Message from Executive Director 
Michael L. Ferrell

Dear Friends,
Welcome to the Coalition Connection summer newsletter! I would like to take this opportunity to thank our clients for all the hard work they do to improve their lives. We are grateful to you for sharing your unique stories which increases awareness of how it feels to be homeless, and what it takes to recover. The paths to homelessness vary and many of you have suffered tragedies and disappointments that could afflict any of us. The Coalition is pleased that we are involved in helping you improve your circumstances.

Thank you to all the individual donors, Coalition staff, businesses, churches, civic groups, and agencies who have helped us improve the lives of homeless citizens. Thank you to our board of Directors, in January we completed a retreat together. It was a successful process, and we emerged with a Five-Year Strategic Plan and a strong vision statement. I believe we have come out of the retreat re-energized and focused on the years to come.

Thank you to our volunteers. You are an inspiration! You have touched the lives of so many of our clients and staff. We truly appreciate your dedication and effort. Have a wonderful summer and look for our next newsletter in the fall.

---

contents

Message from Executive Director 1
Mark Your Calendar 1
Doris J. Washington steps down as Chairperson 2
Coalition’s New Chairperson, Geoffrey P. Lewis 3
Kwaku Bonsra retires after 26 years 4
CFH Forms Partnership with NAPUS Federal Credit Union 4
Around the program sites 5
About the Coalition for the Homeless 6
**passing the gavel**

Doris J. Washington reflects on her years of service with the Coalition for the Homeless.

On March 18, 2013, outgoing Chairman of the Coalition for the Homeless, Doris J. Washington passed the ceremonial Gavel to Chairman-Elect Geoffrey Lewis during a Board of Directors meeting. Washington stated, “It is with great pride and support that I pass the Chairmanship gavel into the capable hands of Geoffrey Lewis and the many talents he brings to the position.”

For twenty years, Washington’s steadfast and noteworthy leadership has been demonstrated in various roles. She began in 1993 as a member of the Coalition’s Board of Advisors. She was later elected as Board Secretary in 1997 before transitioning to the role of Chair in 2006.

Ms. Washington was presented with a special gift and long stemmed roses by Executive Director Michael Ferrell as he expressed “appreciation for her leadership and dedication to the mission and programs of the Coalition for the Homeless.”

At the ceremony, Washington shared reasons for her long time involvement in the Coalition. Having managerial and executive level experience in the federal sector’s housing and financial services industries, she was naturally drawn to addressing the plight of homelessness in her local community. She stated, “It’s been a great privilege and an honor to serve as Chair of such a significant housing and services provider”. While Washington’s successful tenure was applauded by the incoming Chair, the Executive Director and her colleagues, she was quick to give credit to her fellow board members for their commitment and support.

Washington led the Coalition with the mantra that as we work to rebuild the lives of the homeless and their families, we indeed strengthen our local communities. She continually stressed the need for collaborations with corporate, business, non-profit, and faith-based organizations. “By aligning our resources with others, we are able to develop effective solutions and strategies that address the problems and challenges that the homeless face”, she stated. Washington added that while the organization has come through some challenging periods, she was proud that the Coalition is financially healthy and able to address the goal of ending homelessness in the District of Columbia.

In an effort to strengthen the Coalition’s workforce development program, Ms. Washington initiated the Coalition’s first Jobs and Apprenticeship Fair with the support of locally elected officials, trade associations, and employers. This program has evolved in its offerings and is now in its 5th year. She was integral in advancing the Coalition’s development program; she spearheaded the most successful fundraiser in the Coalition’s history as it celebrated 30 years of providing services to homeless individuals and families. Also of note, Ms. Washington organized the activities which resulted in completion of the Coalition for the Homeless’ Strategic Plan for 2013 – 2018. We thank her for a job well done.
It is my privilege to introduce myself as the newly elected Chairperson of the Coalition for the Homeless Board of Directors. My name is Geoffrey Lewis, and I have been a member of the board for 20 years. I remember being impressed by the organization and its staff, and so touched by the testimonials of women and men whose lives were changed by the Coalition. I decided that the Coalition was the organization I wanted to be involved in—an organization that was giving individuals and families with children the opportunity to make positive changes, and to rise above the unfortunate circumstances. I met clients, and they have expressed excitement and commitment about moving forward in a way that would sustain their confidence and independence and enable them to live useful, well-balanced lives.

Over the years, I have seen the Coalition grow enormously and go through some exciting changes and challenges. Each and every step of the way, we have attempted to hold fast to our mission and serve clients in the best possible way. Unfortunately, the need for services continues to grow, and as we take an objective look as to how best to accommodate those needs, we are continually exploring new opportunities for collaboration, improvement, expansion and growth. We are excited about these new developments, and the promise of things to come over the next year. I would like to thank all of you for your continued support, and hope to see you at the Stepping out for the Homeless fundraising event for what promises to be a fabulous evening.

I would also like to welcome newly elected board officers Richard Appleton as Co-Chair and Pamela Gibbs as Secretary. Prior to being elected, both were existing board members. Richard is also the Chairperson of the Coalition’s Development Committee. Finally, I would like to recognize and thank from the bottom of my heart, Doris Washington, the immediate past Chairperson of the board of directors.

I remember being impressed by the organization and its staff, and so touched by the testimonials of women and men whose lives were changed by the Coalition.
Kwaku Bonsra Director of Finance and Administration retires after 26 years

Kwaku Bonsra retired on April 4, 2013 from the Coalition for the Homeless after 26 years of dedicated service. Kwaku joined the Coalition in October 1987 as an Accountant and received a promotion to Director of Finance and Administration in August 1997 to oversee the management of the Coalition’s financial operations.

Kwaku is described as the right hand man to the Executive Director, Michael Ferrell. While there is no magic formula for having a strong relationship between the Finance Director and Executive Director, the bedrock for this crucial relationship is based on mutual respect and trust.

The Executive Director expressed his gratitude to Kwaku for his dedicated service to the organization. He added that he had the highest respect for Kwaku who was very instrumental in improving the Finance Department’s infrastructure and processes.

Kwaku posed a high level of integrity and ethical standards. He was honest, reliable and able to develop and maintain the trust of board members, staff and business associates.

We wish Kwaku and his family all the best. He and his wife will retire in their homeland of Ghana, West Africa.

Coalition for the Homeless Begins New Partnership with NAPUS Federal Credit Union

The Coalition for the Homeless has developed a partnership with NAPUS (National Association of Postmasters of the United States) Federal Credit Union that will allow Coalition staff, board members and volunteers and their families to join the credit union. Previously this membership was only open to postal workers and their families. Many staff at the Coalition has opened accounts, applied for loans, and seeking financial education. We hope soon to be able to expand this service to our clients and donors.

“We believe that others in the community and their families could benefit from our services. We are proud to expand our membership base and improve our ties to the community and to help individuals achieve their financial goals,” says Elaine Ether, Director of Lending at NAPUS.

The Coalition’s Executive Director Michael Ferrell sees this as a win-win situation. The partnership is aligned with Coalition’s on-going effort to incorporate financial education into the workplace.

We are proud to expand our membership base and improve our ties to the community and to help individuals achieve their financial goals.

NAPUS Federal Credit Union was chartered in April, 1970. Since the inception of the Credit Union, they have grown to more than 30,000 members and expanded their lines of service to include savings accounts, consumer loans, credit cards, and mortgage products.
The Coalition for the Homeless clients had more than $86,432.93 in escrow at the end of March 2013. The Coalition encourages individuals to save and strive for self-sufficiency. The funds collected from clients are deposited in their own interest bearing-accounts. The money saved can be used for the first month rent, security deposit and to buy household furnishings or to fulfill other basic needs when the client leaves the program.

**Rodney** came to Emery Work Bed Program in 2009 after he lost her job and was living place to place. He utilized all the opportunities the program has to offer, secured full-time employment in the trucking field and is preparing to move into his own apartment.

**Iveth** entered Valley Place Family Apartments in 2011 with her daughter. Having never been homeless, it was quite a learning experience. Since moving to Valley Place, she completed a Home Health Aide Training Program and is employed in the nursing field. She will graduate from Roosevelt S.T.A.Y. program in August 2013 with her high school diploma. She has saved money through the Coalition’s escrow program, established a checking and savings account and found childcare for her daughter. She moved into a two-bedroom apartment on May 26, 2013. To reduce the chances of another episode of homelessness, her apartment is subsidized, and she will receive other housing assistance.

**André** earned a degree in education, general studies and management from Virginia Western Community College, and in 2012 transferred to Howard University in hopes of pursuing a dual degree in Sociology and political science. Sadly, due to financial issues he was unable to complete his education at Howard. With no place to live, he was homeless and entered the Emery Work Bed Program. He used his networking skills and found a job, enrolled back into school, and found housing. André’ currently attends the University of the District of Columbia where he is pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology/Anthropology.

**Lamont** became homeless in 2012. Although he was going through a difficult time, he was determined to do the right thing. Lamont is thankful that he graduated from high school, never used drugs, and never been in any trouble and hoped with a clean record someone would hire him. He called the Employment and Training Assistance Program at the Coalition for Homeless to help him find a job. Within weeks, he interviewed and was hired at Au Bon Pain Café bakery. Lamont loves his job and is thankful for the Coalition’s assistance.

**Michael** entered Blair Transitional Rehabilitation Program in 2012, homeless, unemployed and depressed about his current situation. With the assistance of the case management team, Michael was able to overcome barriers and focus more on how the program could be a benefit. He volunteered in the Blair kitchen; he became a member of a church, secured income, opened an escrow account and participated in life skill classes. In April 2013, Michael moved into permanent housing and is no longer homeless.

around the program sites

Clients are taking active roles in improving their lives.

André D. Tucker
about the coalition for the homeless

Our mission is to help transition homeless at risk individuals and families to self-sufficiency through housing programs and supportive services. We fulfill our mission by operating and managing 12 programs including the Virginia Williams Resource Center (VWFRC), the central intake office for all families in the District of Columbia.

giving opportunities

- Donate through annual giving
- Individual donors or corporations can sponsor or underwrite programs and services offered by the Coalition for the Homeless
- Donate through the United Way of the National Capital Area
- Donate through Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)
- Make donation through Network for Good
- Donate through your organization’s workplace giving program