

# Housing Matters

From the Executive Director



Photograph by Harry Bosk

As I write this in February 2011, I am excited to tell you that three residents have obtained employment this month. The road to employment has been long and challenging, but their persistence paid off.

Gordon Livingston, M.D. writes in his book *Too Soon Old, Too Late Smart* that *keeping our expectations low protects us from disappointment*. Many of the men here are familiar with incarceration but as Dr. Livingston says the most secure prisons are those we construct ourselves. Fear of failure and fear of the unknown are often common feelings; the men have had many setbacks and disappointments in the past and so low expectations are safe.

However, the men soon find out that we have high expectations for them. We believe that they can achieve whatever they set their minds to and we are willing to help them as much as we can. Jacob is one of the men who obtained employment this month. He shared the following in the weekly house meeting: *"I had a phenomenal week. If it was not for this place I don't know where I would be. This place gave me peace and time to chill. I couldn't do all this if I was not here."*

With your help, we can provide a place not only to provide for basic needs but also to dream and succeed. Thank you for believing in us. Your [financial support](#) equals new opportunities for the men we serve.

## News in Brief

- Each December 21st, Homeless Persons' Memorial Day remembers those who have died in last year with having experienced homelessness. This year we remembered 87 people at the Inner Harbor Amphitheater by lighting candles in donated shoes, and renewed our commitment to make homelessness in a Baltimore a rare and brief occurrence.
- Earl's Place partnered with Stoop Storytelling for their Feb. 7 show "Gimme Shelter: Stories about Finding, Creating, and Losing a Home," and former Earl's Place resident Luke Wesby shared his story as part of the program. Missed the show? Visit [stoopstorytelling.org](http://stoopstorytelling.org) to hear the incredible stories!



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**Sheila Helgerson,**  
Executive Director

**James Carey,**  
Case Manager

**Gary Champ & Mike Rambo,**  
Resident Managers

**Ryan Collins,**  
Outreach Coordinator

United Ministries is a housing and social justice organization dedicated to assisting homeless men who want to change their lives, and to changing community attitudes toward the homeless.

## Earl's Place is Online!

"Like" us on Facebook to see quotes from residents and get all the latest news here at Earl's Place. Go to [www.facebook.com/earlsplace](http://www.facebook.com/earlsplace) to find us!



Want more updates from Earl's Place? We send out a brief e-newsletter every month or so. Visit [earlsplace.org](http://earlsplace.org) and fill out our simple sign-up!

# THE 2011 RESOLUTION RUN



by Ryan Collins

Each year, Earl's Place hosts the Resolution Run, a 5K race held in Patterson Park that serves as a fundraiser for our program. I was able to steal away from my volunteering duties long enough to run the course, and as I jogged along, I overheard a great conversation. One jogger was telling her friend about Earl's Place, explaining about how our program works and how she saw such a need for it. One thing she said stuck in my mind: "Earl's Place really gives the guys a second chance on life."

This may seem like a pretty

run-of-the-mill conversation, but it struck a chord for me. She truly was concerned about the wellbeing of the men we serve, and it moved her enough to share her feelings with another person.

Maybe I'm a little sentimental, but I'm always in awe when I encounter real compassion. It is exciting to know that, yes, the Resolution Run is more than just a race: it's a chance to help people in need.

And indeed, there were a lot of people helping: we had nearly 750 participants this year, over 200 more than last year! We gave out tons of prizes, and more chili and cornbread than I could have fathomed. In all, we raised over \$20,000 — enough to pay for ser-

VICES for three men at Earl's Place!

If you visit the Earl's Place Facebook page, you can find photos from the Resolution Run, a list of our sponsors and soon a video from the race.

We owe an enormous thank-you to all of our participants, sponsors, and volunteers. We hope we'll see you next year!

**"I'm a competitive person. When I'm surrounded by so many people doing positive things with their life, I'm like, 'I'm not gonna be left behind!'"**  
— C.D., current resident

## A Fierce Competitor

Elaine Farrant takes her running seriously. For the last 34 years she has run or jogged four miles every day. "Even if it is raining not too hard, I hit the street, because it becomes an addiction after a while," she says.

Though she isn't a competitive racer, for the last four years she has eagerly participated in the Resolution Run. "It's the only race I run in," Elaine says. "The cause is a good one, and it's always fun. It's great that the men of Earl's Place volunteer to monitor the course and prepare and serve the delicious lunch for all the participants."

There aren't very many women who run in the 70-and-over category at the Resolution Run — only five this year — but as Elaine says, "We recognize each other and the competition is fierce! Actually, the only thing we really hope for is that we'll all be back each year and still running!"

Participating in the Resolution Run isn't the only way that Elaine supports Earl's Place. She has made monetary donations in addition to donations of clothing, both essential ways to help the residents of Earl's Place.

# Board Member Spotlight

## Dr. Ann Cotten

Director, Schaefer Center for Public Policy, University of Baltimore

by Ryan Collins

*Earl's Place is more than just our clients and staff. The Board of Directors volunteers their time, energy, and expertise to ensure we are doing the best we can to serve our clients. The 3-year terms of Dr. Ann Cotten and Rev. Jennifer Knighton will soon come to an end, so we asked them to share their thoughts on their time with Earl's Place.*

## Rev. Jennifer Knighton

Pastor, Grace United Church of Christ

Before she came to Baltimore, Rev. Jennifer Knighton served a large congregation in Lancaster. She moved to Grace United Church of Christ to connect with a smaller, more intimate congregation. "I wanted to roll up my sleeves and get my hands dirty," she told me.

Clearly, it's an attitude that carries throughout her life, because she has accomplished a lot while on the Board. She currently heads the Outreach and Communications Committee, and is putting together a DVD about Earl's Place. The video will feature clients and staff sharing their insights and recollections about Earl's Place.

One of the things she values most about helping at Earl's Place is her time with the clients. "Some men are eloquent of speech, others have so much heart and emotion that they can't get the words out. The bottom line is that everyone wants the same things out of life: respect and love. It's what gets them to the next step."

The respect that Earl's Place offers its clients attracted Rev. Knighton to serve on the Board. She knew that the

**"People will live up to or down to whatever expectations you have of them."  
- Rev. Jennifer Knighton**

dignity and the responsibility with which Earl's Place approaches its clients was what the men needed if they were going to succeed on their own. "People will live up to or down to whatever expectations you have of them," she says.

When I asked her about what she saw during her time on the Board that she didn't know about Earl's Place before, she said she was amazed how well Sheila balances the finances. "I realized how much can be done on so little."

Rev. Knighton says she's reluctant to leave the board. "My heart is at

As the director of the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the university of Baltimore, Dr. Ann Cotten was leading the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Fellows Program in 2007 when she met Sheila, who was in her class as a Fellow that year. Hearing from Sheila about Earl's Place was all it took to know it was something she wanted to be a part of it. "Sheila's passion and enthusiasm for Earl's Place and her pursuit of excellence

drew me to the organization," she says.

It wasn't just Sheila's personality that drew Dr. Cotten to serve as a board

member. "The mission of Earl's Place is vitally important for a segment of society that is often overlooked and forgotten," she told me. Helping Earl's Place is something she finds fulfillment in. "It is wonderful to be a part of an organization that focuses on providing the type of long term support and structure that residents can rely upon as they make the types of fundamental changes required to maintain sobriety while becoming productive and self-sufficient."

Dr. Cotten offered the board a unique perspective: on the one hand, being previously uninvolved with Earl's Place gave her fresh eyes to what could benefit the

program. On the other, her extensive experience in nonprofit and public sector management gave a strong sense of how best to move forward.

Dr. Cotten hopes to see Earl's Place offer even more people a second chance by expanding its transitional housing program. She also wants to address another great need in Baltimore: affordable permanent housing. "Ideally, the venture would provide an affordable, safe community for the residents while generating income to support the mission of Earl's Place."

We'll miss Dr. Cotten's insight, not to mention her candor and wisdom. We've been honored to have her!

Earl's Place," she told me. "Why would I want to walk away from that?" Thankfully, she will continue to lead the Outreach and Communications Committee. She would love to see United Ministries grow in its capacity to help people who are homeless and struggling with addiction, and she envisions a drug rehabilitation clinic and a permanent supportive housing program providing a fuller continuum of care. We'd love to have such projects someday, so we look forward to having her help us continue to grow!

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**Helen & Clyde Shallenberger** from Lois Joellenbeck & Peter Scholl

**Doug & Jill White** from George & Susan Hardinger

\*Former resident

We sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions; please contact our office for corrections.

### Thank You!

The support of these donors has helped us carry our mission of providing new beginnings through housing. If you have provided for United Ministries/Earl's Place in your estate plans, please let us know. If not, please let us talk to you about how you can. [Click here to make a donation on line.](#)

Call or write: United Ministries, Inc. 1400 E. Lombard Street, Baltimore, MD 21231 or [info@earlsplace.org](mailto:info@earlsplace.org)  
 410-522-0225

Wondering what to do with your tax return? [Invest it!](#)  
Dedicate 10% of your tax return to make a New Beginning for a resident of Earl's Place!



Back in October, a stray cat began stopping by the backyard at Earl's Place. Seeing how emaciated she was, one of our residents, Bruce, began leaving milk and food out for her. It wasn't long before a resident brought her into the Thursday house meeting, so Sheila set her up with a litter box, bed, and cat food in her office. Sheila assured everyone that this was a short-term arrangement.

We couldn't bring ourselves to put her back out, though. She eventually began to gain some weight, and Dr. Bob Brenner of Brenner Animal Hospital graciously offered to spay and vaccinate little Sophie, as she came to be known. We were shocked when he informed us that the little kitten of a few months was in fact over a year old — starvation had just stunted her growth. She has since grown into a full-bodied feline.

Though we were looking for a home for Sophie, we always kept the idea in the back of our minds that she might stay. So we put it to a vote in December— and our residents voted overwhelmingly for her to become a resident of Earl's Place. Many of the residents enjoy taking care of her by spending time with her in the backyard, feeding her or changing her litter – or making sure that she stays off the house furniture.

Now, she shares the office with Sheila and me, mostly just sitting on Sheila's desk on whatever important paper she needs at the time. She also faithfully performs her house chore by catching mice. We even put in a cat door so she doesn't have to be stuck in the office all night. We hope you'll stop by and meet her!

### What are people saying about United Ministries on [GreatNonProfits.com](#)?

#### Arnetta J. said:

I have seen the impact that United Ministries makes on the men that are served by the witness of these men. They have attended our Annual Meetings and met with our members to explain how their lives have changed since being a part of United Ministries. I've seen positive results of men moving into their own homes, finding employment, buying a car, being producers instead of takers. This is a much needed and worthy orgnaizaiton.

“My daughter told me, “Dad, **keep doing what you're doing**,” because she remembers when I wasn't doing nothing.”  
– J.B., current resident

Share your story at [GreatNonProfits.com](#)!



Want to make a difference in the lives of our residents? [Donations](#) allow us to help our residents with the services and items they need most, but there are many other ways you can help out!

## Get Involved

### Life Skills Instructor

Share your expertise and know-how with men in the Transitional Housing Program. Possible workshops include: journaling, health and nutrition, resume writing, relaxation techniques, etc. Workshops are held on Thursday evenings.

### Sponsor and Share a Meal

Provide funds for a special dinner - we will do the shopping and then join the men for the cooking and, of course, the eating.

### Share Your Time and Talents

Serve on the board of directors or a committee. Board members serve for a term of three (3) years.

Contact your government officials about issues of homelessness and poverty (we can help!)

### Drives

Sponsor a drive for Transitional Housing Program residents. Pick a drive that works for you: household goods, toiletries, nonperishable food, cleaning supplies, paper products. (See our wish list.)

### Adopt an Apartment Program

Homeless families entering permanent housing have few possessions. Encourage your congregation, job, or community group to adopt an apartment by furnishing these homes for incoming residents.

## Wish List

### LINENS

- Twin bed sheets
- Twin bed blankets
- Twin bed comforters/bedspreads
- Pillows
- Bath towels/washcloths

### FOOD

- Coffee
- Sugar
- Canned goods/nonperishables

### TOILETRIES

- Bar soap
- Deodorant
- Razors
- Shampoo
- Toothpaste/toothbrushes
- Lotion

### SUPPLIES

- Laundry detergent
- 13 gallon trash bags
- Light bulbs (60 watts)
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic wrap
- All purpose cleaners
- Dish liquid
- Dishwasher powder
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels

### MISCELLANEOUS

- Underwear (Size 34 and over)
- Thermal underwear (L - 2X)
- Socks (athletic and dress)
- Gift cards to Home Depot, Staples or local grocery stores

Please contact us for other needs - gently used furniture, clothing, etc. accepted as space/needs permit

**"I'm really proud of myself: I can get on the internet on my own now. I'm grateful to Dave [who volunteers at Earl's Place to teach computer skills] for that."  
- Bruce, current resident**

A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting United Ministries at 1400 E. Lombard Street, Baltimore, MD 21231 or 410-522-0225. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary for the cost of copying and postage.



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The staff and clients of Earl's Place are always honored to speak at your congregation or organization. Call or e-mail us if you're interested!

**Saturday, March 5th, 2011**

**John Oliver**

**"Songs of the American Musical Theater"**

*A performance with classics from Phantom of the Opera, Show Boat, and more! No charge, a freewill offering will be taken to benefit Earl's Place.*

**3:30PM at Immanuel United Church of Christ  
 1905 Edmondson Avenue, Catonsville, MD 21228**

**Friday, March 25th, 2011**

The Glass Grill offers great food in a comfortable and creative atmosphere, and attached is a glassblower's studio that lets you create your own pieces! The Glass Grill will donate 10% of the evening's profits to Earl's Place, and the artist will give 10% of the proceeds for pieces created by customers.

*Call (410)-633-2921 for reservations, plus check out the menu, watch a video about glassblowing at the Glass Grill, and see pictures of the artist's creations at*

**[www.theglassgrill.com](http://www.theglassgrill.com)  
 6804 Eastern Ave., Baltimore MD 21224**

**COMING  
 EVENTS**