

# **The Recorder, Editorial**

## **Hard times harder for homeless**

**Friday, Nov. 28, 2008**

It's all too easy to believe that Calvert County does not have a problem with homelessness.

Our median household income is sixth in the nation. The majority of the people who live here are wealthy, or at least live in comfortable homes making a comfortable living.

But the fact is, there are many homeless people here, and they need our help.

Luckily, we have people here who want to share their time and their wealth to help those who have found themselves homeless.

Because of the efforts of Joseph and Mary Ann Zaversnik, 30 Calvert churches have combined their resources to make a safe place for homeless people here to get a hot meal and a place to sleep during the coldest time of the year. From the couple's determination, hundreds of volunteers have risen to the challenge of helping the homeless, either with financial support or by giving their time to help serve food and work at the churches through a program called Safe Nights.

One church spent the money to put in shower facilities, and others are working to raise the money it will take to feed our homeless population during the winter.

The shelters will be open from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. every night and morning until the end of March.

Participating churches are praising the Zaversniks and the Interfaith Council, which helped set up plans and procedures for the churches to follow. The program started last year here, and already the participating parties have become more organized and ready to help more people.

Safe Nights is not the only program in Calvert County that deserves praise.

On Wednesday, The Calvert Recorder had several stories of organizations that are managing to help the less fortunate despite the national economic crisis.

Residents sent us letters to publish about coat donations, the Calvert Crusade for Children and Calvert Hospice and the kindness that people show one another.

Yesterday, Thanksgiving Day, hundreds of people were expected at the SMILE Ecumenical Ministries' annual feast, an event that used to be held at the Lighthouse Inn until a fire burned the structure to the ground. After that fire, the same people who had been involved in the feast for years came together and found another venue, Catamaran's Restaurant on Solomons Island.

End Hunger in Calvert County just finished a month of campaigning and collecting donations to help our neighbors in need. Mt. Harmony Church in Owings held a free Thanksgiving feast and invited everyone who wanted to join in.

But this is just a small sampling of what Calvert is capable of. Every day we hear the stories of average people who become heroes when they are needed.

The Zaversniks are heroes, as are the volunteers, church leaders and parishioners who have made Safe Nights a success.

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