

Thanks to weatherization assistance, Arc and CAC Enjoy a Warm Relationship

Last fall, the Arc of Howard County (Arc), whose mission is to achieve “full community life for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities – one person at a time,” got an unexpected assist from another non-profit agency, the Community Action Council of Howard County (CAC).

To support its Residential Program, Arc rents or partially owns 45 alternative living houses or apartments in Howard County. Using an \$83,000 grant from the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), CAC provided weatherization assistance to three buildings that house individuals whom Arc supports.

The grant was part of MEA’s EmPOWERing Clean Energy Communities Low- to Moderate-Income Grant Program and was funded through the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF). SEIF funds come from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

The houses are located on Beechwood Drive in Columbia, Valley Road in Ellicott City, and Ducketts Lane in Elkridge. Two of these facilities have full-time nursing staffs to tend to the challenging medical needs of individuals who need support.

A new heating and cooling system was installed in one of the houses. Two of them received new tankless hot water heaters, and all three homes were air sealed and insulated. In addition, energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs were installed in two facilities if they did not already have them.

The tab for work on all three buildings, which took two months to complete, was \$35,000.

The improvements, which are projected to save Arc 20 to 30 percent on energy costs on the three buildings, would not have been possible without CAC, according to Arc’s Facilities and Maintenance Manager Mr. Raksin. “We (Arc) didn’t have the money in our budget for weatherization,” he stated.

“The insulation has made a difference,” said Stephanie Cross, the nurse manager at the Columbia site. “In winter the house is warm now. It used to be freezing in here.” This noticeable difference occurred even though the Columbia facility did not receive a new heating system.

CAC Weatherization Program Manager Deepak Chadha initially approached Arc with the objective of fulfilling agencies' weatherization priorities of helping families with disabled members. "I had heard about Arc's great work from many people and thought this was a great opportunity to partner with them," said Mr. Chadha.

The other weatherization priorities are seniors and families with small children, which were being addressed through general solicitations for CAC's weatherization program.

Arc returned CAC's unexpected assistance with an unexpected award. At an Awards Reception in May, Arc Board of Directors President Robert Topper presented CAC President Bitia Dayhoff with Arc's Excellence in Public Service Award.

CAC provides programs and emergency services for the low-income population of Howard County in order to alleviate the effects of poverty and promote self-sufficiency. In addition to weatherization, CAC's services include housing and energy assistance, the Food Bank and Head Start.

In addition to residential services, Arc's programs and services include employment, family and individual support, respite care, day program and supported retirement.