



50 Harry S Truman Parkway \* Annapolis, MD 21401  
Office: 410-841-5772 \* Fax: 410-841-5987  
[www.rural.state.md.us](http://www.rural.state.md.us)

*The Honorable Phyllis Kilby, Chair  
Stephen R McHenry, Executive Director*

---

**NEWS RELEASE - For Immediate Release: July 27, 2006**

For general information, see: [www.rural.state.md.us/News/Rural\\_Families.html](http://www.rural.state.md.us/News/Rural_Families.html)  
For more information, contact: Program Manager Bonnie Braun, University of Maryland,  
301-405-3672

**Rural Maryland Organizations Work to Strengthen Families, Economies**

Five community-based organizations serving rural families across Maryland are the first to receive grants from a statewide initiative designed to help strengthen rural communities by strengthening families.

Spearheaded by the Rural Maryland Council with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the *Strengthening the Well-Being of Rural Maryland Families* initiative operates on the premise that children do well when their families do well; and families do better when they live in supportive communities. Many rural families, however, are disconnected from the opportunities and supports they need to succeed. These grants – which ranged from \$7,000 to \$20,000 -- helped families in Rural Maryland gain access to economic opportunities, find support through formal and informal networks, and gain access to effective services that work for them. The University of Maryland's Department of Family Studies coordinated the program for the Rural Maryland Council, under the leadership of Dr. Bonnie Braun.

During the first year of this statewide initiative, these five organizations provided:

- Child cognitive development screenings, immunizations, and child care for 52 families;
- Transportation to and from parent education courses for 39 parents;
- Developmentally appropriate parent-child activities and events for 48 families;
- Training in infant mental health for 41 family service workers and parents;
- In-home mental health services for 12 at-risk families with children ages 2-5;
- A bi-monthly support group, health family screening, referral to in-home support services, links to educational services, and assistance in accessing Maryland Children's Health Care for 33 pregnant or parenting teens;
- A 10-week life skills training course for 15 families, which included the role of parents in schools, fire safety and emergency services, accessing social services, dining etiquette, programs for seniors and individuals with disabilities, and preventative health care; and
- Training in advocacy and navigating service systems for 12 families affected by mental illness.

The programs selected for this inaugural program were:

- **Family Support Center at The Human Services Program of Carroll County** in Westminster
- **The Charles County Health Family Program, *Infant Mental Health Project* at the Center for Children** in LaPlata
- **Dorchester County Health Department *Pregnant/Parenting Teens Program*** in Cambridge
- **Harford Community Action Agency *Highland Friends Program*** in Bel Air.
- **Wicomico Partnership for Families and Children *Family Advocacy Program*** in Salisbury.

-- more --

***"A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland"***

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is funding the Rural Maryland Families Initiative again in 2006-2007. The grant application period is closed, and recipients of the 2006 grants will be announced soon.

###

*The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) 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. Our goals are to: (1) Enable citizens in rural communities to achieve success in employment and have access to quality, affordable health care, and other services; (2) Preserve agriculture and other natural resource-based industry as an integral part of Maryland's rural economy and culture; (3) Advocate for a manageable regulatory process and reasonable and effective compliance; and (4) Address the impact of changing conditions on the environment, heritage and economic well-being of rural Maryland. As a collaborative partnership, the RMC operates in a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory manner. [www.rural.state.md.us](http://www.rural.state.md.us)*

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation works to build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. The foundation was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings. It is headquartered in Baltimore. Visit: [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)*

## Strengthening the Well-Being of Rural Maryland Families

Rural Maryland Council - Annie E. Casey Foundation  
2005 Grantees

### **Carroll County Human Services Program**, 10 Distillery Drive, Westminster, MD 21157

*Project Director:* Joyce Tierney, jtierney@hspinc.org, P 410-857-0629 F 410-857-9202

The Human Services Program of Carroll County sought expansion funding for the *Carroll County Support Center* to increase transportation, child development services, case management services, and child care subsidies for low-income families. This application focused on the Casey targets of helping children be healthy and ready to succeed in school, helping families be healthy and ready to succeed in work and the community, and providing families access to quality services that work for them. The Human Services Program of Carroll County was funded their full request of **\$20,000**.

\* \* \*

### **Charles County Healthy Families**, 6100 Radio State Road, PO Box 2924, LaPlanta MD 20646

*Project Director:* Colleen Wilburn, wilburn@center-for-children.org, P 301-392-9332x105 F 301-609-7284

The Center for Children/Healthy Families Charles County applied to expand services through an *Infant Mental Health* program to prevent child abuse and child mental health problems. This application targets families at-risk for child mental health issues, and focused on the Casey targets of helping children be healthy and ready to succeed in school, providing families access to quality services that work for them. Healthy Families Charles County has been funded their full request of **\$20,000**.

\* \* \*

### **Dorchester County Health Department**, 3 Cedar Street, Cambridge, MD 21613

*Project Director:* Kathy Wise, hfd@fastol.com, P 410-901-2388 F 410-901-2385

The Dorchester County Health Department applied to expand the hours of their Registered Nurse/Teen Pregnancy Coordinator placed in the School Based Health Center. This application focused on the Casey targets of helping children be healthy and ready to succeed in school and providing families access to quality services that work for them. The Dorchester County Health Department was funded their full request of **\$20,000**.

\* \* \*

### **Harford Community Action Agency**, 33 West Courtland Street, Bel Air, MD 21014

*Project Director:* Mary Ellen Kim, mekam@hcaa.cncdsl.com, P 410-638-3240 F 410-893-8937

The Harford Community Action Agency sent a proposal to expand their programming to include *Highland Friends*, a life skills training and support program for disadvantaged families. This application focused on the Casey target of providing families access to quality services that work for them. Harford Community Action Agency was funded their full request of **\$7,000**.

\* \* \*

### **Wicomico Partnership for Families and Children**, 540 Riverside Dr. #14, Salisbury, MD 21401

*Project Director:* Kimberly Estep, kestep@wicomicocounty.org, P 410-546-5400 F 410-546-3206

The Wicomico Partnership for Families and Children sought to expand services for parents of *Severely Emotionally Disturbed Youth* who participate in their wraparound programming. The project would train parents as para-professional service providers in their proposed Family Leadership Institute. This application focused on the Casey targets of increasing family earnings and income, helping families and neighborhoods develop strong supports and networks. The Wicomico Partnership for Families and Children has been funded **\$13,000**, a slight reduction from their original request.