

SPRING 2023

NEWS FROM facets



Taking the (Next) Steps from Homelessness to Housed

Last summer Ella and Jacob were full of joy. Happily married, the couple was celebrating the arrival of a new baby into their growing family. Then the unthinkable – Jacob tragically passed and the family lost their home. By September Ella was living in FACETS' Next Steps emergency shelter with a newborn and her five other children. Said one of our caring staff members, "It was a moment you can't even really express. Everything the family knew in life was unraveling and falling apart. How does someone manage that? Six kids by herself in shelter."

On any given night in Fairfax County, 1,200 of our neighbors, including children, are experiencing homelessness. To help address this crisis, our Next Steps Family Program in Alexandria provides emergency shelter and case management to families in need. Our Next Steps office has been flooded with referrals, with half of the families seeking shelter in Fairfax County being directed to our program. In February alone, there were nearly 200 people in our shelters and overflow motels, including 120 children. FACETS is working overtime to address this increase in need and ensure no family is turned away.

Ella and her children found the support they needed at FACETS. They were immediately matched with their case manager, Roger, and with his help, Ella was able to focus on housing and employment goals. She was able to secure a housing voucher but was struggling to navigate the system. Working as much as she could when her children were in school, Ella kept her head up despite her grief. Finally, with FACETS' help, Ella was able to find an apartment and put down a security deposit.

Ella didn't want to get her children's hopes up; they had experienced so much trauma and grief in their young lives. On December 23rd, three months after arriving at Next Steps, Ella told her children to pack up. Roger joined the family as they loaded up their van. The kids thought they were moving to another shelter unit. "I was there to witness it and it brought tears to my eyes," he says. As Ella walked her children inside their new apartment, she said "Merry Christmas. Welcome home. We are out of shelter." Two days before Christmas, the children decorated their very own tree in their permanent home.

The majority of families who are referred to Next Steps are employed, and many are two-parent families. However, a lack of affordable housing, inflation, the rising cost of food and rent, and the end of pandemic-era assistance, all combine to create a seemingly insurmountable challenge to a stable, healthy life for their family. They arrive at Next Steps in survival mode – too consumed by the crisis they are facing to consider anything beyond how they will secure that next meal or where they will lay their head that night. This is where FACETS steps in, acting as a lifeline and connecting clients with emergency and basic needs services, government assistance programs, childcare and so much more.

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Your support helps hundreds of families like Ella's. THANK YOU! Everyone can do something. Visit facetscares.org to make a donation or start a fundraising page.

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A Message from FACETS Board Chair & Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we mark FACETS' 35 years of neighbors helping neighbors, families and individuals in Fairfax are facing crises, and we are being called upon to make some big moves now. Our neighbors are lacking the most basic necessities of life – food, shelter, essential services and educational opportunities – and our entire community is suffering. In 1988, these concerns weighed upon Linda Wimpey and the founding members of FACETS and pushed them to act. While FACETS and Fairfax no longer look the same as they did in 1988, the legacy of selflessness, service and compassion toward our neighbors remains strong.

In 2023, the needs in our community are as great as ever. Eviction moratoriums are ending, pandemic rental assistance funds are depleted and housing costs continue to rise. Fairfax rents increased by a staggering 18% just in the last year, and the temporary boost to SNAP benefits ended in February despite food prices increasing 10% in the last 12 months. Working families in our community worry about keeping roofs over their heads, utilities on and food on their tables. The trauma caused by this instability and deprivation has long-lasting impacts across generations, but it doesn't have to be this way.

FACETS has the history, experience and community backing to make long-lasting and life-changing impacts. We work every day to ensure that our neighbors facing eviction, homelessness and food insecurity remain safe, healthy and housed. With the principles that founded FACETS 35 years ago providing guidance and inspiration, the Changing Lives Campaign will provide flexible-funding to respond immediately with assistance for our neighbors in need. This emergency financial assistance includes application and holding fees for apartments, help with rent, utilities, medical bills, transportation, childcare and other urgent needs that can serve as a tipping point for crisis. These funds will also cover costs associated with growing our staff and infrastructure so that we can better support our clients, residents, and neighbors.

With the support of our FACETS community, we can help keep families and individuals in their homes and provide life-sustaining resources and transformational services. Over 35 years, we have seen that a community coming together can create stronger futures. It is the generosity and leadership of people like you that makes this possible. As we continue the FACETS' legacy of service we thank you for joining us. We are better and stronger together.



Hugh Taylor
Board Chair



Joe Fay
Executive Director



Changing Lives for 35 Years

You can learn more and make an immediate impact by visiting **facetscares.org**.

Meeting Critical Needs:

From Hot Meals to Food Equity

A critical aspect helping neighbors become and remain stably housed includes addressing food insecurity – which is increasingly important given the concurrent rising costs of food and housing in Fairfax County. FACETS keeps an emergency pantry, where we stock non-perishable food, diapers and other essential items that a person or family in crisis may require, but that is just the beginning. Of the wide breadth of services and programs FACETS offers, our food distributions are the largest in terms of numbers of children, families, and individuals served – distributing hundreds of thousands of pounds of fresh and shelf-stable foods every year.

One of the ways we are able to get food out directly to the community is through our Education and Community Development program (ECD for short). Our ECD Community Advocates are embedded in the community, with offices in community centers in the very neighborhoods they serve. At these centers, FACETS staff and volunteers distribute meat, milk, oil, eggs, fresh produce, and more twice a month for their residents. Two of our centers, located at the Wedgewood Apartments in Annandale and Ragan Oaks near Fair Oaks Mall, were asked by the One Fairfax program to address food equity in Fairfax County. Many of the families and individuals we serve through our community centers are immigrants and refugees, populations we know are at higher risk of food insecurity. Working in partnership with Frontier Kitchen, we provide culturally and religiously appropriate meals to Muslim and Latino families in their own neighborhoods.

Our largest food distribution operates off the Route 1 corridor at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Alexandria. This distribution serves over 300 families (or roughly 1,500 individuals) every single month. Lines of people and cars stretch around the corner of the church and down the street long before the distribution is even set to begin. FACETS directly engages members of the community and program beneficiaries and empowers them to take leadership roles; for example, taking on the task of



organizing almost 10,000 pounds of donated food and directing their neighbors through the distribution line.

It is heart-breaking to witness the extent of the need in our community. However, it is nothing short of awe-inspiring to see the great desire within our community to help our fellow neighbors. Every month, staff and volunteers from different organizations, faith communities, and all walks of life, come together to provide this essential service. Our mission is to continue that service until one day, no one in Fairfax County suffers from hunger, homelessness, and poverty.



**Watch your mailbox for information about our
FALL BENEFIT BREAKFAST**

Taking the (Next) Steps, *continued from page 1*

It is our greatest mission at FACETS to create a community where every child, family and individual is stably housed. The families who enter the Next Steps program may have similar unmet needs, but every single one is facing unique challenges and circumstances. As we mark FACETS' 35th anniversary, we have been called upon to do more. To address the increased requests for aid and the diverse and growing needs of our community, we are launching the Changing Lives Campaign. With these funds, we can help families like Ella's put down a security deposit on a new apartment, increase the number of families we are able

to serve through our shelter programs, and ensure that no child or family sleeps outside.

Changing lives takes community and for 35 years FACETS has been a catalyst for convening the community to create stronger futures for our most vulnerable and marginalized neighbors. With children, families and individuals across our community struggling and facing crises, everyone can do something to help. Whether you are new to FACETS or have been part of the family for 35 years, you can be the difference in the lives of the children, families and individuals who need us the most.



A Community That Cares:

Why We Love FACETS!

By Peter Everett, FACETS Donor, Volunteer & Former Board Member

FACETS embodies love in our community. At times carefully planned, as with housing our homeless neighbors - at other times spontaneously, as with a hug for a child during homework help - FACETS epitomizes caring in our community.

As we approach the 35th anniversary of Linda Wimpey's incredible experiment in caring, we want to celebrate our donors, volunteers and partners and invite those who had to step back during the last few years to rejoin us in our mission. Part of that journey involves reflecting on your connection to FACETS - we invite you to spend just a few minutes thinking about these questions. The answers are pivotal, personal and central to your journey.

1. *What drew you towards FACETS originally?*
2. *Who first inspired you to get involved?*
3. *After you were hooked, how did your journey evolve from there?*
4. *Most importantly, why do you believe in the mission of FACETS?*
5. *Who are some of the incredibly talented caring individuals and groups you have worked with and who have inspired you?*
6. *And, finally, what amazing successes have you seen?*

My journey has focused on mentoring and tutoring high school students seeking to attend college as first generation collegians - truly warriors in breaking the cycle of poverty. The young men I have been fortunate to work with face long odds, ranging from the most fundamental - losing a home - to family crises, financial instability, and a steep learning curve in all of the aspects of learning about, testing for, selecting and applying to colleges and seeking financial aid. These daunting challenges are layered on top of demanding high school classes and the ultracompetitive Northern Virginia academic landscape.

Answering the last two questions, I had the privilege of working with a young man who faced a very challenging family situation. He fashioned a dream to dance professionally, worked extraordinarily hard at that dream, and built an impressive resume of performances, teaching and classes. Against all odds, he earned acceptance to an excellent college and a full scholarship, graduated and embarked on a career as a professional dancer!

I'm now working with a remarkable young man who works extremely hard, caring for several young siblings while taking a demanding college and SAT prep program and honors courses in Economics, English and History. He plans to major in Criminal Justice and Law in college, and then pursue a law degree to help others in his mission to represent those who so desperately need to level the playing field. We are laser-focused on finding and applying for scholarships. He is so thoughtful, caring and grateful.

This is why I love FACETS and its mission.

Changing lives takes a community!

Follow us on social media to see some inspirational stories and videos of families, individuals, businesses, faith communities and local groups joining in to change lives and create stronger futures in Fairfax!

We want to hear your story! Email us at facets@facetscares.org or tag us on your social posts and stories:



#ChangingLives
#NeighborsHelpingNeighbors #FACETS35

Programs & Services



- Next Steps Family Shelter
- Hot Meals
- Education & Community Development
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Food Equity
- Opportunity Neighborhood Annandale
- Hypothermia Prevention & Shelter
- Food Distributions
- Emergency Assistance
- Housing Services
- Emergency Pantries
- Basic Needs Support
- Eviction Prevention
- Medical Outreach
- Employer Engagement
- Rapid Rehousing
- Volunteering
- Financial Literacy

Helping Our Neighbors Meet Their Own Needs On Their Own Terms