It’s Time To Help Out.

When you donate your car, RV or boat to Volunteers of America Chesapeake you demonstrate how you are Called to Care for over 10,000 men, women and children in our area. As a certified 501(c)(3) charity you can be certain that when you make a donation, it will be fully tax deductible and go directly to individuals most in need. To find out more about our Car Donation Program and how you can answer the Call to Care please visit www.CarsHelpingPeople.org or call 877-721-4862.
THIS IS WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO.
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Franklyn Baker – Chief Operating Officer
Jack Hollerbach – EVP & Chief Financial Officer
Rob Malone – Chief Business Development Officer
Rev. Sandra T. Gray – Chaplain
Danielle K. Milner – Communications Coordinator

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Dr. Rodney L. Stump - Professor, Department of Marketing
Towson University
Mr. Michael Taborn - Senior Consultant
Boyd Caton & Grant
Mr. Greg Tutino - Managing Director
Ronald Blue & Company
1. Sport & Health Clubs throughout DC, Maryland and Virginia donate backpacks and school supplies as part of our Operation Backpack initiative

2. Over 50 volunteers from the Baltimore Convention Center and Sparks at Play! came together on August 15, 2013 to help build the new Pratt Street Playground

3. On August 17, 2013, Microsoft and the UBM Channel @ Work conference volunteers came to host a Back to School Bash at Eastern Avenue!

4. Volunteers of America Chesapeake along with Public Officials and honored guests cut the ribbon on our brand new Residential Re-entry Center in Baltimore, Maryland on July 31, 2013

5. Volunteers from MOI, Inc and partners work hard to make unique backpacks from scratch as part of the "Back to Basics" competition held by MOI in support of Operation Backpack

6. The children of our Pratt Street Transitional Housing Program smile in between innings at a Baltimore Oriole's game in September.

Our Gifts of Hope Program provides targeted giving options to impact the lives of men, women and children in need.

$10 may provide hygiene kits for individuals in our homeless services programs

$25 may provide transportation to health appointments for a veteran or individual with disabilities

$50 may provide toys for children in our transitional housing programs
President’s Message

Dear Donors, Volunteers and Friends,

We are closing out another busy summer in Chesapeake. I’m thrilled to announce that we doubled our Operation Backpack goals, raising nearly $20,000 and collecting more than 2,000 full backpacks! It was especially exciting to see donors like you rally around our weekly Wednesday’s Wish, our appeal for the most critically needed school supplies. With your help we collected nearly 3,000 boxes of crayons, thousands of composition notebooks and thanks to new partners UBM and Microsoft, we were able to equip high school students at our Eastern Avenue Supportive Housing Program with TI83 Graphing Calculators and access to a brand new computer lab to help ensure their success in math and science – subjects where homeless and low-income children tend to struggle most.

Not only were we able to meet our children's specific needs, but we were also able to make tremendous advances in our care for the Ex-Offender population. On July 31, 2013 we opened the doors to our new 52,000 square foot Residential Re-Entry Center. With the partnership of Marks Thomas Architects and Azola Companies, LLC., our new facility is the largest Re-Entry Center in the United States serving Federal ex-offenders. We are now able to serve 40% more adults through our residential program and thanks to a $750,000 grant from The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation we will complete the building of our Community Correction Resource Center and provide additional services to ex-offenders living in Baltimore. For more than 30 years our organization has been a leader in re-entry programming resulting in a recidivism rate well below the national average and accreditation from the American Correctional Association. Our programs will now feature services specifically targeted towards veteran ex-offenders and state ex-offenders, 2 critical populations that our organization has experience and success in serving.

It was wonderful to host partners, donors, staff and elected officials like Maryland Secretary of Public Safety Gary Maynard, Maryland Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Edward Chow and Baltimore City Council President Bernard Young at our facility's ribbon cutting. Guests from the Mayor's office along with our Board of Directors and Community Faith Leaders toured our renovated facility and had the opportunity to see our state of the art classrooms and computer lab as well as our updated dorms and group meeting spaces all furnished thanks to a $150,000 grant from The France Merrick Foundation. I encourage you to check out photos from our event on our Facebook page and join one of our facility tours to learn more about our new opportunity to answer the Call to Care.

While we're proud of all we've accomplished this summer we're also focused on all we have coming up this fall and winter including our winter shelter and hypothermia prevention programs. We provide these critical services through partnerships with the local faith community. Thanks to these partnerships we are able to increase our capacity to care for hundreds of unsheltered men, women and children through the fall and winter months.

Not only do these programs support the individual, but also the counties we serve by contributing to Point In Time (PIT) counts and identifying critically homeless individuals who can be best served through the 100k Homes campaign.

As the year draws to a close we’ll be focusing on our areas of greatest need and letting our donors know exactly how their donations will make an impact through our 5 Weeks of Giving campaign. Last year we were able to raise nearly $200,000 to close gaps for homeless & supportive housing programs as well as, veterans services, mental health and addiction recovery services.

We're truly blessed to have the support of partners including The Weinberg Foundation, The France Merrick Foundation, Freddie Mac, Sport & Health Clubs and Clear Channel Radio this year as we work to improve the communities we serve. I look forward to making new partners this year and continuing to fulfill our founding mission to go wherever we are needed and do whatever is at hand. Thank you so much for your continued support and have a safe and blessed Holiday Season.

Blessings,

Russell K. Snyder
Back to School Bash at Eastern Avenue

Operation Backpack: 2,000 Kids and Counting!

It's Time to Play at Pratt House!

Residential Re-entry Center relocating to serve more

The 5 Weeks of Giving!

Chaplain's Corner
On August 17, 2013 Microsoft and partners from UBM’s Channel at Work Conference threw a Back to School Bash for the Community at our Eastern Avenue Supportive Housing Program.

Volunteers packed backpacks, landscaped our children’s playground and assembled furniture and computers in our renovated community activity room.

More than 100 children received full backpacks and enjoyed carnival games, face painting, popcorn and cotton candy. Adults at Eastern Avenue attended an onsite computer tutorial class presented by Computer Core and signed up for continuing computer education classes.

Special Thank You to our partners:

Microsoft
UBM
Intel
Eaton
Reflexion
ScanDisk
Symantec
Dell

Fortinet
Kaspersky
Pax8
ShorTel
Samsung
Volunteer Fairfax
Tandberg Data

Check out our Facebook Page for more Photos of the event!
WE DID IT!
With your help more than 2,000 homeless and low-income children throughout DC, Maryland and Virginia received backpacks filled with school supplies in time for the first day of school!

Our donors answered the Call to Care throughout Arlington, Prince William, Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties. Car loads of supplies reached children in Virginia Beach, VA, Baltimore, MD and across all corners of our coverage area.

THANK YOU!!
You responded to our weekly Wednesday’s Wish, ensuring our children received composition books, graphing calculators, 3-ring binders and thousands of crayons!

WE’RE NOT DONE YET!
Not only did we exceed our backpack collection goals, we also raised more than $20,000 to support our children throughout the school year by providing tutors, after school activities, enrichment field trips and updated technology in our computer labs. With the support of Operation Backpack partners like Sport & Health Clubs, Microsoft, UBM, Clear Channel Radio, The Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation and Equity Management we reached beyond our program walls to support the schools our children attend and the faith partners that help us provide winter shelter and hypothermia prevention services.

You can continue to help us answer the Call to Care by donating to the Operation Backpack fund, promoting 365 day learning to homeless and low-income children in need.

Visit www.voachesapeake.org/backpack to donate today.
Summer is our time to celebrate the children we serve from Baltimore, MD to Virginia Beach, VA.

With more than 500 children in our care, our programs often take summer trips to baseball games, amusement parks and museums to give our children a respite from the challenging life in many of our economically challenged communities.

The children of Pratt House call South Baltimore City home and are no strangers to the challenges of inner city life.

“[The Children] don’t have a place to play so they’re more likely to get into trouble or get hurt.” Said Pratt House Resident Advocate Carolyn Eaddy.

As part of our mission to care for our children, Vice President of Development James Wynn assembled a team of partners including John Potvin, President of Equity Management in Baltimore, MD, Stephanie Sparks of Sparks at Play Builders and Mac Campbell of The Baltimore Convention Center. Together, these partners teamed up to build a playground at Pratt House.

“The space is inadequate and hazardous.” said Mr. Wynn at the start of the playground build process in November 2012. After assessing the current play area Mr. Wynn engaged Architect and VOA Chesapeake Board Member Donald Kann to help design the new playground. Mr. Kann and representatives from his firm Kann Partners met with the children to discuss design details including club houses, slides and the all important monkey bars.

Once the designs were in hand, the Pratt Playground building process began with a team of volunteers from the Baltimore Convention Center.

It’s time to play at Pratt House!
“We’re excited to be here to help,” said Mac, the convention center’s Director of Client Services when we first met him in 2012. He and his team worked tirelessly to remove the cracked rubber padding and broken play equipment from the existing space in order to make room for the new playground.

Architects and Builders alike held meetings to determine what equipment would be both safe and fun for the children at Pratt and how to best use the existing space to create the dream playground our children designed.

Finally on August 15, 2013, while the nearly 100 Pratt House children were away at camp, the partners returned together for a day long build led by captains from Sparks at Play Builders.

Owner Stephanie Sparks was on hand to personally assist in the build. “I just love this,” said Stephanie “when I heard about the children at Pratt I immediately knew I wanted to be involved.”

9 hours and more than 50 volunteers later, the children returned home not only to find a brand new playground, but also receive backpacks filled with supplies just in time for the first day of school.

“I’ve never designed a playground before!” screamed one 2nd grader after the official ribbon cutting. Some children ran to get their parents to share in the excitement while others headed straight for the clubhouse to engage in very important, kids only business. “We’re starting a kids club!” one first grader told us excitedly as the clubhouse meeting came to order.

With the completion of the playground, our program has improved the level of care for all our residents. “I worry a little less about what trouble they could be getting into without a safe place for them to play together,” said Marlena Cook, a resident at Pratt House and mother of 5 children “now they can play outside and I know where they are and what they’re doing when I’m in a training class or a meeting. I feel good about that.”
For more than 30 years our affiliate has provided comprehensive re-entry services to the greater Baltimore, MD area. Recognized as a leader in the field, our Residential Re-Entry Center (RRC) received accreditation from the American Correctional Association in August 2011 and in 2012 assisted more than 500 ex-offenders in making successful transitions back into our communities. Our recidivism rate is 30%, well below the national average with more than 75% of our clients transitioning out of our programs with established employment and housing.

As a result of our success, referrals from the Bureau of Prisons and the Federal Probation Department have increased. To meet these new needs our organization worked with Marks, Thomas Architects to design a new facility – a facility we officially opened on July 31, 2013.
“The move increases the number of available beds by more than 40%” said Program Director Jennifer Masslieno, “with each resident completing the program with an average 6 – 9 month stay, we are now able to assist more than 700 individuals annually in making successful transitions back into our communities.”

In addition to our referral partnerships with the American Correctional Association and the Federal Bureau of Prisons, our program has received grants from leading funding organizations like the France Merrick Foundation who awarded the RRC a $150,000 grant to furnish our new space with new desks, beds, mattresses and lockers to ensure we are able to provide quality care and services for our residents.

The RRC was also recognized by The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, who awarded our program a $750,000 grant to turn more than 5,000sq ft of undeveloped space into a Community Re-Entry Resource Center providing residents and the community at large with access to community based, state & local re-entry services including employment assistance, addiction and mental health treatment as well as aftercare and family support services.

“We are so thankful for the opportunity to continue our founder Maude Booth’s work in corrections” said President & CEO Russell K. Snyder, “expanding into this facility not only allows us to serve more individuals but we’ve increased the level of care we’re able to provide with this new state of the art facility.”

In addition to increased security and safety updates the new Residential Re-Entry Center features smart board technology in classrooms providing instructors with new technology to assist in life skills and educational classes offered on site.

“More than the facility just looks good, it is providing critical services to our state,” said Maryland Secretary of Public Safety Gary Maynard during his remarks at the July 31st Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, “The program successes speak for themselves.”

To learn more about Volunteers of America Chesapeake’s Community Corrections Programming, Visit www.voachesapeake.org/RRC

President & CEO Russell K. Snyder along with Board Chairman Alvin Nichols are joined by honored guests and elected officials during the ceremonial ribbon cutting to open our new re-entry facility.
Keisha Bethea is the mother of 4 children including one Graduate of Bowie State University and one future University of Connecticut Husky. She is also a business owner and former inmate at Cumberland Federal Correctional Institute.

“That's what I did, not who I am” said Ms. Bethea when we met at the July 31st Opening of Volunteers of America's new Residential Re-Entry Center.

“I made some mistakes in my life, I admit that. I needed help setting a lot of those things straight.”

Upon arriving at the Residential Re-Entry Center in 2012, Ms. Bethea was introduced to the Case Managers and staff who would help her reconnect with her family, address the issues that led to her incarceration and change her self-perspective.

“I learned a lot,” said Ms. Bethea “about myself, about goals, discipline, failure and success. I battled addiction and depression for years but I found structure here and developed my own sense of discipline. I didn't have that before.”

RRC Residents are required to meet with Case Managers, to discuss, set and track weekly goals. In addition to case management mandatory transitional classes are offered at RRC including those that prepare residents to seek employment, obtain housing and reconnect with families and community support systems.

“Residents in the program are provided with the support systems and tools they need to be successful but ultimately they have to take responsibility to use those tools and supports.” Said Program Director Jennifer Masslieno.

Ms. Behtea has used her tools to remain addiction free, reconnect with her children, start her own business and be “a blessing to other women during their transitions.”

“I promised myself I would make a difference because I didn't want to be defined by mistakes I’d made in the past. I wanted to be more than that, and for people to know me as more than that” Said Ms. Bethea.

“I was given a blessing when I first came here. I met Mr. [Russ] Snyder during my first week at RRC and he talked with me like he didn't even care what I'd done. He still remembers me and my story. It's important to have people like that during your transition, people that care about you. I want to be that person for other women.”

In addition to the Community Re-Entry Center, we are working on targeted re-entry services for Veteran ex-offenders. Contact Vice President of Development James Wynn at JWynn@voaches.org to learn more about how you can help fund Veterans Re-Entry Programming.
The 5 Weeks of Giving is our year end awareness and fundraising campaign designed to highlight and celebrate our programs, services and successes.

Covering nearly 250 miles from Baltimore, MD to Virginia Beach, VA our programs are as unique and diverse as the communities we serve and as the year draws to a close The 5 Weeks of Giving Campaign focuses on those diverse service lines through targeted awareness and fundraising efforts.

Last year we were able to raise nearly $200,000 to support programs like our hypothermia prevention and rapid re-housing services that ensure hundreds of unsheltered men, women and children receive shelter, food and clothing during the coldest months of the year.

This year our goal is to increase funding for our homeless services programs, mental health and addiction recovery services. More than 90% of our addiction recovery clients maintain sobriety while in our program and more than 75% transition out of our shelters into permanent housing.

Join us each day in December as we showcase voices from across our footprint including our Direct Care Professionals, Program Leadership and our Commissioned Ministers.

Each Monday beginning December 2, 2013 our staff will share what motivates them to answer the Call to Care in Monday’s Morning Motivation. On Tuesday’s, tune in to our YouTube channel for video testimonials from clients in our Veterans, Addiction Treatment and Intellectual Disabilities programs.

Our Commissioned Ministers will share the meaning behind our 5 Core Values: Caring, Respect, Faith, Quality and Trust in a segment we call Wednesday’s Word.

Each Thursday we’ll thank the partners, sponsors and volunteers who help us answer the Call to Care for thousands of men, women and children each year and every Friday in December we’ll be celebrating and fundraising at partner locations throughout Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia. Join us for these Fund Fridays events and learn more about the programs and services supported by donors just like you!

Visit www.voachesapeake.org/5Weeks for a full schedule of 5 Weeks of Giving events!
Thank You Donors!

With the support of our partners, we are able to answer the Call to Care throughout Washington DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

Thank you!
Thank You Donors!
On October 15, 2013 we held our 4th Annual Harvest for Hope fundraiser. Each year, we bring together business and community leaders throughout Northern Virginia to celebrate our successes and plan for the future. Our goal is to play an active role in improving our communities by engaging leaders and working together to solve some of our region’s toughest challenges. This year we discussed ways to support the growing number of homeless veterans in our area as well as provide rapid re-housing options to homeless individuals with co-occurring mental health and addiction issues. These are often individuals who go unserved and unsheltered through the coldest months of the year.

With partners like The Shooshan Company, The NFL Retired Players Association, Sigal Construction and Capitol One Bank we’ve laid the ground work for service expansion projects targeting homeless veterans, those struggling with addiction and individuals with intellectual disabilities.

To see more photos from our event, visit our Facebook Page!

If you’re interested in learning more or getting involved with our Northern Virginia services please contact our Chief Business Development Office Rob Malone at RMalone@voaches.org or our Director of Individual Giving Kristina Deignan at KDegnan@voaches.org.
This past fiscal year our donors, sponsors and partners answered the Call to Care for thousands of our neighbors most in need resulting in the highest amount of donations our affiliate has seen since 2004! To thank them, we’ve created The Stewardship Society, an exclusive recognition society for individuals, corporations, foundations and the faith community that help us fund programs and services like our new Residential Re-Entry Center, the Nation’s largest re-entry facility serving federal ex offenders.

Members of The Stewardship Society will be recognized throughout the year in our publications as well as be granted exclusive access to our Called to Care Campaign initiatives, designed to increase community involvement and participation. Stewardship Society members will also receive volunteer opportunities, program updates and regular communication with our Leadership Team as we work to improve the communities we serve.

Membership levels range from Caregivers – those who donate $50 or more, to Sustainers – those who donate $1,000 or more. Current Stewardship Society Members include John Potvin, President of Equity Management in Baltimore, MD and John Shooshan, Chairman and Founder of The Arlington, VA based real estate development firm The Shooshan Company.

Our goal is to ensure that every donor in the Stewardship Society is made aware of changes and accomplishments throughout our programs, ensuring that their donations are informed and impactful.
Growing in Gratefulness
By Rev. Sandra Trice Gray, Chaplain

“…With [gratefulness] let your requests be made known to God.” Philippians 4:6b

“…Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with [gratefulness] in your hearts to God.” Colossians 3:16b

“Give thanks in all circumstances; ...” 1 Thessalonians 5:18a

In our fast-paced, frantic, and constantly changing lives, it’s easy to overlook the many things for which we have to be grateful. The things that are important and are most meaningful to us – we seem to take for granted. What we give attention to increases. If we give our problems all of our attention, they have a way of intensifying and taking over our lives. On the other hand, if we keep our minds occupied with the wonderful things in our lives, they will consume us and wonderfully good things will increase and take over our lives.

We attract what we think about most. Remember our thoughts are prayers and we are always praying. So, I'm suggesting we pray positive uplifting prayers, prayers of gratefulness for the blessings in our lives. Keeping our minds filled with thoughts of gratitude, helps to bring more things to be grateful for into our lives.

Why is developing a spirit of gratefulness important? It:

• Strengthens our relationship with God
• Increases our blessings
• Emulates God in the world (God radiates love, joy, peace, hope, compassion, kindness, understanding, etc.)

God’s Word tells us in Ephesians 6: 8 – “…Whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord.” Michael Angier says it this way: “If you learn to appreciate more of what you already have, you’ll find yourself having more to appreciate.”

In this constantly changing environment and these challenging times, we must focus on the good, imagine the miracles, and expect blessings.

A True Story

A client was diagnosed with Muscular Sclerosis (MS) [Ken] He came to me to share that information and was stunned with my response. He asked me: “Did you hear what I said?” He felt angry, hurt, and abandoned. His life was consumed with angry, hateful, and disappointing thoughts.

I shared with him my thoughts about healing. To his credit he listened without interrupting.

You must do what your doctors say, but also research and develop a plan for yourself. Be informed and partner with your doctor (don't follow their dictates without thinking about them.) Seek a holistic approach to your healing. Do things you enjoy (e.g. play your trumpet.)

I shared the importance of:

• Prayer (Pray: “Thy Will Be Done;” for your highest good to be manifested; Contemplative prayers; Meditative prayers; and prayers of Silence)
• Meditation (Listening to God and the divine guidance)
• Asking God to Change your outlook (through prayer and meditation)
• Keeping a weekly journal (Giving thanks for all your blessings)
• Forgiving easily (Send light and love into those circumstances, as you think positive and grateful thoughts)
• Being grateful for your enemies (They mirror something that needs to change in you)
• Identifying 3 things that you’re grateful for each night before you go to sleep

Needless to say, in that moment he considered me a real pain, but 3 months later he called to have lunch. He wanted to learn more about my thoughts on healing. Today (ten years later), he is a top legislative assistant and the usual debilitating effects of MS have not materialized.
Just to validate some of this, let's examine what the research says about the benefits of gratefulness:

(“Highlights from the Research Project on Gratitude and Thankfulness: Dimensions and Perspectives of Gratitude.” Co-Investigators: Robert A. Emmons, University of California, Davis and Michael E. McCullough, University of Miami.)

• In an experimental comparison, those who kept gratitude journals on a weekly basis exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic about the upcoming week.

• Participants who kept gratitude lists were more likely to have made progress toward important personal goals (academic, interpersonal, health-based, and [spiritual]).

• A daily gratitude intervention (self-guided exercises and spiritual practices) with young adults resulted in higher reported levels of the positive states of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness and energy.

• Participants in the daily gratitude condition were more likely to report having helped someone with a personal problem or having offered emotional support to another.

• In a sample of adults with neuromuscular disease, a 21-day gratitude intervention resulted in greater amounts of high energy positive moods, a greater sense of feeling connected to others, more optimistic ratings of one's life, and better sleep duration and sleep quality.

• Children who practice grateful thinking have more positive attitudes toward school and their families.

• Grateful people report higher levels of positive emotions, life satisfaction, vitality, optimism and lower levels of depression and stress. (It is important to note that grateful people do not deny or ignore the negative aspects of life.)

> “You teach gratitude to others by living it – every moment, every hour, and every day. Others will see the happiness that gratitude brings, and soon, they too will be grateful. And before you know it, you have started an epidemic of gratitude—what could be more wonderful?”

B J Gallagher

7 Steps to Gratefulness
(Select steps that you will actually do)

• Pray (giving thanks) / Meditate (listening to God allowing the Creator to shape your heart)

• Keep a gratitude journal

• Remember the Bad (Then contrast with good encourages the change that needs to take place in us: an increased “being” of gratefulness)

• Think grateful thoughts and send the “light and love” that emerges from them, into the world.

• Be grateful to your enemies (Discover what needs to change in you, then radiate “light and love” into those situations through your gratefulness)

• Practice gratefulness in all circumstances (blessings in disguise reveal truth)

• Make acknowledging your blessings a daily practice. (Before going to sleep, name 3 things for which you’re grateful. This directs your thoughts on the good and your mind will hold onto these things in your dreams)

A Prayer of Gratitude

Thank you God for Life’s Keystone of GRATEFULNESS, which is helping us strengthen our relationship with you – we are indeed grateful for this.

Thank you for keeping our minds filled with positive thoughts and prayers of gratefulness, for we know as we think – so are we.

Thank you for making our light of gratefulness radiate.

Thank you for helping us recognize the miracles that are around us every day, for which we are grateful.

Thank you for infusing our hearts with your presence enabling us to engage in loving actions that provide hope to others around the world.

Thank you for using us as Your instruments, we will follow Your guidance and share the blessings, demonstrating our gratefulness to You and to others as Your beacons of light, love and hope.

Here We Are Lord, As You Need Us to live with an attitude of gratitude!

Thank you!

Amen!

Volunteers of America Chesapeake Ministry Program helps clients, staff, and volunteers (as appropriate) grow in gratefulness and appreciation of “all things.” Understanding that fostering grateful attitudes for: our health, the “inner presence of God,” relationships, and gifts of the “Spirit” – we grow, daily, in gratefulness and our lives are infused with more of the same.
“I was speaking to some of our Church Leaders and they told me I think God just gave us our Ministry,” said Good Samaritan Pastor Wendy Wilkinson when we met at Baker House, Volunteers of America Chesapeake’s residential program for adults with intellectual disabilities.

“Our congregation looks forward to the arrival of the vans on Sunday, you can feel the energy increase when it arrives.”

In August, adults from three group homes began attending the Sunday service at Good Samaritan. Richard, a former Baker House resident, invited his housemates and friends to come with him to church.

“Richard, has been part of our church for several years. The more involved he became in our church family and our service the more we saw an opportunity to expand our ministry,” said Pastor Wendy.

And expand they did, Good Samaritan is now home to 9 Parishioners with special needs and the congregation continues to grow.

“We started out with just Richard and then he brought his friends from Baker House and now his housemates from his new home” said Pastor Wendy.

With the increase in church participation Pastor Wendy and her congregation began to seek ways to be more inclusive of their new members.

“The old model says you build special programs for individuals with special needs, but we’re all members of the body of Christ together,” said Pastor Wendy “we want to make all those who worship with us to feel included in all aspects of our ministry.”

To do this Pastor Wendy has submitted a grant to the Episcopal Diocese to fund inclusion materials from organizations like Friendship Ministries and Godly Play.

“We’re looking to incorporate more materials that help us meet these individuals where they are. We
are already offering an evening Bible study at Baker House but we would like to offer an inclusive Bible Study on Sunday mornings using the Friendship Ministries model of a buddy system so the adults with disabilities are paired with a partner during Bible study, who can help guide them through the story. During the Holy Eucharist we use a pictorial bulletin to help everyone follow along when it’s time to pray, or sing.”

“The books and information don’t break the Biblical stories down to where they are juvenile or insulting for our adults, just enough that the message is understandable so they can receive the word like anyone else” said Gail McLemore, Program Director at Baker House.

“ We learn about the people in the Bible, and how the whole ocean opened up and the good people got by. They were God’s chosen people” said James, a current Baker House resident, as he commented on the evening Bible study.

“Not many churches are addressing the spiritual needs of these adults,” said Pastor Wendy “According to the Faith Inclusion Network, there are programs for children with disabilities but not many for adults and by the grace of God they just came to us. We’re growing as a church together.”

The Good Samaritan congregation continues to raise awareness about Intellectual Disabilities, planning for additional inclusion events throughout the year. You can help fund these and other activities supporting spiritual development and inclusion by visiting www.voachesapeake.org and selecting Baker House under Donate Now.

“We’re all learning to work together and our efforts are starting to gain attention,” said Pastor Wendy, whose ministry serves as a test site for Godly Play, a national organization for the spiritual development of children. Good Samaritan is the first congregation to adopt the material for adults with intellectual disabilities. They are exploring using Godly Play to provide hands on spiritual development for individuals with intellectual disabilities through interactive Bible stories.
We’ve seen the power our partners, followers and fans can have so this summer we invite you to get connected!

Each week we’ll be picking members from our Mobile Community, our Facebook Fans and our Twitter Followers to show our appreciation for your help in spreading the word about Volunteers of America Chesapeake.

Our Called to Care™ prize packs are overflowing with give-aways for our fans who help us answer the Call to Care throughout our region so be sure to stay connected for your chance to win!

**Become a Fan on Facebook:**
Volunteers Of America Chesapeake

**Follow us on Twitter:**
@VOAChesapeake

**Join our Mobile Community:**
Text VOAC to 80077

**Stay up-to-date with our Blog:**
When I Needed You, a Blog about Self-Reliance on Wordpress.com
It’s Time To Help Out.

When you donate your car, RV or boat to Volunteers of America Chesapeake you demonstrate how you are Called to Care for over 10,000 men, women and children in our area. As a certified 501(c)(3) charity you can be certain that when you make a donation it will be fully tax deductible and go directly to individuals most in need. To find out more about our Car Donation Program and how you can answer the Call to Care please visit www.CarsHelpingPeople.org or call 877-721-4862.

Join a heritage of caring:
The Maude & Ballington Booth Legacy Society
For more information or to make a gift contact James Wynn at 240-764-2660.

Cars helping people.