

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

the newsletter of A WIDER CIRCLE

Issue 8, December 2010

A WIDER CIRCLE'S CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



Help us fill in the last photo with a beautiful and dignified place for those who come to us for help!

In the summer of 2010, many of you helped kick off A Wider Circle's first-ever Capital Campaign, with our goal being to raise \$250,000 to expand our space by 2,000 square feet. *Many Hands, Inc.* granted A Wider Circle \$100,000 to ignite the campaign, and a few months later, *Giving Together* granted us \$20,000 to make even more possible.

With demand for our services skyrocketing as the year progressed, and with the early success of the campaign, we decided to expand from our current 9,000 square-foot facility to more than 21,000 square feet! With your help, we can fill in that last picture by making the new Center a dynamic place for families to get the support they need to lift themselves out of poverty. Our Capital Campaign will now run until **March 31**, and if you are ever in the neighborhood we would love to show you around.

Marian's authentic journey (cont. from page 4)

Marian Cooper's commitment to service not only earned her the Fellowship at A Wider Circle; it lifted her into the life of service she knew was the truth she had to live. "My interest in community service came from the realization that as I was advancing in my career and education, I could see my world becoming more and more exclusive. I thought about why I smile or acknowledge some people on the street and avoid the eyes of others. I remember thinking, 'if I ran into a celebrity on the street, I would greet him, and if he were lost, I would be so happy to help him. I would tell my family and friends that I helped this person. Why? Because I value him as a person.' I thought, 'what if I extended that same value to all people. And what if I not only embraced the idea that all people have value but lived it out day to day? What if I decided that any person, no matter his or her situation, was worth my time and effort?'"

"I see A Wider Circle as a way to break the cycles of poverty I have witnessed my whole life. A Wider Circle is a beacon of light to a person entrapped by the negative environment and limited choices. I'm extremely excited to join the team, contribute all I have to offer, and learn from the dedicated people who work and volunteer here. I believe it is possible to be the agent of change in a community, and I know this effort is worth devoting my life to."



Peace... at last

Thanks to a \$350,000 grant from the TKF Foundation, A Wider Circle is building a 1,500 square-foot Sacred Space on the grounds of Sibley Plaza, a public

housing residence for seniors and individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C. The residents of Sibley Plaza (some of whom are pictured here getting ready to start digging!) helped create the blueprint for the space, which they now call their Peace Garden. Ms. Ann Clark, President of the Sibley Plaza Resident Council, inspired the crowd at the groundbreaking event on November 16. "There is so much noise, and this peace garden will be so beautiful. I have been here for 42 years; this is one of the very best days."

The space will be completed in the spring of 2011. A Wider Circle is partnering with American University to research the quality of life changes that result from the garden. From the energy at the groundbreaking, the benefits have already begun.

The past, present, & future of A Wider Circle

The Past & Present

	2008	2009	2010*
Number of families whose homes we have furnished per year	828	1,805	2,475
Referrals from government, non-profit, and other social service agencies per month	30	90	300
Number of phone calls per day	200	250	300
Number of pick-ups of furniture and home goods per month	117	164	306
Pounds of furniture and home goods recycled per year	700,000	1,000,000	1,650,000

* Figures for 2010 are current as of November 28, 2010

The Future

A Wider Circle has served more than 55,000 people to date. However, in an effort to help individuals and families truly gain the **independence** that most characterizes the rise out of poverty, we are expanding our efforts in the following manner:

Outward Expansion:

- Grow from 9,000 to 21,000 square feet
- Provide every family that comes to A Wider Circle with a supply of *Healthy Basics* – to include new cleaning supplies, personal care items, and healthy non-perishable foods
- Build “smart classrooms” at the expanded Center

Inward Expansion:

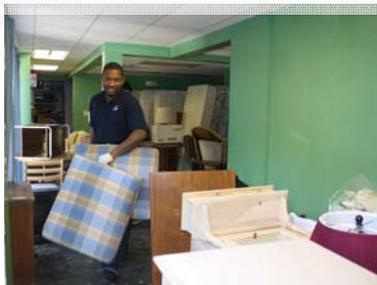
- Do home visits before and after families come to A Wider Circle to select their furniture
- Offer educational materials and classes to every person who receives furniture and home goods
- Match families in need of long-term support with families seeking to become more involved in community service

Welcoming home eight formerly homeless veterans

“This looks like a hotel or something. I couldn't believe it was mine!”

These were the words of an individual who, after nine years of service overseas, had fallen on hard times and found himself homeless in our nation’s capital. On Veterans Day 2010, this was remedied. A Wider Circle partnered with the United States Veteran’s Initiative-D.C., William C. Smith + Co., and Mattress Discounters to give eight formerly homeless veterans a fresh start in life. We provided furniture and home goods (ranging from dressers to toaster ovens, and everything in between!) for four, two-bedroom units of supportive housing for these individuals. Mattress Discounters donated eight brand new beds. “I thought I must have walked into the wrong apartment,” one veteran exclaimed, “It looks so nice!”

8:30 a.m.
Edwin Bowen begins the day by loading up the items at A Wider Circle’s Center for Community Service.



The Wider Circle team unloads on-site and...

the empty apartments of eight veterans...



become fully furnished homes.

2:00 p.m.

Some of the folks who make it happen



Lauren Snow, Director of Education, joined the staff team in October 2010. Lauren brings an incredible amount of heart and mind to her leadership position at A Wider Circle. "What excites me most is direct contact with the people we serve and connecting them with the resources they need to lift themselves out of poverty," shares Lauren. Anyone who has met Lauren knows that the educational programs of A Wider Circle are in good hands!



Anne Thompson, Assistant Director, had been a core volunteer and then Board Member of A Wider Circle for several years before answering the call to help manage the growing day-to-day operations. Hard to imagine how we got along without her here every day, and we mean *every day!* Anne dedicates seven days/week to help our neighbors. Her belief that we can end poverty drives her efforts, and she quotes Willa Cather as inspiration: "Where there is great love, there are always miracles."



Emerson Halstead, Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program Coordinator, joined the staff in October 2010. He immediately helped raise the level of service we bring not only to those who come to A Wider Circle to select items but to those he meets each day as he collects items from around the region. Says Emerson, "The opportunity to impact lives makes all the effort feel effortless."



Edwin Bowen, Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program Coordinator, joined the team first as a volunteer and then became a staff member in June 2010. Edwin works six-seven days/week, and his strength is matched only by the compassion for others that he brings to the job. "I consider this more of a blessing than a job," shares Edwin after a day of loading and unloading furniture.

Creating What is Possible

In the 18th century, we fought for freedom and liberated an estimated 2.5 million people. In the 19th century, we abolished slavery and gave freedom to an estimated 4 million people. In the 20th century, the women's suffrage and civil rights movements gave freedom and equality to about 70 million people.

In the 21st century, it is poverty that keeps people from being free, and our next major accomplishment must be to use the resources we have to free the 44 million people currently held down by poverty and its many effects.

Thanks to you ...

This summer, Mark Bergel, A Wider Circle's Founder and Executive Director, was named the Washington Nationals "All Star Among Us" by People Magazine and Major League Baseball. The award "honors individuals who have made incredible contributions to their community." Thanks to all who voted - we hope this award will bring more awareness to the work of A Wider Circle.



THANK YOU TO OUR 2010 MAJOR SUPPORTERS

TKF Foundation • Many Hands, Inc. • Giving Together
The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation • M&T Bank
Whole Foods Market • Blake and Sons • Hodgson Consulting
Montgomery County Executive Grant Program • Temple Sinai
Silverman Family Fund • Carole and Barry Forman Family Fund
Mattress Discounters • Gannett Foundation • IE Discovery, Inc.
Coldwell Banker Cares Foundation • H. Lawrence Clark Gift Fund
Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament • Nailba Charitable Foundation
Berman Family Foundation • Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Richmond Jewish Foundation • Silver Spring Gymnastics and Fitness
American Women's Club of Luxembourg • Room and Board Store
Montgomery County Council • St. Alban's Parish • SysArc, Inc.
Montgomery County Community Foundation • GAP Foundation
John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation • Healthy Back Store
St. Mark's Presbyterian Church • Holy Trinity Catholic Church
Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ
Marriot Business Services • Temple Sinai Sisterhood
D.C. Housing Authority • Noblis, Inc.

Marian Cooper's authentic journey to A Wider Circle



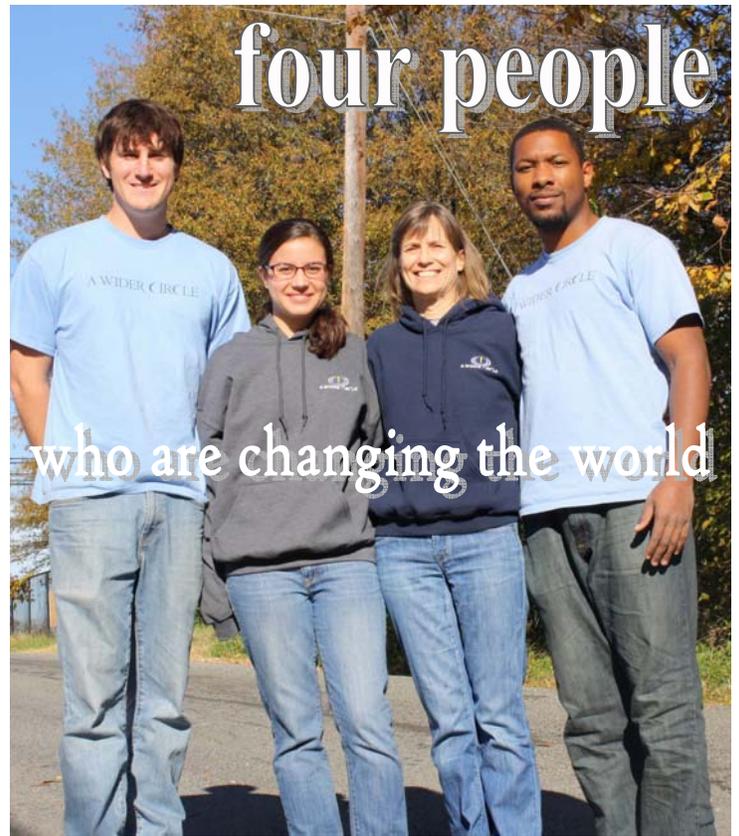
"Out of the 15-20 boys with whom I grew up in Philadelphia, only two have not been to prison," shares Marian Cooper, A Wider Circle's new Community Outreach Fellow. Her authentic journey from her Philadelphia roots to her new position at A Wider Circle finds her working long days at our Center for Community Service in Silver Spring, MD and then going home to her apartment in a Washington, D.C. neighborhood that most would never choose as a home. "From my window I can see so many cycles relating to poverty, from drug dealing to unemployment. And the violence, with children walking right past

it every day. It's one thing to walk through life and fall into a trap; it's another thing to be born into it. If all you know is what's in the trap, your life is going to be very limited"

Read more of Marian's story on page one.

also inside:

The Past, Present, & Future of A Wider Circle



New 2010 team members (from left to right) Emerson Halstead, Lauren Snow, Anne Thompson, and Edwin Bowen made this Saturday - and every other day in 2010 - a great day of service. Meet each of them inside.



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A WIDER CIRCLE