



# Three Oaks Center

Residential Housing and Supportive Services to the Homeless

"Since 1994"

# The Oakleaf



Volume I, Issue IV

Fall 2005

## Three Oaks Center Children's Christmas Party



*Each year the Three Oaks Center hosts a holiday party for the children in our program. If you would like to make a donation to this great event please call the center.*

*Your donation will help make a child's Christmas special.*

## Alexander Homes Provides Ramp

By: Lanny Lancaster, Executive Director

Patricia, who is in our permanent housing program for persons with disabilities, has been with us for almost two years now. She has been a model participant. Sadly, Patricia isn't the only person in the family with a handicapping condition. Her daughter, Danielle 16, has spina bifida and is wheelchair bound. Spina bifida is the congenital defect in which part of the meninges protrudes through the spinal column. Danielle is a lovely girl with a great big smile. She is currently a student at Great Mills High.

Brian Mahoney, the owner of Alexander Homes read in our last newsletter about our need to build a ramp for Danielle to make

access in and out of her home easier. Brian told us this was something he wanted to do and that he could have it completed in just a few days. He contracted with Rob Seltzer of RNS WOODWORKS, Inc. and sure enough, in less than a week, there was a beautiful new wheelchair ramp carefully installed at Patricia and Danielle's home in California.

We are enormously grateful to Mr. Mahoney for his generosity and to Mr. Seltzer for his talented work. We are grateful, and Patricia and Danielle are grateful, to both of these men for their obvious compassion for their brothers and sisters, especially those

struggling with homelessness.

Patricia is now working to provide an adequate and supportive home for Danielle. We believe Patricia's future will be stable and bright. Danielle is going to have a life full of struggles. Patricia and the Three Oaks Center will be here for her for as long as she needs us. The saving grace for us all is the knowledge that there are so many people like Brian Mahoney and Rob Seltzer in our community to lessen the load.



## "Thus Three Oaks"

By: Rona Harding and Mary Morgan

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In 1992 three sectors of individuals from St. Mary's County had the use of three flattop buildings to run a program to provide housing for homeless men. Soon it became apparent that the buildings were not habitable, so plans were made to tear them down. With the free services of architect Rick Baes from the Church of the Ascension, and with help from the naval base, the building was planned. The more we worked together the more

we understood that we were three groups of people working to make the homeless shelter possible. We were the religious community, both Christian and Jew; the government community and the private sector.

We chose the image of Oaks because in the Book of Genesis, Chapter 18, we are told that it was beside the Oaks of Mamre that Abraham and Sarah entertained angels unaware. It is from their example of hospi-

tality that we are all called to be hospitable to strangers and sojourners in our land.

"You shall be hospitable to the foreigner and the stranger in your midst, for you will never know when you are entertaining angels unaware."




## Volunteers

By: Donnita R. Moore, Volunteer Coordinator

When you go to church, the library, a hospital or school you've benefited from the work of volunteers. Almost all institutions that benefit society today were started by volunteers. Volunteers will work without compensation and when a problem is discovered you can be assured that a volunteer committee will form to handle the task. For example, major problems of the 1980's, in our county, including hunger, homelessness and drug abuse, were addressed by volunteers with program development, food kitchens, emergency shelters and food banks. In 1993 Three Oaks Center organized to address the issue of homelessness in St. Mary's County. Concerned citizens/volunteers recommended to the County Commissioners that there be a joint, private

and government effort to address this issue. The Commissioners agreed.



In 1996, after three years of building community awareness, planning, and grant writing, community leaders and volunteers attended the opening ceremony for the Three Oaks Center. Without those volunteers this goal would not have been achieved. And, guess what — the work and our need for volunteers did not stop there.

Volunteers are in continuous need for the Center and we need **YOU** to sustain services which provide supportive housing and outreach to nearly 400 homeless people, including individuals and families.

Volunteerism is an honored tradition, touted as a celebration of the spirit of community involvement.

A recent survey conducted by the Gallup Organization found that 44% of Americans are volunteering. Research suggests that an estimated 83.9 million Americans volunteered at a level equivalent to 9 million full-time employees at a value of \$239 billion.

Do you feel passionate about certain social issues such as homelessness or hunger? If you have a desire to work with others and know that you could make a difference by putting your time and energy into the right cause, then The Three Oaks Center may be the right place for you.

We are thankful each day for the blessings our volunteers bring to Three Oaks Center programs. Wouldn't you like to be counted in those numbers.?

**Volunteer House Monitors:** Men who relieve paid staff during the regular eight (8) hour working day on weekends. Your role is to work one 4-hour shift on Saturday and/or Sunday. We're not asking for every weekend or every month for that matter, but if you're willing we will add your name to a list of monitors that can be scheduled when needed.

**Food Support:** Three Oaks now has a comprehensive culinary training program, which helps our residents obtain new job skills. We need uncooked food items, such as meats, vegetables, dairy products, dry foods, etc. for them to prepare. Not only does this defray the cost of feeding our program participants, but gives the students in the food services program the opportunity to use their new food preparation skills and gain experience for future jobs.

**Other Support:** Volunteers offer their talents to the Center in specific and special capacities and serve the residents in other ways such as tutoring, advocacy, transportation and other needs.

As a volunteer Board member and the Center's Volunteer coordinator I am more than willing to meet with you and/or your organization to discuss Three Oaks volunteer needs, expectations and to answer any questions. I can be reached by calling, Donnita Moore, at Three Oaks Center (301-863-9535 x104). In closing, I would like to leave you with an excerpt from a favorite poem.

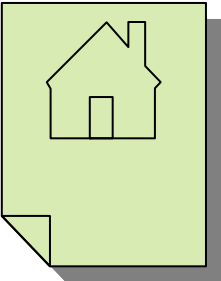
### ***I'll Show You A Volunteer***

*by Foley*

*...Show me a person where a cry for help brings split-second dispatch,  
And, I'll show you a volunteer.  
Show me a person who is devastated when lives are lost or maimed,  
And, I'll show you a volunteer.  
Show me a person who sacrifices home-life, TV... even tender moments,  
And, I'll show you a volunteer.  
Show me a person who may be asked to give more than just dedication,  
And, I'll show you a volunteer.  
Show me a person who is asked to give more... and more... and more,  
And, I'll show you a volunteer...*

***We need YOU...***

**FACILITIES REPORT**



The facilities committee composed of Sue Gelrud, Tom Russell, and Mike McCauley met with the Executive Director and reviewed the

status of the ten townhouses owned by Three Oaks. The committee then toured the units observing them from the outside and inspecting one vacant unit on the inside. Also inspected was the house which contains two rental units that are leased from Ascension Church on Great Mills Road.

The ten units are an important resource for Three Oaks Center. They were purchased with the proceeds of the grant from the Harry

and Jennette Weinberg Foundation and the major capital campaign that was conducted last year. As a result of the success of these efforts, the units are owned free of debt.

The main challenge of owning and operating the units is to manage them effectively as a key financial asset and to manage them compassionately as a landlord whose goal is to help clients transition from lives of confusion and dependence to lives of order and self-sufficiency. It is inevitable that some individuals and families will fail at this transition and this will show up in damage to units, unpaid rent, and more vacancy time than for normal clientele. All of these factors will affect income.

It is important to know that there is a system in place to balance these conflicting goals.

**System Includes:**

General maintenance performed by a contractor.

Exterior yard maintenance is the responsibility of the program participant/tenant.

Center staff meet as often as weekly with tenants to monitor their adjustment to independent living, to advise them, and to take corrective action when necessary.

Property management of the units is performed by the Center's finance office.

The budget for the units includes insurance, maintenance, real estates taxes, utilities, and depreciation.

**Good Grief, I'm Here Again!**

By Dan Capper, President

The Capitol Steps performance in September was spectacular...as usual! To those of you that were in attendance, I'm sure you'll agree that this was maybe the best one yet. And, to those who attended, we say "Thank you for coming"! We hope you enjoyed the show as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you.

Thank you all for your support for the Cole Travel-Three Oaks Center Walk/Run that was held on Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup> at Sotterley Plantation. A very special thank you to all the volunteers who helped make this such a successful event. For those of you who participated in this year's Run/Walk, it should give you a warm feeling of satisfaction be-

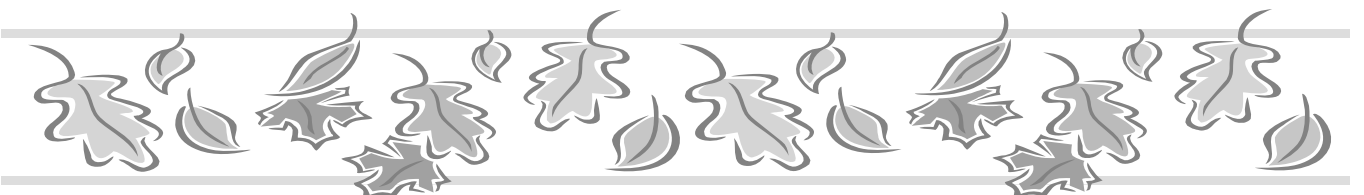
cause you helped us in our battle against domestic violence. Know that it is a war and we still have much to conquer!

The end of November will bring our "Friends" campaign, which is our direct mail appeal for funds. It seems like all we're doing is trying to raise money, but it is a most important necessity for us to do this for the continuation of our programs and service to which the community has become accustomed and has led to our successes! We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the support you've shown in the past and look forward to the future with you by our side!

*Dan*



**In Time for Winter:** Vikki Norris, Betty Beall, Joan MacMillan and Nina Tournay of the Lexington Park United Methodist Church pose with Lanny Lancaster while delivering "Blankets of Love" to be enjoyed by our families at Three Oaks Center.



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## *The Oakleaf*

Fall 2005

## *Three Oaks Center*

*Friends  
Campaign*  
starts soon.  
Please give generously.

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H. S. Lanny Lancaster