



Contact: Sacha Adorno
215-747-7700 ext. 221; 267-243-1593 (cell)
Steege/Thomson Communications
E-mail: sadorno@steegethomson.com

or

Marci Bransdorf
410-223-2852; 301-257-7348 (cell)
Annie E. Casey Foundation
E-mail: mbransdorf@aecf.org

SEVEN MARYLAND ORGANIZATIONS HONORED FOR FAMILY-STRENGTHENING WORK

Awards from the Annie E. Casey Foundation total \$3.5 million

Baltimore – Seven organizations – innovators that strengthen low-income families and communities in Maryland – will receive unrestricted awards of \$500,000 each, paid over five or more years, from the Annie E. Casey Foundation as part of FAMILIES COUNT – MARYLAND. The recipients are being recognized for their effectiveness in helping families acquire the confidence, capacity and opportunities they need to succeed.

FAMILIES COUNT – MARYLAND embraces a simple principle: Children do well when their families do well, and families do better when they live in supportive communities. “We will change the future of our most at-risk children only when we change the present for their parents,” says Douglas W. Nelson, president of the Casey Foundation.

From Western Maryland to central Baltimore, in communities on the Eastern Shore and near the nation’s capital, the honorees have found ways for low-income families to own homes by using sweat equity and have helped immigrant workers advocate for their rights. They have rebuilt an inner-city core, house by house, and have brought families together to overcome the isolation of Appalachia. They have created art programs and educational opportunities that help children thrive.

The FAMILIES COUNT – MARYLAND honorees are:

- **CASA of Maryland, Takoma Park.** Through CASA, immigrant and refugee families throughout the region have gained a strong voice and learned advocacy skills. CASA also provides families with the services they need to move forward, such as legal assistance, language classes, job training and job placements.
- **Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development (CFWD), Baltimore.** The Center reaches out to fathers and helps them grow into their roles as parents and partners. Couples, whether living together or apart, find peer support and help in co-parenting in the Center’s 50/50 program. Both parents can also take part in programs that help them successfully enter and advance in the workforce to better support their families.

- **The Family Center of the Cumberland YMCA, Cumberland.** Focusing on young families, the Center strengthens parents' confidence, parenting skills and earning potential, while early childhood development programs help their children thrive. Through the Center, families can also take part in all of the YMCA's recreational activities and programs.
- **Garrett County Community Action Committee, Oakland.** In the isolated communities of Appalachia, GCCAC brings community leaders together and fuels economic development to create new opportunities for families. Through GCCAC's programs, families can build savings, buy their first homes, find help in parenting and learn job skills.
- **The Kent Family Center, Chestertown.** In rural Kent County, the Family Center creates a second home for families, helps them identify and achieve goals and builds community. A host of parent-led activities, such as a large community garden, complement programs that range from child care and after-school programs to classes in parenting and financial management.
- **New Song Urban Ministries, Baltimore.** New Song works side-by-side with residents of Sandtown in West Baltimore to rebuild hope and restore opportunity through housing, education and job development. Sandtown's children thrive in a pre-school, K-8 school and performing arts programs. Other programs support home ownership and workplace success for parents.
- **Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Hughesville.** In Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties, Tri-County helps low-income families use sweat equity and low-interest mortgages to own homes – a step toward long-term stability they might never otherwise afford. Classes and training opportunities also enable families to increase their earning potential.

“This year marks the Casey Foundation's tenth anniversary in Maryland. We can think of no better way to celebrate the occasion than by recognizing the outstanding work these and countless other organizations are doing throughout the state to give children what they need most – strong, capable and economically successful families,” says Nelson.

The Foundation announces the honorees during National Family Week (November 21 – 27) to draw attention to this remarkable work and the critical need to improve the odds for the state's most vulnerable children. “The continuing challenge is less about know-how than it is about will,” says Ralph R. Smith, senior vice president of the Casey Foundation, “We need the willingness to care enough and do enough so that all families can realize their dreams for their children.”

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a Baltimore-based national philanthropy dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children and families in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother.

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