



January – March 2018

Check us out on  
Facebook!



25 Bloomsbury Ave., Catonsville, MD 21228 410-747-help (4357) • [www.catonsvillehelp.org](http://www.catonsvillehelp.org)

CEA is open 9am - 1pm  
Monday - Thursday

## Thank You to All Who Gave on #GivingTuesday!

#GivingTuesday was a wonderful day for CEA clients. Generous donors gave more than \$6,500 towards our utility fund to help clients "keep the lights on."

The funds will be used throughout the year for clients who need help to pay their BGE bill. Clients are eligible for help once in a calendar year. The additional funds mean that at least 5 more families per month can now receive utility turn-off intervention rather than being turned away for lack of funds.

#GivingTuesday is an international day of giving that falls on the Tuesday after Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Worldwide in 2016, \$168 million was raised.

A mix of social media, envelopes distributed in churches, and flyers posted around town contributed to the success of this year's effort for CEA. The Board and staff kicked off the giving by putting up the first \$2,600 in matching funds.

Consider making a donation at other times of the year to ensure our clients "keep the lights on."

#GIVING  
TUESDAY



## Welcome to the New Executive Director

CEA is pleased to announce that Bonnie J. Harry, RN, has become the organization's executive director. Bonnie served as interim director for over a month. Following a search for a new director, she was selected by the Board in early December.

Bonnie comes to CEA with an extensive management background in the health care field. A registered nurse by training, she has worked in West Baltimore for the past 30 years, and has also owned several businesses.

"The heart of my career has been the passion to deliver compassionate and quality care to all those I have been fortunate to serve. The key component to success is respect for every person you serve," Bonnie said. She is looking forward to meeting the challenges faced by a small charitable organization that is eager to expand services but is in great need of funds.

During her time as interim director she hit the ground running by meeting with church clergy and business leaders in the community and learning the day-to-day operations with help from Mandy Zivin, CEA program assistant. She assisted volunteers with the annual CEA Toy Shop and actively promoted CEA's #GivingTuesday appeal. "I've met many wonderful people in the community, and I'm looking forward to meeting many more," she said.



Pictured above: New CEA Executive Director Bonnie J. Harry

Bonnie and her husband Alan live with her 93-year-old father and two miniature dachshunds in Halethorpe. When she's not working she likes to golf and is interested in calligraphy. Her husband is a chef, and she complements his cooking skills with her love of baking and decorating.

## Shout Out: Catonsville Co-Op

CEA would like to acknowledge the Catonsville Food Co-Op for their ongoing support. The Co-Op provides CEA with leftover produce and other perishables twice a month. This food is a critical piece of the food distribution mission. Thank you, Catonsville Co-Op!



## Start a New Tradition in the New Year

### Give a Monthly Gift

Consider starting off 2018 with a new tradition: giving monthly to CEA. A monthly gift is helpful for you and important for us. If you give each month, you can spread the financial impact of your giving throughout the year. Giving monthly allows you to know you're making a real difference. And you may be able to donate more by spreading donations across a year.

For CEA, having monthly donations helps our planning and decision making. It improves cash flow for those months when assistance requests remain high, but there's not enough cash on hand to operate at an optimal level.



CEA is fortunate to have recurring donors give in a variety of ways: some through their bookkeeper, others via their bank's check writing service, and the remainder via PayPal. PayPal recently made it even easier to become a monthly donor by simply checking the "Make this a monthly donation" box on CEA's PayPal donate page. Thank you for your consideration! The link to donate is below.

<http://catonsvillehelp.org/donate>

Donate to  
Catonsville Emergency Assistance  
Purpose: Paypal

\$25.00  
USD

Make this a monthly donation [?](#)

[Donate with PayPal](#)

or

[Donate with a Debit or Credit Card](#)

## A Holiday Toy Shop to Remember

On December 20<sup>th</sup>, CEA held its annual Holiday Toy Shop for client families in need at Catonsville United Methodist Church (CUMC). A sincere message of thanks to all who contributed and assisted with the event, including volunteer lead Patti Palatella, CUMC, St. Mark's Church, Cub Pack 307, and the neighborhood churches, organizations, and families who contributed. Your generosity certainly made the holidays merrier for local children! See photos below from before the doors opened.



## Oak Crest Community Comes Through

It seemed to be all hands on deck in the Oak Crest Community for its now annual CEA food drive in November. Some folks like high school student Jack Stover and his mom Katie delivered bags to the houses in the neighborhood, and then sorted food at CEA the day of the event. Others like Dorothy Sheppard helped coordinate the volunteers who went from street to street picking up food, and sorting it once it was brought to CEA.

"We had a huge number of people donate food," said Mandy Zivin, CEA program assistant and Oak Crest resident who has been organizing the drive for the past seven years. "Many folks distributed bags on their street and then returned to pick up the food," she said. Others, she said, went to CEA to help.

When it was all weighed and sorted the neighborhood, which is comprised of the streets off Edmondson Avenue from Oakdale to Beaumont, had donated more than 1,500 pounds of food. Wow!



## Looking For a Few Volunteers

### Volunteer Coordinator:

CEA is seeking a volunteer coordinator, responsible for scheduling volunteers on an ongoing basis and putting together the monthly volunteer calendar. This person can expect to spend four to six hours per month on the tasks. Most of the work is on the computer and can be done from home.

Volunteer coordinator duties are currently performed by Program Assistant Mandy Zivin, but Mandy has her hands very full with the program assistant job! Help us relieve Mandy by considering this position.



### Food Volunteer:

If you'd like to interact with our clients, you might like to be a food volunteer. This person greets clients, helps them select and gather their food, and helps the clients to their cars. This job takes place during our open hours of 9am-1pm Monday through Thursday, and can be done as frequently as once a week or as little as one or two times a month.

If you're interested in one of these opportunities, please complete the volunteer form online at:  
<http://catonsvillehelp.org/volunteer-registration>.



## Volunteer Spotlight: Gene Cashour



**G**ene Cashour has seen a lot of changes since he joined the CEA board in 2002. For one, CEA - then called the Catonsville Emergency Food Network - was in a different location. It occupied the basement and first floor of a church at Johnnycake Road and Route 40. "It was small so you couldn't fit many volunteers in and sorting and bagging took place only at specified times," he said.

He began "on a dark and stormy night," he says with a laugh, remembering that his wife Mary didn't want to drive, "so I took her to the meeting and I stayed, and before long I joined the board."

A regular "Mr. Fixit," Gene looks after the needed repairs to CEA's 100 year-old building. The job comes naturally to him. "I had a home repair business," he explained. And, he added, "I hate throwing things away, I'd rather fix them."

As the head of the CEA Renovation Committee, he's the one called when the handle breaks off the freezer, or a heating vent needs to be replaced. Recently he painted the back ramp used to bring carts of food in and out with textured paint so the cart and people pushing it won't slip. If he can't do a job, he'll work with contractors for the repair.



A former chemistry teacher, Gene taught for 47 years in public schools and at Mount de Sales. In fact, he said, he taught another CEA board member, Laura Fisher! The Cashours have lived in Catonsville almost as long as he was teaching school.



Pictured above and left: CEA Board Member and Volunteer Gene Cashour

*Gene has enjoyed the chance to "do some good and meet like-minded people."*

In addition to his love of teaching, Gene enjoys woodworking and not just the small stuff; he's built furniture such as a desk for his daughter. Gardening and model railroading are other passions. And you can often find wife Mary sporting jewelry he's made. Should you attend St. Mark church where Gene is a cantor, you'll find both Cashours singing in the choirs.

Despite his many activities, Gene also finds time to write thank you letters to everyone who donates funds to CEA.



### Inclement Weather Policy

CEA follows the Baltimore County School System for closures and late openings in the event of inclement weather conditions.



*We wish all of our neighbors a happy, healthy, and peaceful new year. We're looking forward to continuing to serve the greater Catonsville residents in 2018 and beyond!*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## STAFF

Executive Director  
 Bonnie J. Harry

Program Assistant  
 Mandy Zivin

## NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Madelaine Fletcher  
 Peggy Carr  
 Laura Fisher, Layout Design

## Tons of Food: The Annual St. Mark Food Drive

**I**ndeed! St. Mark Church on Melvin Ave., collected more than two tons (4,065 pounds to be exact) of food and dry goods at its annual food drive for CEA in mid-November. That's up from the 3,100 pounds collected last year.

Thanks go to organizers Ellen Draper, a parishioner who works with the religious education and confirmation studies students, and Patti Palattella, also a parishioner and regular CEA volunteer, and the many others who helped.



The whole process goes like clockwork but that is because it is very organized. "First a notice is placed in the church bulletin," Palattella said. "The following weekend grocery bags with a printed list of needs stapled to them are distributed after each mass," she continued. "And the third weekend the filled bags are brought in. A generous parishioner donates the moving truck."

After the last mass at 5 p.m. on Sunday the volunteers (students and their parents mostly) unload the truck and bring the food into the parish hall. Before that CEA and church volunteers set up tables and labeled boxes for the food. There's a scale and every bag is weighed, and then sorted by category, i.e. green beans, canned fruit, etc. Each item is checked for sell by dates and then boxed in the appropriate box. Having this amount of food weighed and sorted before it reaches CEA is a huge help.

Volunteers can't work on an empty stomach so before the weighing and sorting begins there's a quick pizza supper.

After all the food is boxed it's loaded back in the truck and taken to CEA where students from the cub scouts and the confirmation class make a human chain with some of the adults and the food is brought in and placed either upstairs or in the basement. By 8:30 the truck and driver are on their way home, and so are the volunteers, a bit tired but feeling good about their accomplishments!

## Meet One of CEA's Clients



Sometimes things are going along OK, and all of a sudden something happens and your life takes a bad turn.

That's how it went for Jason\*, a single father whose son lives with him. A house fire last December left them without any possessions or a place to live. Fortunately, no one was hurt. When the fire broke out, Jason was at work and his son was visiting his grandmother in Florida.

But losing everything really set him back because he had to find a new place to live and start to replace clothing and furniture. He hadn't counted on having to do any of that.

"I'm a medical assistant, working in hospitals and nursing homes," Jason said. "While I was hired as part-time, I often work full-time but I have no benefits," he said.

He tried to see what social services were available. "I was turned down for everything," he said. "Plus I got the run around; people telling me to call this number, and that number, and it never amounted to anything," said. "They told me if I had come out of jail or was homeless I could get help," he said. "Instead I pay taxes, but when I need help it's not there for me."

By the time he found CEA online, he was four or five months in arrears on his utility bill. "They kept charging me for utilities for the place where the fire was even though I wasn't living there," he said. CEA helped him with part of the utility bill and provided him with food. As a client, Jason can receive food help once a month as long as he needs it.

Gradually, he's getting back on his feet. His new apartment he said has some furniture – the basics is how he described it. He's also waiting for a refund of the money he was charged in error. "But I'm in much better shape now," he said.

\* Note: All names are changed to protect the identity of CEA clients.

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