Train For 10 And Help AMEN
FUNDRAISER IS UNDERWAY

Denny Pinch, certified personal trainer, running coach, and longtime AMEN supporter, is training runners for AMEN’s first-ever running fundraiser. Pinch is training the runners for the April 10th GW Classic, a 10-mile race on the George Washington Parkway. It was 18 degrees on the first January training day, but the weather did not deter this enthusiastic group. The 26 participants include both experienced runners and beginners, many experiencing athletic achievement like never before. Arlington resident Sheila Smith, who has never run 10 miles before, is amazed at how she is able to increase her distance every week following Pinch’s training program.

AMEN Celebrates 35 Years

Friends, supporters, and volunteers attended AMEN’s 35th Anniversary celebration last September in Arlington. A Help the Homeless mini-walk kicked off the festivities, led by members of the Wakefield H.S. Marching Band, and was followed by inspiring speeches and great food. AMEN Vice President Diane Weisz Young shared some of AMEN’s rich history in the community, and Arlington County Board Chair Chris Zimmerman presented a County proclamation. Several AMEN clients shared their personal stories of receiving AMEN’s help and how it changed their lives.

Many thanks to Red, Hot and Blue and Lebanese Taverna for donating great food for the celebration.
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am so pleased to report that AMEN’s supporters responded generously during the 35th Anniversary Help More Campaign, donating $82,000 to AMEN.

This success was the icing on the cake to celebrate AMEN’s 35th birthday. Two generous donors provided incentive donations and 85 supporters (including churches and civic organizations) responded. Then the Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Sponsors program matched the donations by 20% to reach a total of $82,000. This exceeded the campaign goal by $12,000. These funds will help Arlington residents who are in financial crisis pay their bills and thus avert more serious consequences like homelessness. The $82,000 enables AMEN to help 270 additional households this year.

Even though Arlington is relatively affluent and has a low unemployment rate, the recession of the last two and one-half years has been very difficult for many Arlingtonians who struggle to pay bills for basic housing and food. When you donate to AMEN, you are helping these neighbors.

I also applaud the Fannie Mae Help the Homeless program. The Help the Homeless program is a major fundraising and public awareness opportunity for AMEN and other nonprofits every year. A separate story on page 3 describes AMEN’s success raising additional funds in the 2010 Help the Homeless mini-walks. Together, the campaign and the mini-walks brought in over $115,000.

~ Gerry Shannon

Two Long-time Board Members Retire

Pearl Hicks and Jack Turner recently retired from the AMEN Board. Pearl, a past board president, served on the board for 10 years as well as on the finance committee. Pearl has also represented AMEN at the Arlington Chamber of Commerce for years, informing the business community about AMEN’s work. She has managed AMEN’s Dress for Work Success program single-handedly for the past 10 years. (See story on next page). Happily, Pearl will continue to serve on the finance committee and manage the Dress for Work Success program.

Jack Turner is a founding member of AMEN. As a minister and as an officer in both the Arlington Ministerial Association and South Arlington Clergy Group, Jack saw the need 35 years ago for a central organization to coordinate help for Arlington residents with immediate emergency needs. Jack has served on the AMEN board for 20 years and was an officer and served on several board committees. Most recently, Jack has chaired AMEN’s publicity committee, speaking frequently throughout the area about the importance of AMEN’s work. AMEN is fortunate that Jack will continue to speak on behalf of AMEN as his schedule permits.

AMEN is enormously grateful to Jack and Pearl for their commitment to AMEN’s mission and for the countless hours they have given to help Arlington’s most needy residents.
How many people does AMEN help each day?

On a typical day, AMEN’s programs serve 12 Arlington individuals and families by providing emergency payments on their behalf.

The actual number varies from day to day. Here is how AMEN delivers assistance through its Daily Emergency Assistance Program: AMEN’s finance committee meets each month to assess AMEN’s finances and then determines how much assistance the Daily Fund can provide each day. The more contributions AMEN receives, the more AMEN can provide in assistance. Right now, because of the recent generosity of our donors in the 35th Anniversary Help More campaign and end of year donations, AMEN was able to raise the Fund’s daily budget by $100 to $1400.

From 1:00-5:00 p.m. each day, social workers in the area may contact that day’s daily volunteer to request assistance for a client who has demonstrated a real emergency need. The daily volunteer determines whether the client’s need falls within the program guidelines. For example, AMEN will help someone pay a rent bill or utility bill based on the social worker’s assessment of emergency need. Similarly, AMEN provides for prescription drugs, and dental and medical fees where a social worker has stated there is an immediate need for these services.

Six Arlington Public Schools join AMEN in Help The Homeless Mini-Walks

Last fall, AMEN partnered with six Arlington schools in Help the Homeless (HTH) mini-walks. The schools were McKinley, Williamsburg, Swanson, Oakridge, Key and Glebe. 1,359 persons registered to walk and benefit AMEN. The large number was made up of students and school staff, plus adults and families in an AMEN community walk. This is the largest ever total of HTH walkers for AMEN. McKinley Elementary, with 337 walkers, was the leading school with Williamsburg Middle School a close second.

The Fannie Mae Corporation sponsors the Help the Homeless program every year to increase public awareness about homelessness and to help raise funds for nonprofits that work to prevent and help the homeless. As one of the nonprofits, AMEN’s total walkers will enable it to receive over $115,000 with the help of its supporters. This amount represents over 10% of our total annual budget and goes directly to help those in need in Arlington. It is 20% of our income from private individual and institutional donors. Through the HTH program, Arlington students learn about the causes of homelessness and ways to prevent and reduce it. Many students continue to participate each year as they pass through their elementary and middle school grades.

AMEN is grateful for the support from Arlington schools, parents and friends.
We also thank the Pep Band of Swanson Middle School, which performs at several school mini-walks and creates an atmosphere of excitement and involvement in this very important cause.

Dress for Work Success Program

For thirteen years, AMEN has partnered with the Arlington County Employment Center to assist Arlington residents who are preparing to enter or get back into the workforce. When a resident completes the Employment Center’s “Arlington Works!” Program and is referred to AMEN’s Dress for Work Success program, he or she is provided with brand new, professional work attire. Dress for Work Success provides an important first step, helping recipients make a smooth transition to work.

In 2010, Dress for Work Success helped 31 clients and their families.

Pearl Hicks has coordinated the program for ten years. She takes each client on a personal shopping trip, helping the client select interview and work outfits. Pearl is a magician in stretching each dollar. With a small budget for each recipient, she typically helps each client buy 5 work outfits! The shopping trips also serve as an avenue to teach these newly self-supporting individuals additional ways in which to budget and make smart shopping selections. Please contact the AMEN office if you would like to serve as a volunteer with Pearl or to make a financial donation to help support this program.

AMEN helped 2,950 Arlington households during the 2010 fiscal year.
Brenda Blount, age 59, has had many challenges during her life. Diagnosed with bi-polar disorder, Brenda has had difficulty keeping steady, full-time employment.

Two years ago, Brenda reported to her County DHS mental health counselor that she was in pain with dental problems. Brenda had neglected dental check-ups for several years because she could not afford them. AMEN approved the counselor’s request, asking AMEN to help pay for the dental work, and, since then, AMEN has also helped Brenda to get prescription eyeglasses, prescription medication and once helped with her rent bill.

This winter, Brenda offered to volunteer at AMEN. She wanted to give back because AMEN had helped her through some very hard times. She helped for two days assembling the annual end-of-year mailing and is ready to volunteer again when needed. This is when she shared her story with us. “AMEN has been like a family to me,” Brenda says. “I applaud them for all they do. They never make their clients feel humiliated for their situations. It just feels like a loving helping hand in a time of need. I want to thank the people who support AMEN, because they are helping so many people with their donations.” Brenda is now in her own apartment and working part-time for her church. She has partial healthcare coverage but still needed the extra help from AMEN to be able to pay for her dental work and eye care.

AMEN Client tells her story

“AMEN has been like a family to me … a loving helping hand in a time of need. I want to thank the people who support AMEN because they are helping so many people with their donations.”

— Brenda Blount, AMEN client

PLEASE DONATE TODAY TO HELP MORE NEIGHBORS IN NEED.