

## **SCA General Membership Meeting Minutes 19 November 2019**

Meeting convened at 7:30 pm in Crestwood Elementary with Pledge of Allegiance.

### **President's Opening Remarks**

SCA President Gail Nittle welcomed the members and the evenings featured speakers: Bob Vitter from the Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO) and Tom Barnett from the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness. Gail also recognized two SCA sponsors in attendance, Elisabeth Libby, owner/operator of the Springfield Plaza Laundromat & Cleaners and Janice Buckley, a local real estate agent.

### **Treasurer Report**

Sandy Frieswyk reported a starting balance from last report of \$10,359.11. A total of \$400 was taken in from sponsor advertising and \$30 from membership dues. A total of \$705.27 was expended: \$157 for the Halloween decorating contest winner yard signs and SCA business cards; \$8.40 for newsletter postage; \$36.38 for newsletter printing; \$3.49 for computer paper and \$500 for a board approved donation to ECHO. The current SCA account balance is \$10,083.43.

### **Doradus Futbol Club Shoe Drive:**

Master Police Officer Eric Nelson, Community Outreach with Fairfax County Police, introduced efforts by the Doradus Futbol Club to collect donated new/used shoes as a fund raiser for the club that will also help individuals in need in the U.S. and impoverished countries. The soccer team from the Springfield area is ranked third in the state and 82<sup>nd</sup> in the nation. The team will receive money for each pound of shoes collected. The club is raising money for a tournament in Orlando Florida. Bill Reed, a member of the Futbol Club's board, and Coach Brian Robinson, coach of the team highlighted the club's activities and objective to transform recreational soccer players to an elite level. They noted several of the team's successes including tournament participation and college scholarships awarded to several of the club's players.

### **Halloween Decorating Contest:**

Mike Slater provided the results of the SCA-sponsored Halloween Decorating Contest. Mike and a small team of volunteer judges visited 15 entrants on 27 Oct. The winner of judge's favorite and most creative was on Atteentee Rd. Mike noted an increase in participation over last year with entrants from both the Crestwood and Lynbrook side of the neighborhood. Yard signs were presented to the winner of each category.

### **General Announcements:**

Gail announced that Planet Fitness is moving to the Concord Plaza. Nothing Bundt Cakes is now open in the Brookfield Plaza. The next Franconia Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on 20 Nov will focus on personal safety during the holidays. CAC meetings are held at the Franconia Police District on the third Wednesday of the month at 7pm. CACs enhance communication between residents and the Fairfax County Police Department and offer residents a chance to dialogue with members of their local police districts.

**Grace Presbyterian Church:**

Dave Retherford from Grace Presbyterian Church provided an overview of its outreach efforts to help the homeless. Grace Church hosts a Help the Homeless meet-up group on the last Saturday of the month at 0930. The church puts together 120 backpacks containing a hygiene kit, sack lunch and a Bible. The church buys the backpacks and contents which are assembled by a team of volunteers. One hundred backpacks are taken to DC and twenty are taken to Woodbridge where they are distributed directly to the homeless. Grace welcomes volunteers to support this ministry.

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church:**

Dan Ancona of St. Mark's told about St. Mark's program to put together military care packages for deployed troops. St. Mark's also sponsors a winter hypothermia program to help the homeless. The last week in January, St Mark's will host up to 50 guests for the week, providing a place to sleep along with meals. St. Mark's accepts volunteers who may want to help with this ministry. A training program is required to participate as a volunteer. Visit the St. Mark's website for more information on this important program.

**Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO):**

Bob Vitter, ECHO President, provided an overview of ECHO's history and mission. ECHO was formed in 1968 when representatives from nine Springfield churches met to discuss ways to meet social needs in the community. Today there are 25 faith-based organizations on the ECHO Board. ECHO is a non-profit organization that is run totally by volunteers. There are about 325 regular volunteers supporting ECHO's various missions. ECHO focuses on providing for the needs of the Springfield and Burke communities. People in need make appointments with ECHO. ECHO provides food, clothing, household goods and financial assistance as dictated by individual need. ECHO relies primarily on donations for its operation. Boy scouts, letter carriers, churches and other organizations assist with collecting food donations. ECHO collects over 20,000 pounds of food a year which helps 14,000 people. ECHO provides the community with 200 food baskets each at Thanksgiving and Christmas. ECHO also gives away 50-60 computers to families with school aged children per year. ECHO accepts clothing and household good donations. Items that cannot be used by ECHO clients are sold at yard sales held twice a year at St. Bernadett's Church. Mr. Vitter noted that ECHO does not typically see a lot of repeat business. ECHO does not ask about income and it does not discriminate. ECHO is always looking for volunteers and donations. Teens looking for service hours can volunteer on Wednesday nights. ECHO was named Volunteer Fairfax Non-profit of the Year.

**Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness:**

Tom Barnett, Deputy Director of Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, provided an overview of the county's winter hypothermia program. The hypothermia program is in effect December thru March and is a private/public partnership supported by local churches. This program is designed to provide life-saving shelter to approximately 200 homeless persons who sleep outside in the winter months. Mr. Barnett also spoke about the rising concern about affordable housing in Fairfax County which contributes towards homelessness. He noted the need for temporary housing for the homeless outpaces the available shelter spaces. The Bailey's Shelter and Supportive Housing facility on Seminary Road was recently renovated. This is the first of four Fairfax County shelters to be renovated. Despite Fairfax County's overall wealth,

homelessness is a problem throughout the county. Each year there are about 3,000 people who are homeless in Fairfax County. Mr. Barnett's office was created in 2008 with the goal of reducing county homelessness by half within ten years. The county has a strategy for preventing homelessness that involves prevention, preservation, integration and implementation. The county's goal is to keep people from becoming homeless in the first place. The county seeks to increase and preserve affordable housing. The county seeks to integrate social services to those who need it. Finally, the county is implementing partnerships to ensure accountability and funding. Mr. Barnett also spoke about panhandling. He noted the county encourages not giving to panhandlers. They recommend instead giving to local non-profits that can assist people in need. Mr. Barnett noted giving to panhandlers is a personal decision. He also noted that panhandling is viewed as being a first amendment right.

The meeting adjourned a 9:10 pm.