

Share the power.



Fall 2015 Newsletter



“I am inspired to be part of the solution.”

Thanks to supporters like you, the Watt Watchers program provides a fresh start for participants

Walter Matthews, IV is a residential counselor and entrepreneur. This past winter, one which many of us would like to forget, he fell behind on his BGE payments. He applied for the energy assistance program, but was told he could not apply twice in the same year. As quickly as he heard these words, his power was turned off. It was April 2015.

With the power off, Mr. Matthews was given a list of resources for assistance. He ventured out to many of those places, in person, to obtain the information and help he needed. He wanted to meet people face to face and fix the problem. Unfortunately for him, and for many other vulnerable families living without power, funds and resources were limited.

Mr. Matthews wouldn't be defeated.

As a last resort, he checked out the Fuel Fund of Maryland's website and used the online application for assistance.

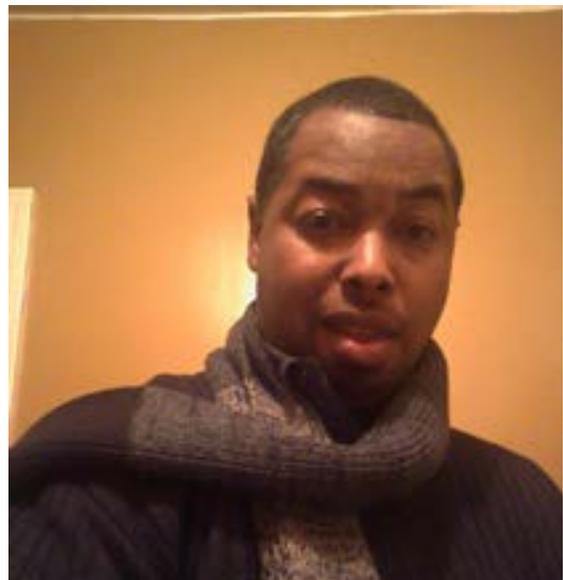
“I loved the online application. I was so used to standing in line for information or to apply for help, that it was actually more personable to complete the process electronically than showing up in person,” Mr. Matthews chuckled.

“The online form was great,” he said. “I hit the ‘submit’ button and I received a response the same day.”

Ed Hostetter, Fuel Fund Program Assistant, was able to quickly respond to Mr. Matthews' inquiry and share with him what he needed to do to receive Fuel Fund assistance.

One of the resources Ed shared with Mr. Matthews was the Watt Watchers class, an educational program of the Fuel Fund that shares creative ways to reduce energy consumption and save money. Watt Watchers empowers people to take control of their home energy usage, and offers tips on involving all family members in the process - even children! The free class is offered to all Fuel Fund clients, and an online version is available for those who cannot attend an in-person session.

“Watt Watchers was so helpful. I learned about ‘energy vampires’ and how unplugging appliances as well as using an energy power strip can help me save on my energy bill,” said



Walter Matthews is prepared for a cold Baltimore winter after completing the Watt Watchers program

Mr. Matthews. “I am more vigilant, mindful and consistent with my energy use. There are so many things you take for granted in life.”

So, how does someone live without power for more than six weeks?

“You just go into survival mode,” said Mr. Matthews.

“Fortunately, I work at night and I was able to rely on my family for support when it comes to food.”

Mr. Matthews is now better prepared for all types of Baltimore weather, and knows he has the power to control his daily energy usage.

“The resources that I was given [Watt Watchers] have made me extremely mindful of the energy that I consume now. I am inspired to be part of the solution now. This is a brand new start for me,” said Mr. Matthews.

An Update from the Executive Director



I'm excited to join the Fuel Fund of Maryland and its rich history of helping families during their greatest times of need. I'm honored to be a part of an

organization that ensures Marylanders have access to energy to provide a safe household for their families. I've been onboard for just over three months, and in that time I've been overwhelmed by the generosity of donors and volunteers who selflessly support their community — and their neighbors — through the Fuel Fund.

I've spent this time learning, listening, and asking lots of questions. The most compelling takeaway I have gathered is the incredible strength of the organization. This is the most passionate and committed staff and board I've ever been a part of, and the mission focus and efficiency are second to none. This is a testament to the great work of Mary Ellen Vanni and her 17 years of dedicated service to the Fuel Fund.

Moving forward, the team and I share a common goal: to make energy more affordable to Marylanders at the greatest risk. Over the next several months, we will explore new programmatic components to augment our existing Watt Watchers program, creating a layered effect of support, based on each client's needs. We will continue to assist those in need when crisis strikes, while engaging in new and innovative ways to support self-sufficiency and energy affordability.

Finally, we will continue to advocate for those in need through meaningful and effective policy change. Maryland families who are at the greatest risk can spend up to 40% of their household income on home energy. We will work hard to ensure that energy is more affordable for all Marylanders.

There is much to be excited for as the seasons change, and I am honored to be a part of such a powerful organization.



Jon Rosa
Executive Director

Inaugural Fuel Fund 5k Trail Run

“Fall back” with us on Daylight Savings Day - November 1, 2015



Presented by:



Lace up your favorite sneakers and get ready to hit the trails on Sunday, November 1, 2015, as the Fuel Fund of Maryland hosts its inaugural 5K Trail Run and 1-mile fun run at Schooley Mill Park in Howard County. The race will start at 9am. Costs to register range from \$30-\$45, and both individuals and teams are welcome. This is an excellent opportunity for first-time runners, beginner trail runners or experienced racers to participate in a family-friendly 5k event which takes participants through picturesque meadows and fields in Highland, Maryland.

“We are excited to have our inaugural 5K take place on Daylight Savings Day so we can educate the public about our many programs and services that help Marylanders with energy assistance, some of whom live in Howard County,” said Jon Rosa, Executive Director, Fuel Fund of Maryland. “Our goal is not only to help vulnerable families and individuals but also to teach them how to better conserve and save on energy costs through our Watt Watchers program,” said Rosa.

All entrants will receive a high performance long-sleeve tech shirt (men's and women's sizing), goodie bag and water stops along the course. There will also be a post-race celebration to include: awards for finishers in each age group, raffles, exhibitors, children's activities, food, and more. The race will take place rain or shine.

The presenting sponsor for the inaugural event is M & T Bank. Other sponsors to date include WYPR Radio, BGE, Barcoding, Mobern Lighting, Len & Lindley Weinberg, Stanley Black and Decker, Kelly & Associates Insurance Group, and T. Rowe Price. If you or your business would like to learn more about a 5K sponsorship and its benefits, please contact Mary Kay Page at mkpage@fuelfundmaryland.org or 410-235-9080x111.

Volunteers are needed to assist with set-up, breakdown, registration, water stops, vendor/exhibit areas, and more. If interested, please contact Danielle Phelps at dphelps@fuelfundmaryland.org or 410-235-9080x106.

Mark your calendar today to join us on Sunday, November 1, day light savings day, and use your extra hour to help us raise funds and awareness about Maryland families that need assistance with their heat and home utility needs. For more information and to register for the race, visit our website at fuelfundmaryland.org or call 410-235-9080x2.

Energy Affordability in Maryland

Thousands of households unable to afford basic energy costs

MD is ranked

43rd

in the nation for home energy affordability

MD households living below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level (less than \$9,895/year for a family of three) pay up to

38%

of their income just on home energy bills

“Home energy is a crippling financial burden for low-income Maryland households.”

-Fisher, Sheehan, Colton
Public Finance & General Economics Firm



Learn more at: homeenergyaffordabilitygap.com



481,369

Maryland families live below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. For a family of 3, that's less than \$39,580 annually.

A New Way to Support Your Neighbors in Need

Fuel Fund of Maryland and BGE are proud to announce a new way to help Marylanders afford their home energy.

Starting September 21st, 2015, BGE customers will have the option of making a donation to the Fuel Fund when they login to pay their bill. Be sure to check it out!

If you have any questions about this new program, contact Erica Lambert at 410-235-9080x110 or elambert@fuelfundmaryland.org.

Thanks to BGE and all of the generous BGE customers!

DON'T LIGHT THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Turn the lights off when you're not using them.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Watt Watchers - volunteers are needed to teach people how to reduce their energy consumption and save money

School Liaison - volunteers are needed to cultivate relationships and lead projects in area schools to educate and spread awareness about Fuel Fund and Watt Watchers programs

5k Trail Run - race day volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks

Contact Danielle Phelps today at dphelps@fuelfundmaryland.org or 410-235-9080x106 to sign up or learn more.

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1500 Union Avenue
Suite 2400
Baltimore, MD 21211

P: 410.235.9080

fuelfundmaryland.org

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