



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A Monthly Newsletter from Community Lodgings: January 2009

Quick Facts: Over the past three months, one of our Transitional Housing clients successfully completed his two-year transition to independence. Three additional families were able to remain in their homes because we renegotiated their mortgage payments

GREETINGS FROM COMMUNITY LODGINGS

On behalf of Community Lodgings, I wish you a very Happy New Year. Over the past few months, our staff and volunteers have stayed extremely busy. In order to provide the families in our Transitional Housing and Youth Education Programs a remarkable holiday celebration, the staff organized a Gift Store, a Family Christmas Party (including Santa, thanks to Mike Oliver!) and gifts for all the families in our programs. The Gift Store was especially exciting as it allowed the children in our Youth Education Program to purchase presents for friends and loved ones. Throughout 2008 the youth accumulated points for positive behavior and achievement in the program. Points translated into currency for them to buy presents in the Gift Store. This Christmas, over \$16,000 worth of gifts were generously donated by individuals and families from Beverly Hills United Methodist Church, Queen of Apostles Catholic Church, Christ Episcopal Church, Bishop Ireton and Saint Stephens & Saint Agnes Schools.

We are very appreciative of both our financial and in-kind supporters, and our dedicated volunteers. On January 7th, an article on Random Acts to charities in the Washington Times featured a story on Community Lodgings' vital programs for formerly homeless families and low-income children! Speaking of random acts, Barry Stauffer and his band of volunteers have done an incredible job renovating the apartments for our transitional families. When he asked what we wanted the answer was, "we want it to look like a place where we would want to live." And it does. Bravo, Barry!

And finally, as the economy falters, we continue to see a dramatic rise in demand for our services. In order to meet that demand, we opened two more Transitional Housing units two families to enter the two-year program. We anticipate that two additional units will be opened by March, bringing our total to 16 units. Thanks to supporters like you, we are able to help these families achieve stability and self-sufficiency. Both our staff and our families are grateful!

For more information, please visit
www.communitylodgings.org

"Dear people who sent us the gifts for our Christmas store, Because of you my Christmas was special because of your donations. Because of you we were able to make my friends and family happy. Thank you so much for your generosity."

-Cristian G., 11 year old student enrolled in our Youth Education Program, writes a thank you note to contributors to this year's Christmas Store



STUDENTS DEDICATE 400+ HOURS TO CLI

Thirteen University of Illinois students recently drove twelve long hours from Champaign to Alexandria. During the week of January 12th they volunteered at Community Lodgings for a cumulative 403 hours, performing a wide variety of duties along the way. Among other things, the college students: picked up trash around our buildings; created guidebooks for YEP's Summer Component; developed college preparation activities; shared stories about college aspirations, life challenges and scholarship experiences with YEP's High School Component; cleaned and organized the Family Learning Center; and assisted in the move of our newest Transitional Housing family. From all of us at CLI, a heartfelt thanks for the time, effort and financial support provided by Tim Beals, Megan Dalton, Caitlin Holmes, Tara Jagers, Taylor Killough, Valerie Kramer, Ashley Lyons, Allie Marconi, Rachel Petersen, Boris Pilev, Kim Scanlon, Michael Stephens and Kathryn Yonkers! We also want to thank First Baptist Church of Alexandria for providing these students a place to stay.