



Catonsville Emergency Assistance

April – June 2018

Check us out on
Facebook!



CEA is open 9am - 1pm
Monday - Thursday

25 Bloomsbury Ave., Catonsville, MD 21228 410-747-help (4357) • www.catonsvillehelp.org



Join CEA's June Community Events!

Frederick Road Fridays



Friday, June 8th
6:30 - 8:30pm
15 Mellor Ave.

Event proceeds
benefit CEA

Entertainment by
the Soul Magnets!

BricknFire Pizza Craft Beer & Wine Series



Friday, June 29th
4:00 - 8:00pm
The Breadery
418 Oella Ave.

Event proceeds
benefit CEA



Featuring Forge
Brew Works
& Charm City
Meadworks!

From the Director's Shelf

I will begin by saying how excited and energized I am to be working with an awesome co-worker, Mandy, who each day puts a smile on my face and on the faces of our clients no matter what! It is a privilege and humbling experience to serve our community. It is extraordinary to have volunteers who come day in and day out to serve with vigor, spirit, and LOVE what they do. Did you know that nationally the number of volunteers is decreasing? Definitely not in Catonsville or at CEA!

In the short time I have been here I've been working with the Board to identify areas of opportunity, and we have initiated plans for growth. We have a talented Board and they will continue to lead initiatives into the coming years.

I have served the West Baltimore Community for over 25 years and now have the opportunity to serve in Catonsville. I have been to many of the schools and spoken to many talented groups of students, bright, enthusiastic, and with good hearts! They understand hunger, homelessness, and not having electric service. Their questions were excellent and crafted with compassion.

I have enjoyed speaking at local churches, and while I have not been to all of them, I am working on that. For those I have been to, they have certainly kept their word and supported CEA. The monthly support and weekly visits with donations from the various congregations are an important part of our daily existence.

I have been fortunate to meet and receive donations from some of our local business owners, and I have greeted others at various community meetings. I look forward to getting to know many of you that I have not yet had the opportunity to meet and to develop a working relationship for strengthening our community!

YES, HUNGER IS REAL, HUNGER HURTS, AND HUNGER IS IN OUR COMMUNITY EVERY DAY! Hunger doesn't happen just at the holidays, or when we have a special appeal or fund raiser.



CEA Executive Director Bonnie J. Harry

It is a real life experience in our community every day. For CEA, success will be defined with a consistent focus of intentional giving. Sustaining CEA requires that we keep our shelves full every day. We want our clients to have the appropriate nutritional opportunities, not substitutions because we didn't have particular items.

We look forward to your SUPPORT, whether by mail, online, or in person. Food donations are accepted at CEA during business hours or by arrangements. Donating your time and talents is always encouraged and welcomed.

The CEA Banner has gone up at 25 Bloomsbury Ave. Many of you said you didn't know where we are or what we do! Stop by, we would love to greet you and don't forget to bring the peanut butter!

Let's feed our community well,
Regards,
Bonnie J.

CHS Students Donate Time and Money

The students of the Sharing Group at Catonsville High School (CHS) invited Bonnie J. Harry, Executive Director, to speak to their group of 50 enthusiastic, energized, and focused students and to receive a donation. Students from this group volunteer on Wednesday afternoons, sorting and packing food for CEA clients.

This group, as well as many other CHS clubs and organizations, have collected food, toys, and clothing to support CEA throughout 2017 and 2018 with various food drives and the annual Christmas toy drive for our clients.



The Sharing Group successfully completed a HOP FOR HUNGER in March throughout the Catonsville area. Yetta Nowak, student advisor, orchestrated the teams with precision and 3,015 pounds of food was collected by students on a very cold Saturday. CEA salutes their incredible effort and thanks them for demonstrating service and volunteerism at its best!



Meet Linda, One of Our Clients

Linda's story is a familiar one. Not that long ago she had a good-paying job, a husband and an infant daughter. And then through a series of circumstances, life started changing for her. She was laid off from her job, she and her husband separated, and she couldn't find work in her field.

"A few months after I returned from maternity leave I was offered a new position in the company," she said. "I would have made the same pay but I'd have had to work more hours, and there would have been no other staff working with me," she recalled. "It didn't seem like it would be beneficial for our family," Linda said so she turned down the job. According to Linda, the refusal was not well received by the company CEO, and the following week she was laid off from a job she'd held for four years.

"Every time I come in I am greeted with a smile and with dignity," she said. "That is so important."

"Fortunately, I had severance pay," she said. After the severance ran out she went on unemployment and continued looking for work. Then she and her husband separated.



Linda found a part-time job that didn't work out. Then a full-time job came along, and while it wasn't in the insurance field where she had been, she took it. Unfortunately, it pays only about half of what she had been making. "Yes, I'm working, but I'm underemployed," Linda said. And that is when the latest difficulties set in.

She got behind in her rent and came to CEA for help in preventing her eviction. "CEA helped and I was able to stay in my apartment," Linda said. For the past year-and-a-half she's been getting food assistance from CEA. A lifelong resident of the Catonsville area, she said it was difficult to ask for help. "I kept thinking that there were people needier than me, but I had to get over it, and admit I needed the food."

Linda said she's grateful not only for the food, but for the way she's treated at CEA. "Every time I come in I am greeted with a smile and with dignity," she said. "That is so important."

Grant Received from CWGC

CEA received a grant of \$1,530 from the Catonsville Women's Giving Circle (CWGC) to buy the paper and plastic bags we use to distribute food to our clients. CEA received the grant in February. We are pleased to have this resource as it plays a very vital part in serving our clients. We are purchasing recyclable bags with the grant money. CEA only uses clean new bags to package food for clients.

The CWGC is a philanthropic organization that supports charitable programs and organizations selected by their membership. The annual grants awarded support the Greater Catonsville community.

Mary Buchanan (left) and Maureen Keck presented a check to Bonnie J. Harry, Executive Director.



Get Involved!
 Plant an extra row of
 veggies in your garden to
 share with CEA clients this
 growing season.



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Volunteer Spotlight:
 Bonnie Wilson



Being a food volunteer is one of Bonnie Wilson's favorite jobs at CEA. As a food volunteer she helps clients with their food selection and takes their groceries to their cars.

"I really enjoy the interaction with clients," she said. "People are so appreciative of the help, and I don't think I've ever gotten so many hugs," she said smiling.

That she enjoys being with people is clear. You know Bonnie's at CEA because all you have to do is follow the laughter to the back room. No matter what job she's doing she brings good cheer to the tasks which include taking in donations, weighing, sorting and shelving the donated food. Whatever task might be needed, she's always willing to lend a hand.

"We love having Bonnie here," said Mandy Zivin, CEA program assistant. "She's compassionate, hardworking and fun. The clients love her too," she added. A nurse by profession, Bonnie began her career as an intensive care nurse. She retired in 2011 from Boys Latin High School after spending 22 years as the school nurse and health educator. "I retired and then I worked for a doctor one day a week for five years," she said. Now, fully retired she's pursuing hobbies, interests and enjoying time with her family which includes three grandchildren.



Bonnie likes to be active. She's an avid tennis player, and plays year-round indoors and out. She also enjoys walking and swimming and she seems to have a passion for making sure that hungry people have food.



CEA Volunteer Bonnie Wilson; Sun Newspapers Photos by Jen Rynda / BSMG

"People are so appreciative of the help, and I don't think I've ever gotten so many hugs," she said smiling.

In addition to volunteering at CEA, Bonnie volunteers one day a week at the Maryland Food Bank and last fall began serving lunch to clients at My Brother's Keeper in Irvington, making friends wherever she goes. "I've been at the Maryland Food Bank for several years, and I work with the same people each week, and often we go out to lunch together after our volunteer shift is over," she said. "It makes volunteering even more enjoyable when you have a good time with your co-workers." And needless to say, her co-workers enjoy her, as well.



To our wonderful donors:
 Before donating, please remember to check your bags, cans, boxes, and jars for the expiration date!

