



HAVE HEART. GIVE HEAT.

BRIGHT LIGHTS | FALL 2012 NEWSLETTER

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THE WINTER MIND

FUEL FUND ASSISTANCE AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

The physical sensations of the bitter cold are familiar to us. We know well from experience what it feels like to have the harsh, wintry wind pierce our skin and chill our bones. We recall those times that our toes went numb in seemingly arctic conditions. Similarly, we have all experienced the long darkness of a bleak winter night.

Fortunately, a simple adjustment of the thermostat brings warm relief, and a flip of the switch fills the room with light.

For those living without electricity or enduring a winter with an empty fuel tank, the physical sensations of winter's bracing cold are not so easily banished. The cold follows them indoors and the streetlight's glow through the windows provides the only light.

Perhaps even more distressing, and even more difficult for many to grasp are the complex emotional sensations that accompany raising a family in a cold, dark home:

The profound stress that comes with the inability to cook a warm meal...

The helplessness that derives from helping a child complete their homework by candlelight...

The fear that arises when putting a newborn to sleep in a freezing bedroom...

As we contemplate this winter what the Fuel Fund means to those who receive assistance, consider not just the bodily sensations that accompany cold temperatures. The Fuel Fund asks that you also take a moment to contemplate the anxiety, disquiet, and psychological strain experienced by our neighbors in crisis, living in cold, dark homes as winter arrives.

Yes, the Fuel Fund means warmth and light. It also means the peace of mind necessary to live a healthy and fruitful life.



NEWBORN BABIES IN A COLD HOME

Due to the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants should be lightly clothed for sleep, and the bedroom should be kept comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.

Over-bundling and multiple blankets increase the risk for SIDS, as does having the baby sleep in bed with adults. Parents with no heat in their home face a serious dilemma in caring for their most vulnerable and precious family member.

For more information, visit aap.org.



LIGHT STROKES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Fuel Fund's mission is to provide resources to vulnerable Maryland families for heat and home utility needs. This is what the Fuel Fund does.

What if we consider what the Fuel Fund is.....?

For a new mom, the Fuel Fund is putting her newborn to sleep in a warm and healthy home.

For a disabled veteran and his family, the Fuel Fund is healing in a comfortable home and out of harm's way.

For a child, the Fuel Fund is completed homework, a warm bath, and a sound sleep.

For a family, the Fuel Fund is being together around the table and sharing a hot, home-cooked meal.

For me, the Fuel Fund is YOU, our supporters, who have enabled us to continue the work begun by Mrs. Victorine Q. Adams 35 years ago.

As a member of the Fuel Fund family, you are a member of the families described above. Your support provided the energy needed for the warm bath, hot meal, and lights.

So, what is the Fuel Fund for you?

There are many important causes in our community. As you consider your contributions during this season of giving, I hope that the Fuel Fund will be a clear, sound choice for helping our neighbors in need live in warmth and light this winter.

Thank you for enabling the Fuel Fund to be so much for so many!

Mary Ellen Vanni



OFFERING HOPE. DELIVERING RESULTS.

FUEL FUND COMPLETES A SUCCESSFUL FISCAL YEAR 2012

The Board and staff of the Fuel Fund are proud to continue to deliver solid results year after year. The families we serve count on us to help them through a crisis, and our donors expect the sound stewardship of resources. As in previous years, the organization delivered on both counts again in Fiscal Year 2012.

During the twelve months beginning July 1, 2011, the Fuel Fund assisted 7,333 families with utility and other fuel bills amounting to \$6,990,879.18. Of that total, bill credits made up \$2,330,293 and the Fuel Fund provided \$1,010,498 in cash. The remainder was paid by beneficiaries.

These numbers represent a 16% increase in the number of utility customers assisted; a 23% increase in utility bill credits and a 2% increase in cash paid by the Fuel Fund over the Fiscal Year 2011.

Distressingly, the Fuel Fund continues to see an increase in the number of seniors requesting and receiving energy assistance. In Fiscal Year 2012,

we provided assistance to 1,534 seniors- a 5% increase over the previous year. This is a multi-year trend that reflects both an increase in the senior population and a decrease in available resources.

In Fiscal Year 2012, the 1,000th participant completed our Watt Watchers course. This education initiative of the Fuel Fund continues to expand by leaps and bounds.

It is your generous support that allows us to continue to meet increasing need. As a supporter you should be confident that your donations are put to use where needed most, and ninety-one cents of every dollar goes directly toward helping neighbors in crisis.



A VARIETY OF WAYS TO HELP

FUEL FUND MAKES IT EASY TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Whether you prefer to donate online, over the phone, by mail. or even in person, the Fuel Fund is grateful for your support. There are a variety of easy ways to contribute. Remember, every \$1 you contribute results in \$3 of bill payments for households in crisis.

- Donate safely and securely through www.fuefundmaryland.org.
- Mail your contribution to: Fuel Fund of Maryland, P.O. Box 62266, Baltimore, MD 21264-2266.
- Contribute through workplace giving opportunities.
- Sign up for the Dollar Donation Fund at www.bge.com/dollardonation. A contribution to the Fuel Fund will be added to your monthly utility bill.
- Give through the donation envelope in your BGE Bill.
- Remember the Fuel Fund in your will. Call Bill Freeman for more information at 410-235-9080 x2.

DO YOU DESIGNATE? PLEASE DESIGNATE THE FUEL FUND:



CFC #99844; MCC #7695; CCC #7695; UNITED WAY #99844



ASSISTANCE...AFFORDABILITY...ACCOUNTABILITY

ENERGY POVERTY REQUIRES ROBUST TOOLBOX

Assistance is vital, but financial support alone cannot solve the problem. Affordability and personal accountability must be part of the equation.

Assistance: The Fuel Fund continues to provide the vital assistance that is necessary to get Marylanders through crises. Crises are inevitable, but can be made less frequent and severe when we address...affordability.

Affordability: For a variety of reasons— deregulation, international conflict, stagnant and declining wages, fixed incomes, medical catastrophes and unpredictable emergencies, simple supply & demand—home energy can simply be out of reach for many Marylanders. The Fuel Fund of Maryland advocates for affordable home energy, and we do so in a way that embraces...accountability.

Accountability: While home energy costs must be affordable, individuals and households must make every effort to do their part. The Fuel Fund of Maryland's Watt Watchers program works with households to lower their bills and better manage their finances.



Fuel Fund of Maryland has developed a curriculum to teach individuals and families how to save money on their utility bills. We focus on the three main cost items, cooling, water and heat. Now that winter nears, here is a Top 10 list to help you keep your bills low while keeping warm!

- 1) Take shorter showers (in spite of how good they feel on cold winter mornings). And showers are cheaper than baths (again in spite of how good baths feel).
 - 2) Have you cleaned your furnace filter lately? If not, do it now!
 - 3) What temperature is your water heater set for? Anything over 120° is hotter than you need. And for those with young children, scalding can more easily occur.
 - 4) Where do you set your thermostat for when you are home during the day or night? This is winter after all, so wearing more clothing should be considered as a cost-savings measure, not to mention a fashion statement.
 - 5) And that night time thermostat setting when you are sound asleep in a nest of blankets? A couple of degrees lower than the daytime temperature will still get you a great night's sleep.
 - 6) Is your weather-stripping around doors and windows intact? If you can feel the air coming through, they are not.
 - 7) Why not also put plastic on your windows to further insulate? There are simple and inexpensive products you can get at your local hardware store.
 - 8) Speaking of insulating, if you have electrical outlets on outside-facing walls put your hand near them. If you feel cool air coming in, there are inexpensive "draft stoppers" made to fit behind your outlet covers.
 - 9) Let the sunshine in! Keep the blinds open when the sun is out and close the drapes as it gets dark. The former helps heat the air inside. The latter helps stop the heat from escaping.
 - 10) Cuddle!
- Every little measure you take to conserve energy results in savings. Before you know it, you could be saving 10% on your bill!
- For more info, visit wattwatchersmaryland.org

FUEL FUND NEWS

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Fuel Fund is thrilled to welcome three wise and energetic community members to the Board of Directors.

Mike Schmeckpeper is a Vice President on SunTrust Bank's Private Wealth Management team located in Baltimore, making commercial and consumer loans to high net worth individuals and families. Mike has worked with SunTrust since his graduation from the University of Maryland, College Park. He grew up in Columbia, MD and still lives there with his wife, Anna, daughter Emily, and son Michael Jr.

Lindsay S. McCrory, Esq. is an associate with the corporate group at Venable LLP. Lindsay is a graduate of Princeton University and NYU Law School. Venable has long been a key supporter of the Fuel Fund and we are excited to have a new representative from the firm on the Board of Directors.

David Carrera is Associate Vice President at the Fund for Johns Hopkins Medicine. Dave is a Loyola Blakefield and Loyola College graduate living in Roland Park with his family. He brings a wealth of fundraising knowledge to the Fuel Fund.

SAVINGS, TRANSLATED

Maria Pulido has joined the Fuel Fund as Watt Watchers Coordinator. Maria is a native of Bogota, Colombia and is currently focused on translating the Watt Watchers curriculum and related materials into Spanish.

FUEL FUND FLASHBACK

1983 Metro Classic

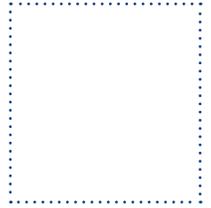
The first Metro Classic basketball event benefitting the Fuel Fund was held March 10, 1983 at the Baltimore Civic Center. In the boys' competition, Dunbar defeated Cardinal Gibbons 82-53, with Reggie Williams leading the way for Dunbar. In the girls' game, Walbrook defeated Archbishop Keough 63-53 in a hard-fought contest. Most importantly, 8,000 enthusiastic fans packed the Civic Center to raise more than \$25,000 for the Fuel Fund. Although the Metro Classic ended in the mid-1990's, the memory of these thrilling sporting events lives on!



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FUEL FUND OF MARYLAND FALL 2012 NEWSLETTER

Fuel Fund of Maryland provides resources to vulnerable Maryland families for heat and home utility needs. Our donors, board and staff support and advocate collaborative funding and services that ensure affordable energy to families that must overcome hardship caused by poverty and assist these families to meet their human needs.

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- James Smith, *Vice President*
- Joni Daniels, *Secretary*
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WWW.FUELFUNDMARYLAND.ORG