families in their area would be struggling to pay utility bills motivated the church community to come together to raise money.

Administrative assistant Jennifer Gross said "promotional information left [in the church gathering space] was quickly depleted as parishioners used the booklets and guides to rethink energy conservation in their own homes and to learn more about the Fuel Fund's focus."

The Fuel Fund would like to extend our sincere gratitude to St. Rose of Lima and its generous parishioners. Other faith-based organizations interested in similar fundraising initiatives may contact Mary Kaye DiUbaldo at 410-821-3022 x2.

## CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

### February 27, 2009 - *Lights Out at Maryvale*

Maryvale Preparatory School hosted its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual student-run *Lights Out* event. Despite a rampant flu bug, more than 45 students spent the night without electricity to bring awareness about the Fuel Fund and the challenges clients face as a result of struggling to pay utility bills. Students spent the evening making fleece blankets for those in need and teaching their peers about the Fuel Fund's work and the reality of life for many of its clients.

Thank you to the following organizations who generously helped to support this event: Applebee's, Baltimore Coffee & Tea, Boardwalk Fries, Carroll Independent Fuel Co., Costco, GT Pizza, Giant Food (Hunt Valley and Towson locations), Mars Super Markets, Noodles and Company, Panera Bread, Pizza Hut, Starbucks and TCBY.



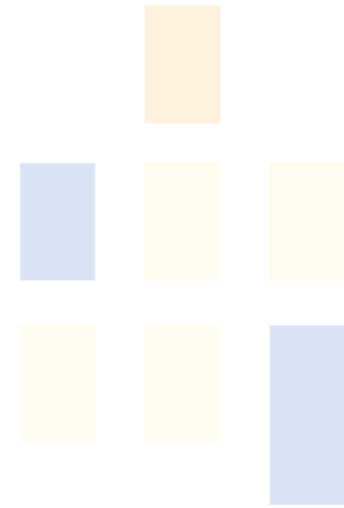
*Maryvale students were able to sew 10 fleece blankets for needy families despite spending the night without electricity in a cold gymnasium.*



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Spring 2009 Newsletter



Watt Watchers of Maryland™ educators Herb Clark and Mary D'Ambrogi (right) gather with some of the 10 graduates of the program at Caroline Center in Baltimore City. The latest session concluded on February 19<sup>th</sup>.

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*The Fuel Fund of Maryland provides resources to vulnerable Maryland families for heat and home utility needs.*