

## 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

## Life is Bitter Sweet

The need for our services continues to grow as available funding continues to be scarce. We routinely close our waiting list; currently we are trying to reach individuals who applied with us in March of this year. Last year we housed 40 men while we turned away 568 others.

According to the Baltimore City 2009 Homeless Census, on January 22, 2009, the City of Baltimore yielded a count of 3,419 homeless individuals, a 12% increase from the 2007 Census. The majority of these individuals were single, African-American, and male; 47% were between the ages of 45 and 60 years old. A significant 31% of the sheltered population were chronically homeless with substance abuse and mental health issues. To be classified chronically homeless an individual is unaccompanied with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. The main reasons for homelessness are health conditions such as mental illness and substance abuse (35%), income/employment problems (26%), and housing concerns (26%). To read the full Census go to [www.homelessbaltimore.com](http://www.homelessbaltimore.com).

Statistics such as these can be very disheartening, but the good news is that thanks to our caring friends and supporters we are able to continue to provide new beginnings through housing and each year many of the men gain stability and move to self-sufficiency.

In June a group of ministerial students from Germany came to Earl's Place as part of their visit to the United Church of Christ Central Atlantic Conference. The ten vicars, students who have completed their academic studies at university and are now engaged in full-time practical experience in parish ministry, spent time with us discussing the problems of poverty and homelessness which of course are universal.

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On behalf of the group Thomas Vesterling thanked the men for sharing information about their journeys and life at Earl's Place. Thomas stated that they learned about respect and courage and marveled at the sense of family they observed here. He presented us with a German map because "you need to know where you are going", a bar of dark chocolate and a bag of Goldbaren (gummy bears) "because life is both bitter and sweet".

The men have stories that are sometimes disturbing and always thought provoking. We always welcome visitors and we are also available to speak to congregations or organizations.

Eventually the economy will improve; but for those who are most impoverished regaining stability is a long slow process. United Ministries is committed to assisting in the process. That is why the prayers and support of the community are so important. Please be assured that your gift regardless of the size is greatly appreciated and will make a difference in the lives of the men. Please don't wait, make a donation today.

## **VOICES OF THE VISIONARIES**

### ***CRIME IN THE COMMUNITY***

At one time, my community seemed very peaceful and quiet. In the evening all of the adults usually sat outside at night with a cool drink and the company of the neighbors. Now when I go out to Cherry Hill I look at what my participation in the drug trade has done to my home.

I was a drug user who played a major role in keeping my community ridden with crime. Every time I bought drugs I kept the guns and violence in my community. At times the violence got so bad that people had to stay in their homes during the night and sometimes during the day as well. At the time I could not see anything wrong with what I was doing.

The days of sitting outside are gone because of the shootings and killings. It pains me to know that I played a part in someone's death. During my active addiction it did not bother me to learn of someone getting killed, to me it was all a part of the game of the drug trade. Now I am clean and sober and I see life out of new eyes.

I am trying to live a responsible life for myself, my family, my home and community. I know now that I played a big part in bringing down my home, my relationships, and my community. Each time I bought a bag of dope I helped to keep gang bangers in my community. Each time I said nothing, each time I did nothing, I became a part of the problem in my community.

I know now that my life, my community, my home and my family are all connected. Their strengths and weaknesses depend upon the actions, willingness, strengths and wisdom of the people who live there. Life does not go backward. It does not tarry with yesterday, nor should I.

Respectfully,  
Kevin B.

Kevin is currently enrolled in classes to earn his General Equivalency Diploma (GED). He is a willing spokesperson for this program and tells a very compelling and eloquent story of his life in active addiction and of this new phase in his life.

“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

Thanks to everyone who purchased tickets for the father’s day raffle; a total of \$550 was raised. The winner of the raffle, John Deckenbeck, donated the proceeds back to United Ministries. Thanks John!

Joan Kolobieski continues to provide presentations on healthy eating and stress management. Her visits are not in vain; I hear many of the men talking about how they are changing their eating habits.

Once again the members of First & St. Stephen’s United Church of Christ outfitted a fortunate resident with all of the basic necessities for his new apartment. Bernard recently moved and thanks to the generosity of First & St. Stephen’s and several other donors from D.C. his apartment was almost full when he moved in. His apartment is definitely a home.

Note: we accept gently used furniture, household items and clothing. Please call to verify our current needs.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- ◇ Curtis on completion of the Introductory Computer Training Classes presented by the Pratt Center for Technology Training
- ◇ Kevin on completion of Gaudenzia’s 15 week Aftercare program
- ◇ Arto on obtaining the degree of Practioner of Barbering by completing all the necessary hours in practical barbering and theory
- ◇ Raymond for the successful completion of the Schapiro Training and Employment Program in Human Services Relations
- ◇ Michael for completion of the Recovery Network out-patient program
- ◇ Leslie and O.J. for completion of treatment through the Johns Hopkins Hospital Program for Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies
- ◇ Leonard on obtaining a Master’s in Journalism from University of Maryland
- ◇ Congratulations to William, Andre, Brian, and Bernard on obtaining their own housing.
- ◇ Congratulations to Glen H. and Brian on the birth of their daughters, Sophia and Mila respectively.



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

# HUNGER & HOMELESSNESS

On any given night in Baltimore City, approximately 3,000 people are looking for shelter. In Maryland 67% of the clients who utilized a food pantry have incomes below the federal poverty level of \$1,613 for a family of four. Fifty-eight percent of those households have a monthly income of less than \$1,000.

The week before Thanksgiving is National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week ([www.studentsagainsthunger.org](http://www.studentsagainsthunger.org)) In keeping with this, the Chesapeake Association of the United Church of Christ has designated the Sunday before Thanksgiving Homeless Awareness Sunday.

On November 22, 2009, Baltimore area congregations are invited to participate in a special mission offering to benefit Earl's Place. If you are a member of a congregation that would like to participate, please contact Sheila Helgerson at 410-522-0225 or [unitedministries@verizon.net](mailto:unitedministries@verizon.net). Offering envelopes and information for bulletins and newsletters will be available. We are also available to speak—just ask!

**MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE TODAY!**



**Support United Ministries and  
Earl's Place  
While Shopping or Paying  
Bills Online  
[www.iGive.com/earlsplace](http://www.iGive.com/earlsplace)**

## LEAVE A LEGACY

1. Prepare a will. More than 60% of those who die don't have one.
2. Leave a specific amount, asset or percentage of your will or trust to United Ministries.
3. Consider various assets for your charitable gift. These include stocks, bonds, CDs, real estate, vehicles, art and jewelry.
4. Name United Ministries as the beneficiary of your pension plan or IRA.
5. Name United Ministries as the beneficiary or owner of a life insurance policy.
6. Remember loved ones through memorial gifts.
7. Encourage family and friends to leave gifts to charitable organizations in their wills.

*Adapted from [www.leavealegacymd.org](http://www.leavealegacymd.org)*

**As you are making out your will,  
please consider remembering United Ministries with a bequest.**

# FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS

**THANK YOU!**  
 The support of these donors has helped us carry out 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 show you how you can.  
 Call or write: United Ministries, Inc. 1400 E. Lombard Street Baltimore, MD 21231  
 410-522-0225 unitedministries@verizon.net

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*\* Visionary (Current or former resident)*

This list reflects gifts of contributors between April 1, 2009 and July 31, 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 corrections.



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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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# MARK YOUR CALENDAR



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

## Sponsorships Are Available

For more information, call 410-522-0225  
or check our website:  
[www.unitedministries-earlsplace.org](http://www.unitedministries-earlsplace.org)