



Community Connections

News for Supporters of United Community Ministries

From UCM Program Participant to Volunteer: A Journey of Success

Fourteen years ago, Edith Menjivar and her husband came to UCM because they needed help. They had been given an eviction notice from the mobile home park where they were living with their three young children because the land was being developed into a new Wal-Mart. The developers told the residents that they could either relocate their mobile homes or leave them for the company to take care of. Either way, though, all of the residents had to leave. They were told if they needed help, they should go to UCM.

At the time, Edith spoke very little English and had never heard of UCM. When she came to our offices, she asked to speak with a Spanish-speaking counselor. She met with Alex Pytel, who today is the Manager of the Basic Needs Program. Alex helped Edith's family get the funds they needed to move into a new home. "He gave me good advice, and helped me to find out about resources that could make our lives much better," recalls Edith. Although Edith's husband was working full-time, the family was struggling to make ends meet. Alex helped them get food from UCM's food pantry and diapers for their youngest child. They were able to get school supplies through UCM at the beginning of the school year and Christmas presents through UCM's holiday room. "I really appreciate everything that UCM did for me in that time," Edith says.

Today, Edith volunteers her time in UCM's food pantry. "It feels good to come back here—there are a lot of people here who I care about." Edith's two youngest children are in high school and her oldest started community college this fall. Her husband is a realtor and she has spent many years working in the mortgage industry.

She volunteers at UCM because, "It feels good to help other families.... I tell them to be patient and work hard. I tell them that it's not easy, but they can do it."



From the Desk of Cynthia

Today, one in seven Americans lives in poverty—the highest number since the Census Bureau began keeping statistics a half century ago. This past June, UCM finished Fiscal Year 2010 having served more than 14,000 people from over 5,000 families, which is 28% of the people in poverty in Fairfax County. That we can serve so many of our neighbors in need is a true testament to your generosity and that of many others who support our mission.

The men, women and children who come to UCM are the real faces of poverty and hunger in our country. They are each individuals, with their own histories, stories, challenges and successes. And we are inspired by them everyday. We clap with joy for the baby who takes his first steps at the BEL Center. We celebrate the worker who has gotten a job through our Workforce Development Center. We are amazed by the determination of the mother and her children who fled domestic violence and found shelter in one of UCM's transitional housing apartments.

At UCM, we meet people where they are in their lives and we work with them, one step at a time, to achieve a brighter future. They are our inspiration, our reason for being as an organization. With hard work and your help, together we are keeping hope alive.

Going the Extra Mile to Care for Those Who Cannot Come to UCM

Each week, UCM volunteer Jeff Dawes loads his truck with bags filled with groceries for people who cannot come to UCM to get the food they need to make it through the week. "Everyone I bring food to really looks forward to it and appreciates it," says James. Most of these individuals are elderly or struggle with severe disabilities that have left them homebound. This part of UCM's Basic Needs program began eight years ago in response to needs in the community.



Each week, volunteer Jeff Dawes brings food to elderly and disabled UCM program participants who are unable to come to UCM for food distribution.

James is a UCM program participant who is unable to come to the UCM food pantry to get the groceries that he needs. Ten years ago, James had a stroke that left him deaf in his right ear and severely limited the movement on the right side of his body.

The Veterans Administration provides James with a scooter to get around more easily and with the medications that he needs. However, he cannot get to UCM on his own. With no family or friends close by to help him get to UCM, he needs UCM to come to him. James calls UCM each week to sign up for food distribution. "The food from UCM is really important to me. I am so thankful for UCM's help," he says.



Because of a debilitating stroke James suffered ten years ago, he cannot come to UCM's food pantry. Fortunately, UCM is able to bring food to him!

We're Going Green!

To save funds, most of UCM's communication is sent via email. Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter by emailing sarah.stone@ucmagency.org. We will never sell or rent your name and you can unsubscribe at any time. You can also join us on **Facebook!**

Cross Off Those Names on Your Holiday List

Already dreading the prospect of shopping for holiday gifts? Does everyone you know already have everything they want? We have two easy ways for you to cross family and friends off your holiday list without ever having to set foot in the mall.

Friends of UCM Holiday Cards

Instead of purchasing another candle for your Aunt Sue, make a donation on her behalf! The Friends of UCM will send her a hand-written holiday card letting her know that a donation has been made in her honor. Have no fear: we will not tell her what the amount of your donation was. For more information, contact Christine Fiske at Christine.fiske@ucmagency.org or 703-768-7106 ext 328.

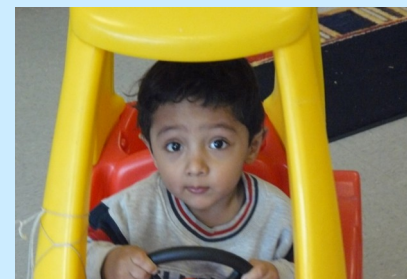
Memorial or Honor Gifts

Would Aunt Sue prefer a gift made in memory of your uncle or in honor of her grandson's birth to the basket of fruit you are planning to give her? Call or email us to arrange a memorial or honor gift and we will send her a letter letting her know that a gift was made in honor or memory of her loved one. For more information contact Capri.coleman@ucmagency.org or 703-768-7106 ext 305.

Helping Max Get Off to the Best Start

Max is a bright little boy who attend attends UCM's Bryant Early Learning (BEL) Center through a subsidy from the Office for Children. From the beginning, Max exhibited disruptive and aggressive behaviors at home and at school. Max's developmental assessments indicated delays, so the Child Development Specialist referred him to ChildFind, where it was determined his delays were largely behavioral.

Max's teachers developed individualized goals for him and worked closely with his parents, who did not possess the parenting skills to correct Max's inappropriate behavior. BEL's Child Development Specialist referred Max's parents to Spanish language parenting classes and the BEL staff worked hard to provide a firm, structured, consistent, and nurturing environment to support Max in developing positive social skills and behaviors. Because of these interventions, Max has made vast improvements in his behavior and overall demeanor.



A student at the BEL Center learns to "drive" a toy car.

Help UCM to Always Be Here to Help Those in Need

Won't you consider creating a legacy of caring while continuing to help your neighbors in need by naming UCM as a beneficiary in your will? By designating UCM as a recipient of your estate, you will continue to help community members in need long after you are gone.

Please consider the following options when remembering UCM in your estate arrangements:

- **Bequest:**
Specify either a percentage of assets or specified dollar amount for UCM in your will or estate plan.
- **Gifts of Property/Real Estate**
Gifts of appreciated property can be given to the UCM through a donor's will or living trust.
- **Life Insurance:**
Donate your fully paid life insurance policy to UCM.

This information should not be construed as legal advice. Make sure to talk with your lawyer about any estate arrangements you intend to make. To notify UCM, please call Niki Wanner at 703-768-7106 x 338 or email niki.wanner@ucmagency.org.

Do you already have us in your will? Please let us know.

Save the Date!

Capitol Steps Performance to Benefit UCM
Hosted by the Friends of UCM
Sunday, January 30, 2011

UCM Spring Gala
Hosted by the Friends of UCM
Saturday, April 2, 2011



The Friends of UCM at the 2010 Spring Gala.

Help Us Reach Our Help the Homeless Goals

This year we have sky high goals for Fannie Mae's 2010 Help the Homeless Program. We have 3,000 children and adults committed to registering to walk on our behalf. If we have the funds to register all of our walkers, we will be able to raise more than \$140,000—and your help will help us get there!

How You Can Help Us Reach Our Goals

- Donate funds to sponsor children in local schools whose families cannot afford the registration fee. Just \$15 sponsors a child or \$375 sponsors an entire classroom of children.
- Register to walk on the National Mall on November 20, 2010, and name UCM as the beneficiary organization you are walking for. You can register at www.helpthehomelessdc.org.



Youngsters from St. Luke's Day School walked to fight homelessness on October 6th and 7th.



Bryant Early Learning Center Open Enrollment

Now Accepting Applications!

We provide:

- State-licensed, accredited child care for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years
- Highly dedicated staff
- Kindergarten readiness
- Affordable rates
- Subsidized childcare through the Office for Children





United Community

Ministries, Inc.

7511 Fordson Road
Alexandria VA 22306

Phone: (703) 768-7106

Fax: (703) 768-4788

Visit Our Thrift Store!

UCM's Back Porch Thrift Store is a great place to find hidden treasures and to donate your gently used clothing, household items and furniture. Stop in today!

Open:

Mon - Wed, Fri, Sat	10 am - 6 pm
Thursday	10 am - 8 pm
Sundays	Noon - 6 pm

7838 Richmond Hwy
Alexandria, VA 22306

Shop. Donate. Recycle. Repeat.

Fiscal Year 2010 Highlights

- More than 14,000 individuals from over 5,600 households received services from UCM.
- UCM's Basic Needs Program served 10,600 people.
- UCM's three two-year transitional housing programs provided intensive counseling, case management and life skills classes with the goal of bringing participants to the level of independent living.
- Healthy Families Fairfax, a highly successful child abuse and neglect prevention program, served 640 families. Zero cases of abuse were found.
- UCM's Workforce Development Center provided 739 individuals with job readiness training.
- More than 1,200 individuals took part in programming at UCM's Community Centers in the Sacramento and Creekside Village neighborhoods.
- Fifteen children graduated from UCM's Bryant Early Learning Center ready to start kindergarten in the fall.



CFC #37839



United Community Ministries is funded in part by Fairfax County.



United Way #8199