



Carpenter's  
Shelter

# ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN ALEXANDRIA

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

## 52 WAYS YOU CAN HELP



## It Takes a Community

Dear Friends,

2013 has been a year of great progress for our mission at Carpenter's Shelter. I'm pleased to share this annual report with you not only outlining our success but, providing you a glimpse of how YOU are a big part of our clients achieving sustainable independence.

This year marked an important milestone in Carpenter's Shelter's history – our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary serving those most in need. Our mission statement outlines a clear direction for the future and explains how we break the cycle of homelessness one client at a time.

There is a spirit that drives what happens here. It comes from the compassion and commitment of staff, volunteers, partners and donors who work tirelessly to ensure our client's succeed. Not only do we wish to end the cycle of homelessness, but we are determined to trigger a cycle of abundance. We want everyone who walks in through our doors to move forward in life and never end up homeless again.

What can you do? Continue to help us in the fight to end homelessness and be a champion for us. The spirit found at Carpenter's Shelter is contagious and worth catching! With your help, we can succeed in helping those in need have a better tomorrow.

Thank you for helping us move forward, and we look forward to another great year.

Warmly,

Lissette S. Bishins  
Executive Director



## Vision

To be the community leader in preventing and ending homelessness.

## Mission

Carpenter's Shelter supports the homeless achieve sustainable independence through shelter, guidance, education and advocacy.



*The Carpenter's Shelter Board of Directors, from left to right:*  
*Back row: Matt Sheldon, Tim O'Hara, Val Hawkins, Lee Fifer, Brenda Doherty*  
*Front row: Collin Moller, Jeremy Flachs, Rita Grazda and Jeff Creskoff*

## Board of Directors 2012 – 2013

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| Charlotte Hall                    |                                   |

Photos by Zoya DiCaprio

## 52 Ways— How You Can Help

**01** Sign up to make a monthly donation

**02** Help plant the seed for change in your kids while they're young – join the Circle of Hope

**03** Volunteer for a four hour shift at the front desk

**04** Double your donation and have your employer match

**RESIDENTIAL SHELTER**

# Providing Housing and Hope

Since 1988, Carpenter's Shelter has been more than just a roof to the men, women and children of the DC Metro Area.

Over the past 25 years, Carpenter's Shelter has evolved from an emergency shelter providing cots on cold nights in churches and warehouses into a holistic and comprehensive continuum of care. Our vision is to be the community leader in preventing and ending homelessness. Through our core principles of respect, responsibility, and results, we serve over 1,000 homeless and formerly homeless individuals each year. Our ultimate goal is to enable our clients to become self-sufficient and financially stable for the long-term.

Carpenter's Shelter offers a structured case management program that is goal-oriented and encourages families to address the root

causes of their homelessness while living in the shelter and beyond. Case Managers begin their relationship when a family first enters the shelter and follows them into the community with a continued focus on the family's stability through the community case management model. Our approach provides three distinctive supportive services to current and former residents of our shelter: housing, education, and child and family services.

Carpenter's Shelter's comprehensive continuum of care offers continuous services, aiding the chronically homeless and shelter residents through their transition back into independent living. Last year, we empowered 379 clients to address the issues which led them to homelessness, and provided the tools necessary to achieve lasting independence.



*"I feel secure living at the shelter because I know I have a place to lay my head"*



**05** Burn some pre-Thanksgiving calories by running our 10K

**06** Get outside with your family and walk in our Fun Run to benefit homeless children in Alexandria

**07** Love delicious food and competition? Come to Carpenter's Cook-Off

**08** Give the gift of learning by donating educational children's toys

**09** Help get our kids excited and ready to go back to school by providing supplies for over 100 children

**10** Help homeless members of our community during the cold winter by volunteering at our Winter Shelter

**11** Show your friends how to make your secret family recipe while serving dinner at the shelter

**12** Help provide our community case managed clients a "grocery store" experience by organizing our pantry

**MEDICAL**

# Promoting Healthy Living



For families struggling to pay the rent, a serious illness or disability can start a downward spiral into homelessness, beginning with a lost job, depletion of savings to pay for healthcare, and eventual eviction.

Unfortunately, many homeless people who are ill and need treatment do not ever receive medical care. Barriers to health care include lack of knowledge about where to get



treated, lack of access to transportation, and lack of identification. However, Carpenter's Shelter has an on-site clinic where clients can receive free treatment and referrals. The Clinic is open once a week and run entirely by volunteer doctors and nurses. Hundreds of clients received free health care at Carpenter's clinic and last year 17 women received preventive services through our Women's Wellness Program.

**WINTER SHELTER**

# A Warm and Supportive Place



Carpenter's Shelter coordinates the official Winter Shelter for the City of Alexandria with the assistance of Alfred Street Baptist Church and Church of St. Clements.

The Winter Shelter doors are open to anyone in need of shelter from inclement weather during the months of November to April from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Last year Winter Shelter was open 140 nights including weekends and holidays. Forty two volunteers left their own warm beds to brave the cold each night and



assist with laundry, checking clients in and giving a hand to staff.

Last year, Winter Shelter served 265 unique individuals. When individuals living on the streets walk through the doors of Winter Shelter they are presented with a warm place to stay for the night and can begin to connect with services. Carpenter's continually encourages individuals to not let the bitter temperatures of living on the street be their last stop.

*“When I came in they treated me like a man, they didn't treat me like I was homeless.”*

**13** Do you like to clean to relieve stress? Come help clean our kitchen

**14** Put your green thumb to use by helping keep our outdoor space looking great

**15** Instead of going to the mall with your friends, bring everyone together at the shelter for a Day of Service

**16** Give our children an experience they will never forget by taking them on a field trip to your favorite local hotspot

**17** Not only should you sign up for our monthly newsletter, but make it a habit to forward it to one friend a month

**18** Have your company join a Work-Place Giving Program United Way – 8228 CFC – 87293

**19** Make a donation to the shelter and encourage your workplace to get on board and match it

**20** Keeping our residents healthy is key to their success – help by donating first aid kits and vitamins to our clinic

**DAVID'S PLACE**

# Meeting Basic Needs and Beyond



*“Our well being and success has remained a priority for the staff at Carpenter’s.”*

David’s Place is the only day shelter in the City of Alexandria which specifically focuses on meeting the basic needs of homeless individuals.

David’s Place is a clean, safe facility connected to Carpenter’s Shelter, serving hundreds of chronically homeless people each year.

Last year with the help of 123 volunteers, who contributed 1,124 hours, David’s Place was able to offer services such as showers, laundry, phone and voicemail access as well as outreach services to 245 clients.

**COMMUNITY CASE MANAGEMENT**

# Maintaining a Course for the Future



A family is most at risk to return to homelessness their first year after living in a homeless shelter.

Once a client has moved into permanent housing, Carpenter’s Shelter continues to offer case management for a minimum of one year. Workshops that included topics such as planning for the future, healthy relationships, healthy living and celebrating success in

the community were offered quarterly at the shelter. Throughout the year Community Case Management clients are also able to “shop” in the pantry, their children receive school supplies, receive turkeys for Thanksgiving and holiday gifts at the end of the year. Through case management and offering continued services, Carpenter’s Shelter boasts a 95% success rate for our shelter graduates, last year.

*“There is always someone there to encourage me when I’m down and congratulate me when I reach my goals.”*

**21** Help invest in our residents’ success by donating to our scholarship fund to further their education

**22** Come see all the great work we do by taking a tour of the shelter

**23** Are you a registered doctor or nurse? Get involved by **volunteering at our clinic**

**24** Share your secrets to job success by becoming a job coach for our residents

**25** Are you an expert in \_\_\_\_\_? **Teach** our residents by leading a Life Skills class

**26** Spend your morning lending a helping hand **volunteering at David’s Place**, Alexandria’s only day shelter

**27** Pick up a pair of flip flops for our residents to use as shower shoes

**28** Help our community case managed clients make delicious meals by donating frozen meats

**EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

# Teaching Lasting Independence



Carpenter's Shelter serves as a center of learning for all ages, providing educational workshops and classes that teach our clients the skills they need to succeed independently outside the shelter.

Adults living at Carpenter's Shelter are required to be employed or actively seeking employment. Resources and Employment Readiness Workshops are available to improve job readiness skill and job search techniques. The workshops focus on resume building, job searching, interview skills and on the job skills. Once clients obtain full-time employment, they are required to save 70% of

their pay check. This allows clients to become financially stable before moving out of the shelter. New in 2013, Carpenter's Shelter partnered with Computer CORE to provide basic computer skill classes on site.

Life Skill workshops are offered once a week as a part of Carpenter's education program. These workshops are designed to teach clients skills to reverse the cycle of homelessness. Some topics include: household management, meal planning/ budgeting, parenting skills, career development, credit tools and traps and stress management.

**HOUSING**

# Building a Stable Living Environment

The transition from living in a shelter to living independently can be difficult for many individuals and families.

Carpenter's six week Ready to Rent Program is a housing readiness workshop that provides guidance and resources to help families and individuals develop the skills necessary to break down leasing barriers. It helps them

engage in positive leasing habits, while linking them with landlords in Northern Virginia. The program also addresses some of the barriers to renting, such as a prior eviction or criminal record, and teaches proactive ways to explain past rental history. This past year over 60 individuals benefited from the Ready to Rent program and have worked diligently to chart a new course for their future.

*"After graduating from the shelter program, Carpenter's continued to support my family with food, community resources, and education assistance."*

**CHILDREN**

# Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness



Last year 80 kids called Carpenter's Shelter home.

We encourage our youngest residents to continue being a kid. From September to June all of the children attend school or daycare and during the summer they attend day camps offered by the City of Alexandria. Many of our children go to after school programs and all of our children who need academic assistance, are paired with a volunteer tutor.

Four nights a week Carpenter's kids attend Children's Hour while their parents are in Life Skills and Parenting Classes at the shelter. Volunteers lead the Children's Hour and facilitate meaningful activities. Last year 603 volunteers worked with Carpenter's kids to help provide valuable life-skills, academic encouragement and assistance, and opportunities for social interaction to promote healthy living and learning.

**29** Help keep yourself and our residents active by teaching a Zumba or exercise class

**30** Help our residents get an early start for job searching by donating alarm clocks

**31** Boost our residents self-confidence by providing hair cuts

**32** We have clients with a variety of hair types – **donate supplies** for them today

**33** Next time you're at happy hour make sure to **mention Carpenter's Shelter's mission** to all of your friends

**34** Get your kids **involved** and organize a cereal drive

**35** Make laundry detergent to help keep the shelter green and clean

**36** Invite your friends over for a cook out and have them **bring a canned good donation** along

**VOLUNTEERS**

# Supporting Carpenter's Mission

Volunteers have an enormous impact here at Carpenter's Shelter.

Carpenter's relies on countless volunteers to help achieve our mission by delivering critical services throughout the year. From seven in the morning to eleven o'clock in the evening you will find volunteers preparing meals, tutoring, providing childcare, answering phones, organizing the linens closet, providing medical care or doing lawn work. Volunteers range from 18 to 90 years of age, come from 50 faith-based groups and speak 11 different languages. Carpenter's is not only diverse in the types of volunteers it has but also in the services volunteers provide to the shelter. Carpenter's meal program is entirely volunteer run. Carpenter's harnesses the

support of volunteer groups to purchase, prepare and serve all of the food served at the shelter. As a result, the only food product that the shelter has to buy is milk. This volunteer led program provides a savings of over \$200,000 a year to the shelter. Carpenter's also has a clinic that is entirely run by volunteer doctors and nurses with a value of over \$35,000. Carpenter's is leveraging volunteers to expand the services provided to the community. The shelter has earned a reputation of providing quality service, customized care and excellent client results. These outcomes could not be accomplished without the wide range of volunteers who provide countless hours of service. Our volunteers have different backgrounds, cultures and career fields but they share compassion and are committed to Carpenter's mission.

**SERVICE HOURS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS**

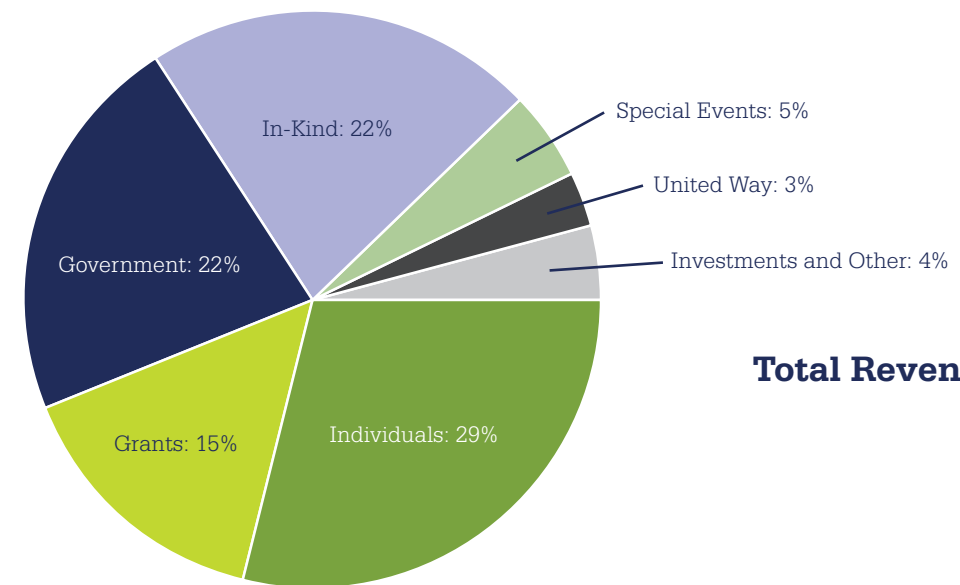
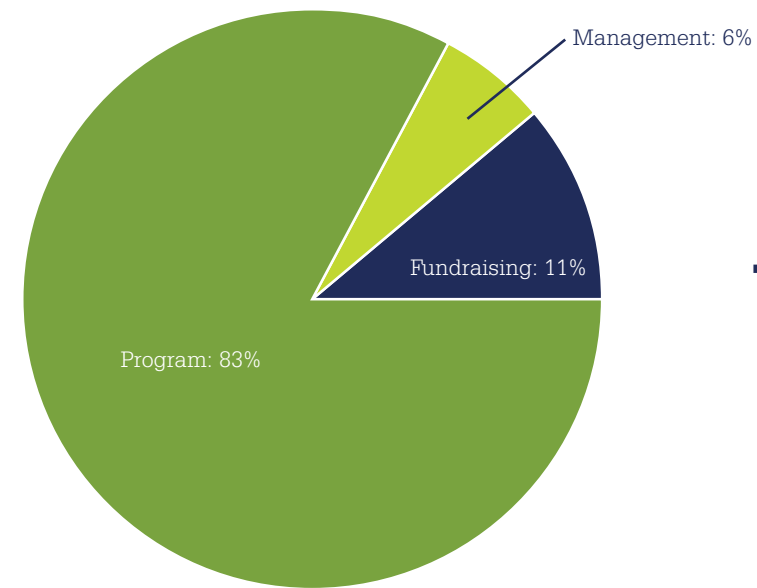
# Impactful Community Engagement

Last year 47 groups completed special projects at Carpenter's Shelter.

The projects included organizing the toiletries closet, putting away pantry items, painting resident's rooms, folding linens, shelving books in the library, landscaping, creating a community garden and taking family photos. These special projects are vital to the day-to-day operations of the shelter which free up Carpenter's staff to

focus on our clients' needs. Clients develop a sense of dignity that they are living in an environment that is clean and safe. The groups that complete these special service projects include corporations, alumni groups, civic groups, faith based groups and groups of friends. Volunteers help fill gaps and create a positive environment, which leads to the overall success of Carpenter's Shelter. Last year, individuals and service groups provided 18,807 volunteer service hours to Carpenter's Shelter which is equivalent to almost 9 staff members.

# Financials



**37** Help out our residents by donating gift cards to the Shelter

**38** Follow us on Twitter

**39** Like us on Facebook

**40** Put your special talents to use and join one of our many committees

**41** Love the thrill of bidding wars? Participate in our live and online auctions

**42** This holiday season give a sustainable gift to a friend by participating in our Alternative Giving Program

**43** If you're busy and can't get away from your desk, shop our Amazon wish list

**44** Make it your New Years resolution to become a major donor

# Donors

## Strategic Partners

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**45** Keep up with what's happening at Carpenter's by **following our weekly blog**

**46** Put your computer knowledge to work and **join our IT committee**

**47** Help flyer the town for Carpenter's next event by volunteering with our outreach committee

**48** Be an ambassador for the shelter by **sharing our stories**

**49** Already a volunteer? **Get a new friend involved**

**50** Help keep our residents productive by giving them a good night's sleep – **donate twin sized bedding**

**51** Keep the sniffles and cough at bay for our residents by **donating medicines this winter**

**52** Are you bilingual? Help our staff better communicate with residents by **translating**



*“When we walked into Carpenter’s Shelter for the first time, I remember the staff accepting my daughters like they were their own. They made us feel comfortable, and most importantly, we felt safe.”*



**Carpenter’s  
Shelter**

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[www.carpentersshelter.org](http://www.carpentersshelter.org)

**United Way #8228 CFC #87293**