



# Family Focus

FALL 2009

## Northern Virginia Family Service Joins Forces with SERVE

### NVFS/SERVE Merger Information

- » Current recipients of service will see no change in the assistance they receive. It's possible that there will be additional complementary services to expand what is currently offered.
- » This decision was driven by the boards of directors of both organizations, in accordance with their governance structures.
- » The leadership structure of Northern Virginia Family Service will remain intact, and the new program will be called "SERVE - a Program of NVFS"

In an historic move for both organizations, the boards of Northern Virginia Family Service and SERVE, Inc. (Securing Emergency Resources through Volunteer Efforts) have voted to go forward with a plan to merge. The final documents are currently being prepared, with the official merger scheduled to occur in early November.

SERVE, Inc. was founded in 1975 by a group of concerned volunteers who desired to meet the emergency needs of families in Prince William County. The first services offered were a food and clothing closet funded through small monetary and in-kind donations. By 2002, it had become the largest organization of its type in the County, with the construction of a new, custom-designed, state-of-the-art facility located on 5.3 acres and comprised of three buildings totaling nearly 25,000 square feet.

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## Starting Over: A Mom's Tough Decision

Andrea Castillo made a decision several years ago that turned her world upside-down and put her in a position of great need. The decision was a good one: to move away from her abusive husband in order to protect her 6-month-old son. But the decision was also a painful one to make because she had to leave a whole life behind. In order to create a safe space for herself apart from her abuser, she had to move out of a home she partially owned, leave a salaried job, and abandon a network of friends that she knew would only end up goading her back into the abusive relationship. As a result, she found herself in a position that she never expected: homeless and jobless with a child.

Andrea's search for help started where just about anyone in her situation would start. She

*continued on page 4*



Andrea Castillo at our BEST Transitional House.

### NVFS FACT

Last year, 100% of our housing counseling clients were able to keep a stable residence by keeping current with their rental or mortgage payments.

## Upcoming NVFS Events

Stay up-to-date at [www.nvfs.org](http://www.nvfs.org)

### 22nd Annual Help The Homeless Walkathon

(Saturday, November 21)

Since 1988, the Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Program has brought together caring and committed individuals to work toward preventing and ending homelessness in our region. It has become the largest funding collaborative in the nation focused on homelessness, raising more than \$70 million for nonprofit organizations in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area that serve homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless. Each year, we join tens of thousands of our neighbors in this walk to raise awareness and funds to end homelessness. WE NEED YOUR HELP TOO!

Adults and youth can participate in the Walkathon, which will take place on Saturday, November 21 on the National Mall. Registration opens at 7 am, with the program beginning at 8:30 am. The Walkathon is a 5K stroll around the beautiful National Mall.

We are looking for walkers as well as donors to sponsor youth walkers. Our goal is to register 3,000 walkers, so we can earn an incentive award of \$50,000. With your participation, we can do it. Please contact Jennifer Rose, NVFS Community Engagement Specialist at 703-219-2174 if you can participate or help us in this effort.

### We Are America Now Breakfast

(March 5, 2010)

We Are America Now, a breakfast event that recognizes the contributions of immigrants in this region, will take place on March 5, 2010. The event honors individuals in Northern Virginia who have made positive immigrant contributions in their communities, and focuses on their indispensable presence in this region. If you have immigrant success stories, we would like to showcase them. If you have first-hand knowledge of individuals who deserve to be recognized for their immigrant contributions to this region, please contact Crista Peterson, Director of Annual Giving Programs, at [cpeterson@nvfs.org](mailto:cpeterson@nvfs.org) or 703.219.2136.

### Gifting for Families Holiday Drive

Make a difference in the lives of thousands of needy children this holiday season. Through Gifting for Families, NVFS provides grocery cards, gift cards and toys to families in need to help make the holiday season a little brighter. We anticipate providing assistance to well over 1,000 families this year.

To support our Gifting for Families Drive:

- Donate gift cards of \$20 or \$25 for Shopper's, Safeway, Giant, Wal-Mart or Target
- Donate new, unwrapped toys
- Volunteer in our Toy Closet (location TBA)
- Make a generous financial contribution

In order to properly process the donations and get them into the hands of those in need, we will need items by the following deadlines:

#### Gift Cards (Delivered to our office in Oakton)

**November 13** for Thanksgiving Grocery Cards

**December 14** for Holiday Grocery & Gift Cards

#### New, Unwrapped Toys (Delivered to our Toy Closet - location TBA)

**December 9-11 & 14-16** between 10am-2pm or by appointment

To participate contact Jennifer Rose at [jrose@nvfs.org](mailto:jrose@nvfs.org) or 703.219.2174.

### The 2010 Road to Independence Gala

(May 14, 2010)

This event includes silent and live auctions and Community Champion awards, and celebrates NVFS as the leading resource for families in need in our region. It also recognizes the generous donors and supporters who are dedicated to giving back to the community. The prestigious event draws an audience of over 500. For information about in-kind donations and sponsorship needs, please contact Crista Peterson, Director of Annual Giving Programs, at [cpeterson@nvfs.org](mailto:cpeterson@nvfs.org) or 703.219.2136.

As always, we want to acknowledge the generosity of our Principal Partners who contribute financially and also give their time and expertise to ensure that NVFS programs are a success!

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## NVFS and SERVE *(continued from page 1)*

The success of SERVE's programs in Prince William County has been due in large part to the extraordinary support and commitment of community involvement and volunteerism. Without the exceptional commitment of all parts of the community, including government and public entities, civic organizations, a wide range of religious congregations, local and regional businesses and extremely dedicated private citizens, SERVE, Inc. alone, with its modestly-sized professional staff, would not have been able to provide its many critically important services over the years. NVFS honors and respects this remarkable tradition and intends to bring its expertise and resources to extend the reach and impact of these programs even further.

When the merger occurs, SERVE's staff will then become employees of NVFS. The five-acre campus and its programs currently serving nearly 15,000 people each year will be called..."SERVE, a program of NVFS."

This merger of programs will create a cohesive continuum of integrated human services designed to move individuals, families and children out of poverty and homelessness along a path to independence and brighter futures. By combining NVFS' programs in early childhood education, health care access, affordable housing and workforce development with SERVE's homeless shelter, emergency assistance, food distribution and transitional housing programs, those with limited resources will now have an even more comprehensive array of supportive services for themselves and their children.

Today nearly every non-profit is confronted by the challenge of meeting increased demand with fewer resources to support that need.

"During this period of economic downturn, it is becoming increasingly important to find innovative ways to deliver quality care and assistance to our region's poor and underserved," states NVFS President and CEO Mary Agee. "With the degree of commonality between the services and client-bases of both organizations, we expect to be able to continue to deliver the same services and even expand our efforts in certain programs once the merger has been finalized. By integrating programs, we believe we can most effectively advance our missions in the Manassas community and the entire Northern Virginia region."

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## Starting Over *(continued from page 1)*

immediately sought help from her family. She returned to her childhood home in the Bronx and found a place to get back on her feet. But a legal battle quickly ensued, and she was required by law to establish residence in Northern Virginia because of a decision establishing joint legal custody over the child, even though she was granted complete physical custody.

Having returned to Northern Virginia, Andrea knew she needed help in order to start her new life. She contacted an emergency shelter and was able to stay for their 30-day time period. She then moved into a transitional home which allowed her to have a safe place to live while she worked through all the legal and financial battles of her divorce. While she was able to find work as a Pharmacy Technician, she had even bigger dreams than that. Her dream was to become a nurse, but she had no idea how she would accomplish that given the situation she was in.

Andrea found out about the Building, Encouraging, Supporting & Teaching (BEST) Transitional Housing Program offered by NVFS through a caseworker. What made BEST a unique fit for her was that through the program, NVFS would enable her to pursue a degree. Most other transitional housing programs require the individual to work full-time in order to stay in the home. Our approach is one that values education as a means for independence as well, requiring only part-time work in order to remain in the home. This structure enabled Andrea to attend classes full-time, work part-time hours in order to pay her rent, and to still have time at home with her young son.

“The BEST program helped me put it all together,” she says. “My career, my child, stabilizing relationships, and of course my schooling.” Andrea has been able to maintain a small but stable income during her time in the home provided by NVFS. In addition, she excelled in her nursing program and is now a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). “BEST even helped me to secure a scholarship for my schooling, and they made sure that I was able to finish. I wouldn’t have been able to pay for school otherwise.”

Andrea recognizes that there is still work to do in order to solidify her position in the community. “This, for me, is the second-to-last step to independence.” She explains that as soon as she is able to secure full-time employment, she expects to be able to afford to move into a home of her own. Her son, now three years old, will start school in a couple of years and she wants him to have stable roots in a community where he can grow up. Even further down the road, she has hopes of becoming an RN.

Through it all, she has appreciated all the extra help and counsel she has received through the case management that NVFS has provided. “I still contact my case manager a couple of times each week,” she explains. “They have even allowed me to come into the office and use their computer and fax machine during my job search. They have subsidized my son’s day care, and even helped me get along better with my roommate. I look back and know that I was in a difficult situation. I had to start my life over, especially to make it better for my son. I’m so grateful BEST gave me the ability to pursue more schooling.”

## Good Works

*People can reach out in many unique ways to support the communities in which they live. All of these efforts, in one way or another, have a profound effect upon families and children in our region. These are just a few examples of how our supporters have chosen to give back.*

### Making Lemonade out of Lemons

Ellie, 6 and Riley, 5 are 2 sisters, who know how to make things happen! They heard about NVFS’ need for school supplies and decided that they wanted to help other kids. They decided to sell lemonade on a particularly hot afternoon in August to raise money to participate in the drive. They raised enough money in one afternoon to buy 2 backpacks and fill them with a ton of everything a student could need to start the school year off right! Way to go girls!



## Announcing The *Family Legacy Society*

Since its very earliest days in 1924, Northern Virginia Family Service has provided vital services to countless individuals and families struggling in their challenge to become independent and self-sufficient. Although the nature and number of the various Agency programs have changed over the course of those 85 years, the mission of the Agency has remained constant... "to empower individuals and families to improve their quality of life, and to promote community cooperation and support in responding to family needs."

That promise of service and steadfastness has not wavered. To honor the valuable legacy of our mission and the loyal support of the myriad supporters who have made our work possible, NVFS proudly announces The Family Legacy Society established to recognize those who make estate and deferred gift provisions for Northern Virginia Family Service.

All members of The Family Legacy Society will receive a small token and certificate of membership which we hope will be proudly displayed. In addition, a cumulative list of members will be published each year in the Annual Report and may appear, as appropriate, in various other Agency publications. A member's name will appear only with his or her permission. As membership grows, there may be occasional social events which are as yet unscheduled.

Charter membership will include those donors, both living and deceased, whose notification of Agency inclusion in their estate or deferred gift plans reached us from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2010. If you are interested in becoming a charter member, we welcome your participation. The simple instructions are as follows:

1. If you have not already done so, consult your legal and financial advisors to inform them of your charitable intentions.
2. As soon as Northern Virginia Family Service is included in your provisions – or if you have questions, please use the enclosed envelope or notify the Development Office with either a call to 703.219.2130 or a brief letter addressed to:

Carole C. Fay  
Chief Development Officer  
Northern Virginia Family Service  
10455 White Granite Drive, Suite 100  
Oakton, VA 22124

We invite your membership as you join in preserving the NVFS legacy of *Help • Hope • Here*.

## Special Foster Care



Become a therapeutic foster parent to a special needs child and help put the pieces together again.

### Have you been wondering...

- What does it mean to be a foster/respite parent?
- Can I work when I am a foster parent?
- What type of support will I have?
- Do I have to be married?
- Is there a chance for adoption?
- Where will the child go to school?
- How long would I keep the child?
- What does it mean to be a special needs child?

The Special Foster Care and Therapeutic Respite Care Program of NVFS holds regular training sessions for people interested in learning more about the ins and outs of being a foster or respite parent. As families come in all shapes and sizes, so do our foster and respite parents.

For questions or to register, contact Ginny Snaider at 703.219.2184 or [gsнаider@nvfs.org](mailto:gснаider@nvfs.org).

Thank You

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THE ROAD TO  
INDEPENDENCE  
GALA 2010

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The Road to Independence Gala provides a festive and elegant setting for community and business leaders and supporters to celebrate the impact of NVFS on families and children in need. You can make a difference by embracing our mission to empower individuals and families to improve their quality of life. Please help us impact our community!

For more information about the event or sponsorship, please contact Crista Peterson, Director of Annual Giving Programs at 703.219.2136 or [cpeterson@nvfs.org](mailto:cpeterson@nvfs.org).

### Family Volunteer Day:

Join us on November 21 to celebrate Family Volunteer Day! This nationally recognized day of service is designed to demonstrate the power of families who choose to volunteer together and impact their communities. NVFS will be offering several entertaining, all-age-appropriate family volunteer opportunities from 10am-2pm that day. Join in the fun or learn more by contacting Anna Rogers at 703.219.2193 or [arogers@nvfs.org](mailto:arogers@nvfs.org).

## Family Focus

*return service requested*

*Help • Hope • Here*

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Northern Virginia Family Service



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