

MISSION STATEMENT

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 Johnson

EARL'S PLACE
TRANSITIONAL
HOUSING
PROGRAM

CHALLENGING TIMES

These are challenging times. We are reminded of this each time we read the newspaper or listen to the news. Foreclosures are up, unemployment is up, stocks are down, all of us know someone who has been affected by the economic downturn. The news makes us want to hunker down and protect what we have.

"And when I can do more I surely promise to do so. Keep up the good work. Amen."

I am writing to ask you to do just the opposite. Yes, the economy is a mess. But for most of us there are many who are in much more difficult circumstances than we are. Please consider the blessings that you have and make a contribution as you are able. Perhaps you want to make a donation for each bed in your house, for the number of regular meals you eat in a month or the number of shoes that you have. Or maybe you want to donate to our Abele Building Fund or the "*change for CHANGE*" campaign (page 4). In whatever ways you are able to help, we say thank you.

When the men enter Earl's Place, many are broken not only in spirit, but financially. In 2008, twenty-two men entered the program. Half had no income when they came in, six were receiving general public assistance of \$185 per month and only two were employed. Those who are employed are often underemployed, and all find it difficult to meet their most basic needs. Your support and this program allow the men to regain their dignity, gain skills for independent living and work on goals they may have put on hold or never even imagined they could consider.

When a man completes our program and moves to the next phase in his life, he becomes a Visionary of our program. I am pleased and proud to note that several of the Visionaries are now listed as "Friends" (see pages 5 and 6). Recently, one of the men sent a money order for \$25, with a monthly pledge for the same and a note saying, "And when I can do more I surely promise to do so. Keep up the good work. Amen."

Thank you for your support. As the need for our services increases, your contributions become even more important. Please give generously.

Sheila

FROM THE GUTTER TO THE CURB

By Otha J.

Whoever is about to read this chapter of my life, I don't normally share about it. But I hope it will enlighten someone. This is not from some Narcotics Anonymous text or some Hollywood script that one has to memorize. No, this is where I was and where I am today. There were periods in my life when I truly lived a basic and simple lifestyle. Those times were called the "norms." I remember my childhood: going to school, eating properly, not smoking, not drinking. Those were the best years of my life.

My gutter experience didn't begin until curiosity began to captivate my interest. It took me over and took me on a ride that it seemed impossible to remove myself from.

I watched my brother smoking cigarettes, and this started my downward illusion of glamour. When I stole one of my brother's cigarettes, my body sent me a signal instantly. It rejected the intake, but I was back experimenting again and again. I thought I conquered this monster, only to find out it conquered me. It had me in the grips of a progressive addiction called nicotine, which opened up a floodgate to other things, such as uppers, downers, weed, wines, liquors, heroin, cocaine, etc. These drugs took me places and had me doing things I normally wouldn't do. I wouldn't wish this experience on my worst enemy.

Recreational participation.

For twenty-two years I was in an addiction I had no control over. I lost family, jobs, my wife and children, houses, apartments and friends. But most of all I lost myself, all the while trapped in an illusion that I was not that bad.

I found myself homeless for a period of six years.

With a spirit of confusion I wandered through the streets of Baltimore broke and disgusted, unable to be trusted. Family and friends rejected me, which pushed me further into my addiction. I couldn't understand the message they were sending. I couldn't see their love in the rejection, so I continued to run on to the bitter end of jails and institutions.

For twenty-two years I was in an addiction I had no control over. I lost my family, jobs, my wife and children, houses, apartments and friends. But most of all I lost myself, all the while trapped in illusion that I was not that bad.

Coming to grips with the reality of my life, I had to make a decision whether to live or die, which took me to my curb experience.

Since entering drug rehab, I'm now attending NA meetings and living in the Earl's Place transitional housing program. I am starting to allow the format of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions to take their course in my daily walk to recovery. It saddens me to think that it took twenty-two years to get six good months. It is what it is. My yesterdays are my yesterdays, my todays are my todays. Thanks be to God who gives me the victory.

BUILDING BLUES

The building we are in was renovated in 1997, so we are working to develop a reserve (The Abele Building Fund) to cover repairs and equipment replacements. In March, however, we had two unexpected expenses.

The main roof has been patched several times and now needs to be replaced at a cost of approximately \$3,200. In addition, the outside sewer lines backed up into the basement (again). Hot water heaters, the furnace and items we had stored were ruined. The insurance company was great, but we had the unexpected expense of a \$2,500

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that every has.”

-Margaret Meade

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Gabriel, a former resident, has provided many hours of assistance with upgrading and networking the computers despite a full schedule of college classes.

Thanks to the following individuals and congregations who helped make the holidays for the men special through our **Adopt a Resident** program: Lois Carrigan, Towson Unitarian Universalist Church, Rev. Cathy Oatman, Cindy Neff, Jill & Doug White, Ann Cotten, Carol & Tom Hoffman, Grace United Church of Christ (UCC), Marcia Conlin, Susan Meyers, Ron & Maria Lefrancois, Jim Sanford, St. Mark's UCC.

Thanks to everyone who braved the cold and participated in the **2009 Resolution Run**. A great time was had by all, and as usual Tony and his kitchen crew did a great job preparing the chili and cornbread for the after-race celebration. Thanks to our sponsors: Canton Club Health & Fitness; Central Atlantic Conference UCC; Chesapeake Association UCC; First & St. Stephen's UCC; Nancy, Grant & Lou Grasmick; Tom Hoffman, CLU, ChFC, IAR; Immanuel UCC; Scott Kreger, Ferris, Baker, Watts; David Martz, Long & Foster Real Estate; Patterson Park Baptist Church; Post Pro Digital Media; St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church; Underground Wheel Company; United Evangelical UCC; and Walden University.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- ◇ Anthony, Earl, Arthur, Neal, Kirk, Charles, Tyrone, Sean, Antoine, William S., Kenny and Robert on completing the program and obtaining their own permanent housing. Anthony was inadvertently left off the list for the last newsletter. He is working at St. Agnes and has his three year-old living with him. He says, “I've got what I always wanted.”
- ◇ Robert and John, who were accepted into college at Morgan State University and Baltimore City Community College, respectively.
- ◇ Justin on completion of the Baltimore Community Resource Center Chemical Dependency Counseling program.
- ◇ Andre, John and Ray on completing The Johns Hopkins Hospital Program for Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies. Ray also completed the Clerical and Computer Skills Training Program through Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake, Inc.
- ◇ Victor for the successful completion of Basic Human Service Training through the Shapiro Training and Employment Program, Inc.
- ◇ Clarence for successful completion of the Outpatient Substance Abuse program at Bon Secours.
- ◇ William and John, who completed the Gaudenzia treatment program.
- ◇ Gabriel on receiving a scholarship from City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.



“I know my life is going in the right direction. I am starting to complete things.” Ray C.



change for CHANGE

United
MINISTRIES
NC.

EARL'S PLACE

**HOPE, HELP,
HOME AGAIN!**

Have you ever wondered if you should give a person on the street some spare change? If you did, perhaps you felt good, but perhaps you were concerned about what he or she was going to do with it.

We want to invite you to donate your spare change to United Ministries. The change you donate will be used to help the men at Earl's Place as they work to reclaim their lives from the street.

Your spare change will make a difference in the lives of the men.

To reach a goal of

\$10,000

We need

40,000 Quarters

or

100,000 Dime

or

200,000 Nickels

or

1,000,000 Pennies

What can you spare?



We will accept your change in any manner—rolled or loose. Thank You!

FRIENDS

THANK YOU!
 The support of these donors has helped us carry out our mission
 of helping men return Home Again!
 If you have provided for United Ministries/Earl's Place in your estate plans,
 please let us know. If not, please let us show you how you can.
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* Visionaries (former residents)

This list reflects gifts of contributors between July 1, 2008 and February 28, 2009. Every effort is made to recognize all gifts. We sincerely apologize if any errors or omissions have been made. Please contact our office for any corrections.

Shopping Budget Down the Drain?

You can raise money every time you search the web, at iSearchiGive.com. Make it your homepage and use it to find everything, from news on the economy to mood-lifting jokes. (We recommend the latter.) United Ministries, Inc. gets a penny (or more!) every time you search. Believe it or not, it adds up quickly. And best of all, it costs you NOTHING! **Start iGiving at: www.iSearchiGive.com/EarlsPlace**



YOUR DONATION OF

\$ 1.00 will purchase 14 loaves of bread from the Maryland Food Bank

\$ 3.50 will purchase 20 pounds of food from the food bank

\$ 12.00 will purchase a case of toilet paper

\$ 20.00 will purchase one drug screen

\$ 25.00 will purchase 40 pounds of chicken from the food bank

\$ 50.00 will purchase a month's supply of cleaning supplies

\$ 100.00 will cover the cost of one day of case management services

\$ 500.00 will cover the cost of services for a resident for a month

\$1,000.00 will cover a month of utility costs

Please contact us for other ways you can help. Thank you!



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR



January 1: 2010 New Year's Resolution Run
2 p.m. Patterson Park

Sponsorships Are Available

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