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Rural Maryland Council Awards Grants to Six Organizations Helping Rural Families

(September 14, 2007 – Annapolis) The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) has selected six organizations to receive a total of \$100,000 in grants from its direct service grant program, *Strengthening the Well Being of Rural Maryland Families*. This initiative, made possible with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, awards grants to non-profit organizations that help disadvantaged families in rural areas improve their financial literacy and stability.

Of the six grantees, two organizations serve Western Maryland, one serves Southern Maryland, and three serve the Eastern Shore.

The RMC, which is administering the program for the third year in a row, received applications from 14 organizations which, together, applied for nearly \$269,000.

“This level of requests is both a testament to the effective work of past grantees but also an indication of the growing need for more resources in Maryland’s rural areas,” said RMC Executive Director David M. Jenkins. “We are very pleased to be working with the Annie E. Casey Foundation for a third year to bring much needed resources to some of the most distressed families in our state.”

The six grantees are:

Western Maryland:

- **Carver Community Center, Cumberland.** (Grant: \$20,000) A workforce development program will help provide low income job seekers with the computer training they need to obtain and hold a job. Financial planning and money management workshops will be presented monthly, and self-esteem and soft skills workshops will be offered continuously. Participants who obtain employment, enter another training program, or enroll in learning institutions after the training will be considered successful.
 - **Media Contact:** Tawnia Austin. Phone: 301-777-7350.
Email: carvercc@allconet.org

- **Garrett County Community Action Agency, Oakland.** (Grant: \$8,740) The Money Smart Jump Start project will help families develop financial skills and positive banking relationships. GCCA’s existing Individual Development Account program can "jump start" families towards building assets and increasing their wealth. A First Time Home Buyers program and a Microloan program that are available to the target families.
 - **Media Contact:** Pam Nelson. Phone: 301-334-9431, ext.151.
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Southern Maryland

- **Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.** (Grant: \$19,980) Angel's Watch Regional Women's Shelter is the only regional shelter serving homeless women from Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties, many of whom are homeless due, primarily, to their inability to earn a living-wage and secure affordable housing. (This represents a shift away from barriers related mostly to chronic alcohol, drug or mental health issues.) The shelter will collaborate with community partners to offer intensive job readiness services, assistance securing affordable housing, and personalized services to help them with unsubsidized child care, accessible transportation, financial management, asset acquisition, community involvement, etc.
 - **Media Contact:** Julie Van Orden. Phone: 301-274-0680.
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Eastern Shore

- **Maryland Rural Development Corporation**, serving Caroline, Kent, Talbot and Dorchester counties. (Grant: \$12,780) The Head Start on Homeowner Ownership project will provide direct technical assistance, training, and leveraging of below market rate mortgage resources for first-time homebuyers including participating Head Start families seeking first time homeownership. Funds will also provide support for a strategic housing production partnership to actualize affordable new housing units.
 - **Media Contacts:** R. Kevin Brooks or Gary Sawyer. Phone: 410-269-0910.
Emails: rkb@mrdc.net and gjs@mrdc.net
- **Shared Opportunity Services, Inc., Kent County.** Grant Amount: \$18,500. Kent County, a rural agricultural community, relies heavily on Hispanic workers yet limited resources are available to help workers and their families become stable and economically successful. In 2006, SOS introduced a basic financial literacy program that resulted in a nucleus of family strengthening support for local Hispanic families. With this grant, the program will be expanded to reach 200 Hispanic workers employed in nearby communities, to emphasize basic financial education as a life skill, and to encourage past participants to provide peer support.
 - **Media Contacts:** Judy H. Linn, Phone: 410-778-7911.
Email: director@kentfamilycenter.org
- **Maryland Cooperative Extension, Worcester County.** Grant Amount: \$20,000. The Parents and Teachers as Wealth Coaches project delivers train-the-trainer programs to parents, primary caregivers, and K-12 educators. The program integrates basic personal finance lessons into daily encounters with children in classrooms, at home, and in the community. The grant will help the program meet an increasing demand for in-school assemblies, parent and teacher trainings, and materials.
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The Rural Maryland Council is an independent state agency that brings together community-based organizations, federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify and seek solutions to the unique needs of Rural Maryland communities. As a collaborative partnership, the RMC operates in a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory manner.